

Palm Beach County Hurricane Preparation – Special Needs Units

Palm Beach County has established a Special Needs Program to provide for citizens with certain medical problems during a major hurricane. The Special Care Units (also known as SCUs) are facilities that have auxiliary power and are not located in areas that have a high risk of flooding during a hurricane. Physicians and nurses are assigned to the Special Care Units by the Palm Beach County Health Department.

To be eligible for the Special Needs Program, a citizen must:

1. Persons who cannot be without electricity because they depend upon their own electrically energized life support equipment within the home.
2. Persons that are too immobile and/or have a chronic stable illness, but are not suitable for regular shelter placement.
3. Insulin diabetics who depend on refrigeration for their insulin.
4. Persons who are bedridden and require custodial care.

Participation in the Special Needs Program requires registration and an application that must be completed by a doctor. That application must be sent to the Division of Emergency Management, and the Palm Beach County Health Department will determine if the applicant is eligible for the Special Needs Program.

If you do not live in an area which must be evacuated prior to a hurricane and have certain medical problems, there are alternatives to applying for the Special Needs Program:

- talk to your doctor about your sheltering alternatives to the Special Care Units
- install impact-resistant hurricane shutters
- installing or retro-bracing garage doors for resistance to higher winds
- reinforcing roof trusses or roof framing systems
- making arrangements with your oxygen vendor for an adequate supply of portable oxygen cylinders to sustain you in the event you lose electrical service.
- buy a portable electrical generator
- buy insulin that does not require refrigeration (with your doctor's approval)
- designate a safe room such as a bathroom or large interior closet and stock up on supplies (drinking water, non-perishable food, battery-powered radio, etc.)

SPACE AT THE SHELTER IS LIMITED AND PRIORITIZATION IS BASED ON NEED

For further information about the Special Needs Program, call 561-712-6400 and ask to speak to the Special Needs Coordinator.

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