



Hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30, so don't wait until a hurricane is barreling down on South Florida before you make your preparations - especially if you have special medical needs. Avoid delays and stress during severe weather by registering in advance for a special needs shelter. Those who are pre-registered will have transportation, paperwork and details arranged so they can be brought to a shelter quickly.

"The Florida Department of Health in Broward and Broward County Emergency Management are responsible for ensuring that clients with special medical needs are triaged and placed in special needs shelters during severe weather," said Dr. Paula Thaqi, director of DOH-Broward.

The shelters are recommended for those who have needs such electricity or oxygen dependency. To be eligible, an adult or child must meet one or more of these criteria:

- Depends on a health care professional to perform daily assessment and administer care.
- Requires minimal assistance.
- Depends on oxygen therapy.
- Is medically dependent on uninterrupted electricity.
- Has mental or cognitive limitations requiring assistance and is accompanied by a full-time caregiver.
- Needs care that exceeds aid provided at general shelters.
- Has impairments or disabilities that are medically stable.
- Is a hospice client and is accompanied by caregiver or hospice nurse.
- Weighs less than the safety weight restrictions of provided cots (after supply of hospital beds and bariatric cots are exhausted).

Broward County estimates that several thousand people are eligible for special needs shelters but fewer than 400 are registered. The number has declined, likely due to complacency, lack of information or plans to stay with others. Those who need a higher level of care can be scheduled to shelter in a hospital.

The adult and pediatric applications are available at: www.broward.org. The application should be completed and mailed to:

Adults

Special Needs Registry
Broward County Emergency Management Division
201 NW 84th Ave., Plantation, FL 33324

Children

Special Needs Registry
Florida Department of Health in Broward County
780 SW 24th St., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315
or fax pediatric application to 954-767-5155.

For more information visit:

www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/index.html.

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