

Local Shelter Issues

Shelter Space

There is a substantial shelter space deficit throughout Connecticut. So, if you have a safe place to go, plan to use that location instead of a Public Shelter. But, if you have no safe place to go, shelters will be open. Here are some important points to remember if you choose to go to a public shelter:

When you arrive give your name and address to the shelter manager so you can be located, if necessary. If you leave the shelter, check out with the shelter manager. Accountability is important for your safety.

Shelters are not able to provide any conveniences or luxuries. They are not hotels! Food and water will be available, but there may be a slight delay in initial service. If you want or need special food items, bring them with you! Bring your family's disaster survival kit to ensure proper provisions. Below are some items you should consider bringing when going to a shelter:

- Drinking Water (Initially)
- Snacks or special foods
- Lawn chair or bed roll
- Book or electronic entertainment item with head phones
- Change of clothing

Remember weapons and alcoholic beverages are not permitted. The only animals allowed are service animals.

People with Special Needs

Some people have medical issues that cannot be accommodated in a regular public shelter. For those people whose health would quickly and dramatically deteriorate in a public shelter and have no other safe place to go, there are Special Care shelters available.

You must contact the Emergency Operations Center to see if your medical issues qualify for a Special Care shelter. There are specific criteria and requirements to be eligible for the Special Care shelter, which may vary somewhat from town to town. You must have a caregiver with you during your stay at the Special Care

shelter. During an emergency we have very limited staff working in the shelters, so your caregiver is critically important for your health and safety.

There is limited hospital sheltering for people who are extremely high risk and cannot survive outside a hospital environment. Your physician must recommend hospital sheltering and give specific details of your medical situation. You may be responsible for fees associated with hospital sheltering. As at any other shelter, you must bring your emergency supplies with you. In any emergency situation you should have a plan for where you will go if you cannot return to your home because of damage.

People with Disabilities

Estimates vary, but as many as one in four people live with some type of disability. Sometimes signs are obvious, a wheelchair, a guide dog or a cane. However, many times a disability is not obvious. Whether obvious or not, awareness and sensitivity toward persons with disabilities makes good sense.

Practicing disability etiquette is an easy way to help people with disabilities feel more welcome and comfortable. Here are a few things anyone can do to make a person with a disability feel more at ease in any situation. Remember, a person with a disability is a person first. Ask before you help. Don't assume a person with a disability needs your help with a task. If you are asked for help, be sure to ask what kind of assistance is needed. Be sensitive regarding personal space and physical contact. Respect personal space and remember that people often consider their equipment part of their person. Think before you speak. Speak to the person, not their aide or companion. Converse with a person with a disability as you would any other person. Get permission from a parent or guardian before interacting with children.

People with disabilities must assume personal responsibility and be prepared for an emergency. The basic steps of a personal safety plan are the same for everyone. Where will you go? How will you get there? What will you take? How much time will you need? How will you communicate with those who need to know? With minor modifications, the information in this Guide is applicable to everyone. You must take responsibility for yourself in an emergency. Part of any plan is to identify and use all available resources. If you need help or have questions, contact your local Emergency Management agency. There are people and tools to help you become better prepared.

Protect your Pets

In a hurricane, pets are subject to the same hazards as we are and have many of the same needs. Remember, Public Shelters do not permit pets! The best plan is to identify a safer location that allows pets (e.g. a friend's home or hotel). That way, you can keep your pets with you when you evacuate. Check the Internet to help locate hotels that accept pets. You should also have a supply kit for your pets. Include non-perishable food, water and medications. Keep a sturdy cage or carrier to comfortably hold your pet and/or a collar and leash. Make sure all vaccinations are up-to-date and keep a copy of the records. Also keep several good photos to help identify your pet should you become separated. Place identification on your pet's collar or consider using a microchip to identify your pet. Consult your veterinarian for more details.

ITEMS TO REMEMBER:

- Never leave your pet(s) outside during a storm
- Never leave a cat with a dog, even if the two are friends
- Confine and keep small pets (birds, hamsters, etc.) away from cats and dogs
- Dangerous animals should be secured in special crates or cages