

Persons With Disabilities

Disabilities

It is especially important for individuals with disabilities to be prepared before an emergency occurs. Emergency plans must fit everyone's unique circumstances. In addition to the preparation steps recommended on [Broward.org/Hurricane](https://www.broward.org/Hurricane), individuals with disabilities and/or their caregivers may need to take extra measures to increase self-reliance and ensure safety. All public shelters are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible.

Sensory Disabilities – individuals with hearing or visual limitations

- Accommodations for individuals with hearing or visual limitations are available in all public shelters.
- When you seek emergency preparedness and response information from your government, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), gives you the right to request this information in alternate formats (e.g. Braille, audiotape, large font, etc.) You may have to wait a reasonable time while an alternate format document is prepared.
- Find out if fire alarms at your workplace or where you live are visual (flashing strobe lights) as well as audible.
- Consider purchasing a National Weather Radio. The radio turns itself on and emits an audible alarm in response to a message from the National Weather Service about a natural or manmade hazard. It can also emit a visual strobe alarm and connect to other devices to shake a pillow or bed.
- Service animals are permitted in General Population Shelters so long as the pet meets the requirements under Federal law. Visit [ADA Requirements for Service Animals](https://www.broward.org/ADA-Requirements-for-Service-Animals) for additional information.
- During an emergency, Broward County press conferences from the Emergency Operations Center will be broadcast on television with sign language interpretation and webcast on [Broward.org/hurricane](https://www.broward.org/hurricane).
- Have a battery-powered radio so you can listen to a local radio station for the latest emergency information.

Mobility Disabilities – individuals who generally use wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes or other devices to assist in mobility

- Accommodation for people with mobility disabilities are available in all General Population Shelters, including transfer assistance.
- Consider purchasing a small bag to hold essentials that you can attach to your wheelchair or walker.

Developmental or Cognitive Disabilities – individuals with disorders that may impact ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, do math or follow instructions.

- Accommodation for people with developmental or cognitive disabilities are available in a General Population Shelter.
- Develop a simple plan for evacuation and put copies in several places so you can find it easily.
- Practice your evacuation route out of your home and workplace until it is ingrained in your memory.
- Disasters increase stress and your coping skills may be adversely impacted. Try to find outlets for stress and creative solutions to problems.

Tips for Caregivers

In the days following a hurricane or other emergency, a caregiver may be separated from the individual they care for. Family members or other individuals or agencies may be required to step in to fill the care gap. Caregivers can facilitate this process by providing thorough information on the elderly or disabled resident's needs.

- Prepare a written, detailed description of the kind of care the individual is accustomed to receiving.
- Include specific information about special supplies the individual may need, such as medication, extra clothing and personal hygiene or incontinence products.
- Create an hour-by-hour description of a typical 24-hour day, including:
 - How the individual spends his or her time, and what is needed at each point at the time of the day.
 - The location of equipment and supplies required to meet those needs.
 - Information about the individual's eating and sleeping habits and preferences.

- Include tips for helping the individual reduce stress and remain calm.
 - Does talking or singing help? Is there a special story or song?
 - What possessions bring comfort (blanket, stuffed animal, etc.)?
 - Where can they be found?
 - When is medication needed to help calm the individual?
 - Who is the individual most comfortable with if you are unavailable and how can they be contacted?
- Suggest a substitute caregiver in case you are unavailable or unable to provide care for an extended period.