

## **ORANGE COUNTY PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM**

The People with Special Needs Program (PSN) is designed for any Orange County resident or visitor that during times of disaster evacuation has no other alternative and/or requires transportation assistance to evacuate their home and/or has a health/medical condition that requires medical attention by skilled medical professional in a shelter environment.

### **Who is eligible and how does someone register?**

Any Orange County resident who meets the established eligibility criteria may register. Each registrant should update their information annually or as the registrant's needs change.

Registration forms can be obtained by calling one of the following:

- People with Special Needs Registration Line (407) 650-4047
- Orange Co. Office of Emergency Management (407) 836-9140
- Area Senior Social Service Agencies
- Area Home Health Care Agencies
- Area Hospice Agencies
- Area Medical Equipment Suppliers

Information collected during the registration process is confidential by law and will only be give to emergency responders who may provide for the registrant's needs during an emergency.

### **What other services does the PSN Program provide?**

The PSN program provides emergency preparedness information to special needs citizens throughout the year by participating in community events. In addition, persons registered with the PSN Program receive emergency preparedness information annually. PSN Program staff is also available for community presentations.

The PSN Program is also responsible for the management of Special Needs Shelters during times of disaster by deploying the necessary equipment and staff utilized to operate a Special Needs Shelter.

The PSN Program partners with local emergency responder agencies to ensure that residences of persons housed in a Special Needs shelter are safe for them to return home. In addition, the PSN Program provides information on disaster related services that may be needed.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Where will I go if I must evacuate my home?**

Orange County has designated Special Needs shelter sites. Residents are encouraged to monitor their local television and radio stations for emergency/event information. A shelter site may not be utilized for every emergency situation; citizens are encouraged to monitor their local television and radio stations for specific shelter openings and locations.

In addition, persons registered with the PSN program will be notified of Special Needs shelter openings by phone. You will receive an automated message providing you with information on sheltering and

transportation. A public service announcement will also be made on the radio and television set, specifically announcing "Special Needs" shelter locations. You will be asked to call 407-836-3111 should you require special needs sheltering or transportation. **This phone number should only be used during times of disaster.** You will not automatically be picked up if you are registered with the PSN Program you will need to contact us to make arrangements for transportation. If possible, you should try to make arrangements with family or friends for transportation.

**What should I bring if I decide to go to a shelter?**

If you have no other alternatives and need to seek refuge at a shelter, you must bring with you a minimal number of supplies for your stay at the shelter.

These include:

- Identification Card
- Medical Identification Card
- Daily prescriptions (2-week supply)
- Non-prescription medicines (2-week supply)
- Non-perishable food and water
- Blanket, pillow, folding chair or cot
- Change of clothing and personal toiletries
- Other special items such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, prosthetic devices, walkers, special dietary foods, etc.
- Medical supplies that you utilize on a daily basis, this includes any portable oxygen, cannula, diabetes testing kit, nebulizer, etc.
- A book, magazine or something to occupy your time while you wait for the storm to pass.

The American Red Cross and/or Salvation Army provide the food for persons at shelters. You are encouraged to bring snacks and bottled water with you.

In addition, please bring the names, addresses and telephone numbers of family and friends should you need to contact them or to provide information of your whereabouts. Also, leave your porch light on; this will assist the authorities that drive around after the storm to indicate that you have electricity.

Firearms and weapons of any kind are not permitted at any American Red Cross or Special Needs shelters.

**Can I bring my family to the Special Needs shelter? Can they stay with me?**

Persons seeking sheltering are encouraged to bring a caretaker with them to the Special Needs shelter. Your family will be allowed in the Special Needs shelter with you. Please ensure to bring bedding and supplies for them as well.

**Can I bring my pets?**

Pets are not allowed in Special Needs or American Red Cross Shelters. Orange County has some pet friendly shelters for information regarding these shelters contact Orange Co. Animal Services at 407-352-4390 or contact your vet to make arrangements for boarding your pet.

Only certified service animals and guide dogs will be allowed in Special Need Shelters. Please remember to bring enough water and food for your service animal or guide dog.

**Do I need to register if I am a resident of a nursing home, convalescent and retirement home, or adult congregate living facility?**

Residents of nursing homes, convalescent and retirement homes, or adult congregate living facilities are responsible for the evacuation of their own patients and must have emergency plans to handle these types of situations.

**Why can't I go to a hospital instead of a Special Needs Shelter?**

Local hospital must maintain the capability to provide for the needs of the very sick or those with life-threatening injuries. Unless you have a life threatening health/medical condition requiring continuous medical attention, you should go to a designated American Red Cross or Special Needs Shelter.

**How long should I plan on staying?**

You should plan on staying for the duration of the event or until it is safe to leave.

**When can I go home?**

You will be able to leave the shelter as soon as it is safe for you to return home. Prior to leaving the shelter your home will be assessed for damage by a damage assessment team.

**What else can I do to prepare for a hurricane or other disaster?**

Create a personal disaster plan. Identify the specific hazards that threaten your community (e.g. hurricanes, tornados, flooding) in your area and learn about your community response and evacuation plans. Identify escape routes and safe places. In a fire or other emergency, you may need to evacuate on a moment's notice. Be sure everyone in your family knows the best escape routes out of your home as well as where the safe places are in your home for each type of disaster (i.e. if a tornado approaches go to an interior room or closet with no windows). Your plan should include contact information for family, friends and members of your support network. You should also include the phone number of an out of town contact.

Plan for your pets. Be aware that pets (other than service animals) are not permitted in the Special Needs Shelter. Prepare a list of family, friends, boarding facilities, and veterinarians that could shelter your pets in an emergency.

Assemble a disaster kit for your home. The following should be included in your basic disaster supplies kit:

- 1-week supply of nonperishable food and manual can opener. Include special foods that you require.
- 1-week supply of water (one gallon of water per person, per day).
- Prescription and non-prescription medications (enough for 2-weeks). The name and phone number of the pharmacy where you have your medications filled.
- Portable, battery-powered radio or television and extra batteries.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.

- First aid kit and manual.
- Sanitation and hygiene items (hand sanitizer, toilet paper or any special items that your require).
- Changes of clothing
- Pillow and Blanket/Sleeping Bag.
- Photocopies of identification, credit cards and important documents.
- A list of your physicians and their phone numbers.
- A list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of family and friends should you need to contact for assistance in evacuating, sheltering or to provide information of your whereabouts.
- Cash and coins (small denominations).
- Special needs items such eyeglasses, hearing aid and batteries, etc.
- Extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, medication, medical supplies or other equipment you might need. The name and phone number of your medical/oxygen equipment provider.
- The name, address and phone number of the person (i.e. veterinarian, friend of relative) with whom you have made prior arrangements to care for your pet(s) should you have to evacuate.

Review the contents of your disaster supplies kit at least once per year or as your family's needs change. Check food and water supplies and medication for expiration dates and rotate or replace every 6 months. Being prepared and knowing what to do is your best protection.

**Can I still seek refuge at a Special Needs shelter if I am not registered with the PSN Program?**

Yes, you will need to call us at 407-836-3111 when shelter openings are announced on your television or radio. You will be triaged by phone and your level for Special Needs sheltering will be determined.