

# Super Seniors News *June 2011 Newsletter*

Dear Friends,

This issue of Super Senior News will be dedicated to “Hurricane Preparedness.” Hurricane Season officially begins June 1st and ends November 30th. Now is the time to develop a hurricane plan and prepare your hurricane kits. Don’t wait until the last minute. Be prepared with the supplies and equipment you will need to ensure your health and safety, in order to minimize the disruptions that may occur to your daily lives after a storm hits

Sincerely,

*Jacquelyn W. Gibson*

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## Hurricane Planning Tips for Seniors

Seniors are especially susceptible to the effects of a hurricane. Those who live alone or are without support of family or friends must take special precautions in the event of an emergency situation. People who are frail or disabled may need special assistance from family, friends or social service agencies. Advanced preparation is essential for seniors and people with special needs. Therefore, it is important to have a plan in place:

- Determine with whom you will stay in the event evacuation is necessary. Select family or friends who are unlikely to be evacuated from their homes and obtain their commitment for you to be housed with them.
- Make arrangements for transportation in the event of evacuation. If family or friends are going to transport you, be sure they can accommodate any equipment or supplies. Also, be assured they will transport you well in advance of hurricane warnings.
- In the event of a warning, notify someone of your whereabouts and your intentions, should you need to evacuate.
- Have any special provisions at the home in which you will be staying at the beginning of hurricane season.

- Make sure you have an ID bracelet to wear with your name, medications, and contact information on it. This information can also be printed on an armband.
- Transfer to a manual wheelchair if you are on a battery operated one. You may not be able to recharge the batteries. Purchase extra batteries if you must use a battery operated chair.
- If you have special needs, register with the Special Needs and Emergency Evacuation Assistance Program (PSN/EENP.) Applications are available in English, Creole and Spanish. They maybe requested by calling 3-1-1, or you can download them from the following website: [www.miamidade.gov/oem](http://www.miamidade.gov/oem).
- If you are staying at home, have someone to stay with you.
- Take refuge in an interior hallway or a smaller room with no windows like a closet near load-bearing walls.
- Stock your “must-have supplies in the safe room.
- Use only battery-operated lamps or flashlights (no candles).
- Gas up your car well in advance and keep it in good repair.

**Disaster Planning Tips for Senior Adults1**

Carolyn S. Wilken2

Disaster Planning Topics	Special Tips for Senior Adults
Water – 1 gallon/person/day. Store at least 3-7 days worth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dehydration is a serious health problem for older adults. Store more than the recommended amount.</li> <li>• Gallon jugs of water are heavy. Use containers that are small enough to easily handle.</li> <li>• Be certain that the caps are easily removable in spite of arthritis.</li> <li>• Store extra water if you have pets.</li> <li>• Water in swimming pools and spas can be used for sanitation and person hygiene.</li> </ul>
Food –store a 3-7 day supply of non-perishable food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider special dietary needs.</li> <li>• Have a manual can opener that you can use.</li> </ul>
First Aid Kit –one for home and one for the car	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add anything different that you might need.</li> </ul>
Non-prescription drugs – include pain relief, stomach medicine, and poison response drugs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep several day’s worth of all vitamins and supplements that you use daily. Withdrawal of some supplements can be a serious problem.</li> </ul>
Contacts -to notify in an emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All doctors names, phone numbers, addresses and what they treat you for (i.e. cardiologist)</li> <li>• In-town relatives or close friends (all phone numbers)</li> <li>• Out-of town relatives or close friends (all phone numbers)</li> </ul>
Important papers – insurance, birth/death certificates, bank account and credit card information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And, Medicare and/or Medicaid cards</li> <li>• Living will and medical power of attorney</li> <li>• Veteran’s papers</li> </ul>

Disaster Planning Topics	Special Tips for Senior Adults
Time passers –board games, puzzles, books, paper and pens for letters and notes, envelopes and stamps, playing cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paperback books weigh less than hardcover</li> </ul>
Medical Needs –first aid kit, extra glasses, names of doctors, information about prescription medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also, extra hearing aid batteries</li> <li>• Wheel chair batteries</li> <li>• List of serial numbers and styles of medical devices (i.e. pacemakers).</li> <li>• Information on all prescription drugs-dosage, directions, interactions, refill dates.</li> <li>• Minimum 2 week supply of all essential medications</li> </ul>
People with special needs - who require daily skilled nursing care, assistance with daily living, or have life-saving medical equipment dependent on electricity should register for in Special Needs & Emergency Evacuation Program (PSN/EEP). Request application by calling 3-1-1 or download from the following website: www.miamidade.gov/oem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alzheimer’s Victims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Register with local police/fire departments</li> <li>o ID bracelet or necklace</li> <li>o Instructions for reaching family member, friends, physician</li> <li>o Information about special or peculiar behaviors</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Diabetics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Special dietary foods</li> <li>o Testing supplies</li> <li>o Emergency insulin supplies that do not require refrigeration</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Bed-Bound Persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Emergency transportation plan</li> <li>o Supplies of daily care items –bed pads, adult diapers, linens</li> <li>o Dietary needs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Oxygen Dependent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Oxygen supplies (including alternate power source –such as battery).</li> <li>o Extra water for oxygen condensers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Emotional Support/ Stress Reduction- Special pictures, spiritual support, comfort food, addresses and phone numbers of friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a journal about your experience.</li> <li>• Form informal ‘support group’ to share concerns and information.</li> <li>• Write letters to your grandchildren or other family and friends.</li> </ul>
Evacuation or move to shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider backpacks to put supplies in if you must evacuate or move to a shelter</li> <li>• Prearrange transportation with neighbors</li> </ul>

## References:

### Psychosocial Issues for Older Adults in Disasters

DHHS Publication No. ESDRB SMA 99-3323

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Center for Mental Health Services



### Disaster Preparedness for Seniors by Seniors

Available from your local chapter of the American Red Cross, or online at

<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/seniors.html>

## Evacuation Checklist



No one ever wants to evacuate, but sometimes it is the best thing to do. If you are ordered to evacuate, do so immediately. Remember if you are being ordered to evacuate, it is because authorities have decided that your life is in danger. Seek shelter outside of the evacuation zone, such as at the home of a family or friend. Go to one of the Hurricane Evacuation Centers as a last resort.

### Here are Some Things to Keep In Mind as You Evacuate

- Leave a note saying where you are going
- Lock your home
- Take your hurricane evacuation kit



### Before You Leave

- Know your evacuation route and follow directions
- Make arrangements for pets
- Let an out-of-town relative or friend know your plans
- Turn off your electricity and water
- Bring in or secure outdoor items that may blow around in strong winds (garbage cans, barbecue grills, children's toys, lawn furniture)
- Turn your refrigerator and freezer to the coldest settings
- Fill bathtubs, washing machines, and other containers with water
- Prepare your evacuation kit
- Fill your car with gas

### Evacuation Kit

- Battery-operated radio or hand-crank
- At least a 2-week supply of medication
- Extra clothing, including sturdy shoes
- First aid kit
- Blankets and pillows
- Books and toys
- Important papers
- Drinking water
- Snacks
- Cash
- Cell phone with chargers
- Extra batteries

**Source:** UF/IFAS Extension Solutions for Your Life website: <http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/>

## Emergency Preparedness Prescription Medication Refills



Section 29 of Florida Chapter Law 06-71 requires all health insurers, managed care organizations and other entities that are licensed by the Office of Insurance Regulation and provide prescription medication coverage as part of a policy or contract to waive time restrictions on prescription medication refills. This requirement includes suspending electronic "refill too soon" edits to pharmacies.

The law enables those who are insured or are subscribers of prescriptions medication plans to refill prescriptions in advance of a hurricane. To do this there must be authorized refills remaining for the prescription medication. The law authorizes payment to pharmacies for at least a 30-day supply of any prescription medication.

It does not matter when a pharmacist most recently filled the prescription.

### This law is in effect under the following conditions:

1. The person seeking the prescription medication refill must live in a county that:
  - Is under a hurricane warning issued by the National Weather Service; or
  - Is declared to be under a state of emergency in an executive order issued by the Governor; or
  - Has activated its emergency operations center and its emergency management plan.
2. The prescription medication refill must be requested within 30 days
  - After any of the conditions listed above (in section 1) occur; or
  - Until these conditions are terminated by the authority that issued the conditions; or
  - When these conditions no longer exist.

- The time period for the waiver of prescription medication refills may be extended in 15- or 30- day increments by emergency orders issued by the Office of Insurance Regulation.

This law became effective July 1, 2006. To read the law in its entirety, go to: [http://laws.flrules.org/files/Ch\\_2006-071.pdf](http://laws.flrules.org/files/Ch_2006-071.pdf)

Source: Elder Update Special Edition—Disaster Preparedness Guide for Elders, 2009

### Assuring the Safety of Your Pets



Whatever plans you make for yourself, remember to include your pets. If you're riding out the storm in the home of a family member, friend or neighbor, take your pets with you. If you need to go to an evacuation center, Miami-Dade County has **Pet-Friendly Hurricane Evacuation Centers**. For the application and instructions on accessing these centers, please visit [www.miamidade.gov/animals](http://www.miamidade.gov/animals).

If you have no alternative but to leave your pet at home, there are some **precautions you must take**. Confine your pet to a safe area inside—never leave your pet outside! Provide them with bedding and leave them food and plenty of water. Place a notice that is protected in clear plastic, outside in a visible area. It should advise what pets are in the house and where they are located. Your notice should also provide the number where you or a contact can be reached, and the name and phone number of your vet.

#### In addition:

- Make sure all vaccines and shots are up to date
- Place I.D. tags on appropriate collars
- Having the pet micro-chipped or tattooed by your vet helps ensure reunification if lost.

### Assemble a Portable Pet Disaster Supply Kit

Whether you are away from home for a day or a week, you'll need essential supplies. Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers that can be carried easily (duffle bags, covered trash containers, etc.) Your pet disaster supply kit should include.



Medications and medical records (stored in a waterproof container) and a first aid kit.



Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals can't escape.



Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.



Food, potable water, bowls, cat litter/pan, and can opener.



Information on feeding schedule, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.



Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable.



### Important Phone Numbers & Web Addresses



#### 9-1-1 Emergencies

#### Federal Emergency

#### Management Agency

#### 3-1-1 Government Information

1-800-621-FEMA (3362)

Toll-free outside Miami-Dade County

TDD: 800-462-7585

1-888-311 Dade (3233)

[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

TTY/TDD: 305-468-5402

#### 2-1-1 Family Social Services

#### Florida Power and Light

TTY: 305-644-9449

1-800-4-OUTAGE (1-800-468-8243)

7-1-1 (hearing impaired)

[www.fpl.com](http://www.fpl.com)

#### American Red Cross

#### AT&T

305-644-1200

1-888-757-6500

[www.miamiredcross.org](http://www.miamiredcross.org)

TDD: 305-780-2273

6-1-1 (repairs)

#### Miami-Dade Department of Emergency Management

#### Food safety during emergencies

[www.miamidade.gov/oem](http://www.miamidade.gov/oem)

[www.foodsafety.gov/keep](http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep)

305-468-5400

#### Miami-Dade Alerts

Don't be the last to know when a hurricane is coming. Sign up for weather advisories with Miami-Dade Alerts. Find out more at <http://miamidade.gov/wps/portal/Main/safety>.