

## HOW TO PRE-PLAN FOR A HURRICANE

ALL residents are strongly encouraged to pre-plan early to evacuate the area when necessary. Your safest evacuation choices include staying with relatives or friends out of the evacuation area, checking into a hotel/motel, or admission to a medical facility. Where you can best be supported during a hurricane should be a joint decision of your physician, home health agency, caregiver, family and you. The following information is to assist you in making a decision concerning your care.

- Determine if you need to evacuate from the risk of hurricane flooding or wind. Your local emergency management office can help you with this step.
- Determine your evacuation destination. Consider a relative or friend's house, a hotel, or an emergency shelter. Be sure the location you choose is out of the risk area. Plan several alternatives.
- Arrange for transportation to your evacuation location. Plan an alternate source of transportation (i.e. taxi, friend).
- Travel your evacuation route including all stops. It may take 3 to 4 times longer during an actual evacuation. Plan to leave early.
- If you live in a safe area, call a friend or relative at risk and offer them shelter.
- Make arrangements for help in protecting your property and personal possessions from storm damage.
- Make sure you have a flashlight and a battery operated radio in the event of a power failure. Acquire extra batteries.

- Consider purchasing a weather alert radio with an automatic alarm system to warn you of severe weather.
- Give a relative or friend a copy of your evacuation plan. Give your insurance agent an emergency telephone number or address.
- Give any social agency you regularly visit an emergency telephone number. This will help ensure continued service.
- If you need prescription medicine, keep at least a two-week (preferably a one-month) supply on-hand during the hurricane season.
- If you are dependent on special life support equipment, you must plan ahead to secure emergency electrical power. The power could be out for several days or weeks depending on the severity of the storm and your location.
- If you are dependent on an electric wheelchair, purchase extra batteries. Keep spare batteries fully charged during hurricane season.
- If you are dependent on oxygen, acquire a portable unit & extra supply of oxygen.

### EMERGENCY PUBLIC SHELTERS

Emergency Public Shelters are places to go if you have no other choice. There is no need to register for an Emergency Shelter unless you need transportation to that shelter. A shelter is usually a concrete block structure, located outside of the storm surge area, used for protecting residents who reside in vulnerable areas and structures. It is not a hospital, nursing home or hotel. Emergency Shelters available under emergency conditions will accept anyone who is self-sufficient and needs no outside professional assistance in performing activities of daily living.

### SPECIAL CARE SHELTER

Registration officially turns off when Lee County falls into the 5 day forecast cone.

Lee County sponsors Special Care Shelters, which are opened on an "as needed" basis. You must be pre-registered and verify which Special Care Shelters have been opened before evacuating.

These shelters are available for individuals who require assistance with activities of daily living. Only basic medical assistance and monitoring will be available. Special Care Shelters are not equipped with advanced medical equipment or medications, or staffed to provide advanced medical care. (*Space is limited so sign up well before hurricane season.*)

**If you need 24-hour skilled nursing care or are electricity dependent for life support, you are not a good candidate for a Special Care Shelter.**

Oxygen will be provided and concentrators are not necessary. Registrants need to bring portable oxygen units with extra oxygen if available.

A caregiver must accompany all residents, as the volunteer medical staff will be unfamiliar with your medical condition and treatment.

If assigned to a waiting list due to limited space (this is very likely), you can go to an Emergency Public Shelter, motel or get out of town. However, oxygen is not provided at an Emergency shelter, so if oxygen dependent you can: 1) talk to your oxygen supplier about getting a system that works by pressure which does not require electricity, so you can stay at home if you do not have to evacuate; 2) go to a hotel; 3) leave town; or 4) talk to your doctor about making other arrangements.

### HOSPITAL

If your **physician** has decided that you need to be cared for in a hospital during an evacuation, he/she needs to arrange pre-admittance prior to evacuation.

You will need a letter/script from your doctor's office stating you are to be taken to a specific (in-County) hospital and that arrangements have been made with the facility for admittance. These letters/scripts are valid for the current year only, so you must get a new letter/script each year to be admitted to the hospital.

This letter/script must accompany you when you are evacuated. You must also attach a copy to your application in order to be registered.

**If you are not on our pre-approved list, hospitals will not accept you!**

A hospital will not accept anyone without a caregiver. No sleeping arrangements will be made for your caregiver (they must bring their own medications, sleeping cot or bag, food & money with them).

Hospitals will not accept you until there is an official evacuation ordered by the County.

Upon that evacuation order, you can enter through the hospital's Emergency Room.

**Medicare will only pay for hospitalization claims that are deemed medically necessary. Therefore, arrangements must be made in advance.**

## REGISTRATION

For Special Care Shelter or Hospital registration, and/or if you need transportation, complete the Lee County Special Care Shelter Application Form, sign and return it to the address at top of the form.

If your doctor determines you need to be evacuated to a hospital, include a copy of doctor's note/script (new script each year) and take the original with you if evacuated. All final shelter assignments are determined by the Health Department.

Call our office (239) 477-3640 with questions.

Because Lee County cannot guarantee transportation, we suggest you provide your own to an Emergency or Special Care Shelters or to a Hospital. Transportation is not provided from your residence to other private homes, hotels, etc., or outside of the County.

**The only animals allowed in shelters are service animals. Pets are NOT permitted in public shelters or Special Care Shelters, so make arrangements in advance for your pets.**

## AS A STORM APPROACHES...

- ❑ Listen to a local radio or television station for official emergency information and evacuation information.
- ❑ Make contact with individuals from whom you will need assistance.
- ❑ Confirm with friends/family/caregiver your need for transportation assistance, arrange for it now on a stand-by basis.
- ❑ Check your emergency supplies.
- ❑ Check your supply of medical items. Refill any prescription drugs that have less than a two-week supply remaining.
- ❑ Obtain a supply of cash. It may be several days or weeks before the banks will reopen in the event of a major hurricane.

- ❑ Place important papers (insurance policies, medical information, etc.) in a plastic bag. Take these with you if you evacuate.
- ❑ Gather emergency supplies to take to the public shelter.
- ❑ Call friends or relatives and remind them of your hurricane plans.
- ❑ Protect your property and personal possessions from the wind and water that accompany a hurricane. Call a friend, neighbor or relative for assistance if needed.

## IF ORDERED TO EVACUATE

- ❑ Confirm the evacuation order with a neighbor, if possible. Do not listen to rumors. Listen to the news media for official announcements.
- ❑ Pack your emergency shelter supplies, medical supplies, important papers, etc.
- ❑ Call for transportation assistance if necessary.
- ❑ Once an evacuation is announced, you can call either 477-3600 or 477-3640 to verify if the evacuation order is in effect for your location.
- ❑ If you registered with the Lee County Special Care Shelter Program and advised that you can provide your own transportation, you will not receive a phone call to evacuate. If you pre-registered with us for transportation, you will be called. Once notified, you must be ready to evacuate when your transportation arrives.
- ❑ Turn off your electrical power at the main box except for the refrigerator and freezer.
- ❑ Secure any valuables in a safe location or take them with you.
- ❑ Let someone know where you are going.

NOTE: People with special needs who need a ride to a shelter and do not register before Lee County enters into the 5 day forecast cone will need to go to a bus stop. LeeTran will transport to the Special Care Shelter, where the staff will determine if they will remain or be sent to an Emergency Shelter.

**Therefore, it is important to pre-register before any storms are approaching! Have your Plan AND a back-up Plan! Lee County Special Care Shelter Program should be considered your back-up plan.**

## WHAT TO BRING TO SHELTERS

If you evacuate to an Emergency Public Shelter, consider bringing the following items:

- Medications (in original bottles)
- Medical support equipment (wheelchairs, dressings, feeding equipment, etc.)
- Name & phone number of your doctor, home health agency, hospital, next of kin
- ID & valuable papers
- Food for special dietary needs
- Personal hygiene items & change of clothes
- Lawn chair or cot, blanket or sleeping bag, radio, can opener and a flashlight
- Non-perishable food, snacks, drinks and bottled water
- Cash for purchases after a disaster

**If you require oxygen, you need to register to be admitted in a Special Care Shelter.**

**Remember, Special Care Shelters do not allow smoking, guns, alcohol, or pets.**

## WHAT TO DO AFTER THE STORM

Listen to local radio or television announcements for official information. Do not return to your home unless you are self-sufficient. Social agencies will need time to reopen their facilities. Remember, emergencies bring out the best and worst in people. Be cautious and be patient!

**For additional information on hurricane preparedness planning, contact Lee County Emergency Management at (239) 477-3600.**

<http://www.leeoc.com/>

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# Hurricane Planning

## For People with Special Needs



## Hurricane Shelter & Transportation Guidelines & Registration

**Registration officially turns off when Lee County falls into the 5 day forecast cone.**

Prepared in cooperation with:

Lee County  
Health Department

Lee County Public Safety  
Emergency Management Program



Lee County  
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA