

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Ron DeSantis  
Governor

Scott A. Rivkees, MD  
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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## Information Regarding the Escambia County Florida Special Needs Registry and Public Shelter Program

The Florida Division of Emergency Management operates a [Florida Special Needs Registry](https://snr.floridadisaster.org/Signin?ReturnUrl=%2f) website at <https://snr.floridadisaster.org/Signin?ReturnUrl=%2f>. This provides for pre-disaster registration that allows residents with special needs to register with their local emergency management agency to receive assistance during a disaster such as a hurricane. A person with special needs is someone who would need assistance during evacuations and sheltering because of physical, mental, cognitive impairment, or sensory disabilities. Registrants will be required to update/review their registration each year by the anniversary of their registration to remain on the registry and to revalidate their eligibility and transportation needs.

Before a disaster occurs, it is recommended that persons with special needs first consult with their personal physician to discuss all the options to address their personal medical needs prior to disaster evacuation and the potential option of evacuation from this area versus seeking access to sheltering including a General Population Shelter, a Special Needs Shelter (SpNS), or other suitable healthcare facility. This may include: having a month's supply of their prescriptions always available; arranging for special medical equipment; and, their potential admittance to a licensed healthcare facility.

If you decide to evacuate out of this area before disaster impacts our community, making plans now is the most important action you can take. You may plan to stay with a friend or family member further inland or even stay at a local or out of town hotel/motel which may offer more comfortable and potentially safer options.

Most individuals who are not electrical or oxygen dependent are suitable for General Population Shelters. Escambia County has pre-identified General Population Shelters for those with no other options should they not meet the minimum medical qualifications for the SpNS. These shelters provide no medical support or care other than basic first aid. Individuals may visit the website at <https://myescambia.com/our-services/public-safety/beready/hurricane-shelters/evacuation-shelter-list> to see the pre-identified list of disaster shelters. They should listen to local news information for the announcements as to which shelters will be opened and when. Not all shelters will be opened in every disaster situation. Please see the **FDOH-Escambia Levels of Care for the Special Needs Shelter** document at <http://escambia.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/public-health-preparedness/special-needs-shelter/documents/level-of-care-for-spns.pdf> for medical conditions that are appropriate for a General Population Shelter.

For those individuals requiring additional medical care, the Special Needs Shelter services the community on a first-come, first-served basis. During a disaster, decisions on admittance to the SpNS are made upon arriving at the shelter. To assist individuals in determining their medical condition eligibility for admittance to the SpNS, please go to <http://escambia.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/public-health-preparedness/special-needs-shelter/documents/level-of-care-for-spns.pdf>. You should also bring a caregiver with you to assist in your medical care and in meeting your daily needs. The caregiver must remain with the patient the entire time the patient is staying at the SpNS. Medical assessments are NOT conducted at the time of pre-registration. If you need sheltering but do not reach

the level of care provided at a SpNS, then the closest General Population Shelter to their location should be considered. If you exceed the level of care that can be provided at the SpNS, then please discuss with your physician the appropriate shelter facility for them to attend. Any special dietary needs, medications, and medical supplies, along with any specialty bedding/bed must also accompany you to the Special Needs Shelter. There will be no beds available, only cots are provided in limited supply. You can review Special Needs Shelter requirements and a list of items you should bring with you to a public shelter at <https://myescambia.com/our-services/public-safety/beready/shelterqa>.

Should you need transportation assistance evacuating to the public shelters, you may call Escambia County Area Transit (ECAT) bus services when community evacuation orders are issued and at the time you are ready to evacuate to the shelter. When you are ready for pick-up, call ECAT and alert them that you are ready for pick-up and they will include your address in their pick-up route. You can reach their office at 850-595-3228.

There are also many local non-profit and faith-based organization's efforts underway to help assist you prepare to meet your needs in times of emergency. Two such organizations are: Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies (BRACE) (<http://www.bereadyalliance.org/>) which partners with the United Way and United Way's "2-1-1 Northwest Florida". 2-1-1 is an information and referral program that can help connect you to non-profit partner organizations with a variety of services that might be able to assist you. By dialing 2-1-1, they can communicate with trained information specialists 24-hours a day, 7-days a week (alternate number 850-595-5905); or visit [United Way of West Florida](https://www.uwwf.org/2-1-1-northwest-florida) at <https://www.uwwf.org/2-1-1-northwest-florida>.

If you are homebound because of your medical condition at the time of a disaster, BRACE has a [Homebound](http://www.bereadyalliance.org/what-we-do) (<http://www.bereadyalliance.org/what-we-do>) program that may allow its partners to assist you in meeting your disaster-caused emergency needs. BRACE will strive to provide supplementary disaster preparedness information, including reasonable access to training, for persons with special needs by emailing your request to [BRACE@BeReadyAlliance.org](mailto:BRACE@BeReadyAlliance.org) or by calling 850-444-7135.

The better prepared you are today; the easier it will be to get you through a disaster when it happens. All the websites referenced have great preparedness information to help guide you in planning and preparing for the next disaster.

For more information, call (850) 595-6683 Ext 2201.