

2010 SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM

Lee County Public Safety

Thank you for your interest in our Special Needs Program. The information on the following two pages is geared toward helping you to make the best possible decision for your safety and well-being in the event of an impending hurricane.

Our Special Needs Program offers three types of shelters – **Emergency Public Shelters**, **Special Care Shelters** and **Hospitals**. The Department of Health will determine which is appropriate for your needs based upon the information you provide on the attached application. We also provide **transportation** to Emergency Public Shelters.

The Special Needs Program should be your backup plan for an evacuation if your other plans fall through or if you have no other place to go. If at all possible, you should pre-arrange to evacuate with family, friends or at a motel out of harm's way. Making specific preparations now for where you will go if a hurricane is heading this way will take the worry and stress off both you and your loved ones. Pack your items to take with you well in advance so you will be ready to leave as soon as evacuation orders are issued.

Emergency Public Shelters are usually located in schools and will accept anyone who is self-sufficient and needs no outside professional assistance in performing activities of daily living. They are places to go if you have no other choice – they are not hospitals, nursing homes or hotels.

Special Care Shelters are available for individuals that require assistance with activities of daily living. They do not have advanced medical equipment, medications or the staff to provide advanced medical care – only basic medical assistance and monitoring is available. A companion/caregiver must accompany you to a Special Care Shelter as there will be very limited hands-on care available. Your companion/caregiver must bring something to sleep on, such as a cot or lawn chair, in addition to their personal items, food, money, etc. Once all available spaces at the Special Care Shelter have been reserved, you may be put on a waiting list. It is very important to get your application submitted as early as possible.

Hospitals are assigned if your physician decides that you need to be sheltered in a skilled nursing facility. Shelter space at the hospital must be reserved in advance. This requires a letter from your physician, which you will need to take with you to the hospital. This is for sheltering purposes only and does not include any medical care. A companion/caregiver must accompany you to the hospital and they will need to bring something to sleep on, personal items, food, money, etc.

Transportation to Emergency Public Shelters can be pre-arranged. If you note on the application that you need transportation to an Emergency Public Shelter, you will be called and notified of your pickup time. You must be ready to evacuate when your transportation arrives. If after listening to the radio or television for evacuation information and you are still unsure whether the evacuation applies to your location, you can call 2-1-1 for clarification.

If you do not pre-arrange shelter transportation and realize you have no way to get to the shelter, you can go to any of the "hurricane evacuation" bus stops and get a free ride to the Emergency Public Shelter.

Hurricane Evacuation Check List

Registration

- Make arrangements to evacuate to family/friends/motel outside any evacuation areas– Plan A
- Submit your Special Needs Application – Plan B
- If you have pets, plan for their evacuation now
 - Pet-friendly shelter information 239-533-7387
- Let your family/friends know your evacuation plan
- Think ahead – if your home gets damaged or destroyed, where will you go?

Approaching Storm

- Contact family/friends where you are evacuating to confirm your plan
- Gather your emergency supplies so you are ready to leave
 - Important documents (ID, insurance, medical, etc.) to take with you
 - Prescriptions - refill them to give you at least a two-week supply (one month is better), pain and cold meds, etc.
 - Cash from the bank to get you through a few weeks
 - Medical support equipment (feeding equipment, wheelchair, etc.)
 - 2 portable oxygen tanks (1-traveling to shelter; 1-returning home)
 - do **not** bring your concentrator
 - Personal hygiene items, clothing, blanket, pillow, extra glasses
 - Non-perishable food, can opener, snacks, drinks
 - Radio, flashlight, extra batteries
 - Books, magazines, cards, puzzles, etc. to help pass the time
- Remove items from outside your home, secure storm shutters

Ordered to Evacuate

- Confirm the evacuation is for your area - if you are registered with the program and you are in the evacuation area, you will receive a phone call from us
- Pack the emergency items you gathered
- Call to let family/friends know where you are going
- Confirm transportation, if necessary
- Secure your valuables or take them with you
- Turn off electrical power at main box except refrigerator/freezer
- Secure your home and evacuate area

Return Home

- Listen to radio/television for official announcement that it is safe to return to your area
- Determine that your home is not damaged and is “livable”
- Arrange for transportation back to your home
- Listen to the radio/television for information on FEMA or Small Business Association phone numbers for assistance

If you need further information or have any questions, please call Debbie Quimby, Special Needs Coordinator at (239) 533-3640.