

Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management



Preeti Emrick
Director
7480 Baltimore Annapolis Blvd
Glen Burnie, MD 21061
Phone (410) 222-0600
Fax (410) 222-0690

County Executive Steuart Pittman

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: September 17, 2020
Contact: Preeti Emrick
(410) 222-0600

Anne Arundel County Preparedness Month - Week 3: At-Risk Populations

(Glen Burnie, MD) - Emergencies or disasters such as fires, hurricanes, and snowstorms present a real challenge for all citizens. For the millions of Americans who have physical, medical, sensory or cognitive disabilities, these emergencies or disasters can present additional challenges that may not be easily recognized. At-risk populations are 2-4 times more likely to be injured and/or die in an emergency or disaster due to a lack of planning, accessibility, and accommodation.

At-risk populations include individuals who are physically or mentally disabled (e.g., blind, deaf, hard-of-hearing, have learning disabilities, mental illness or mobility limitations), individuals with limited English language skills, geographically or culturally isolated individuals, homeless individuals, senior citizens, and children. Some individuals may have temporary special needs, as when recovering from surgery or an injury.

Before, during, and after an emergency or disaster, members of at-risk populations may have additional needs, therefore it is essential to have emergency plans in place. To ensure the at-risk populations of Anne Arundel County are prepared for

any emergency or disaster, this Week 3 of Preparedness Month highlights the following topics:

Monday, September 21, 2020 - Access & Functional Needs

- Ask at least two people to be your emergency support network: family members, friends, trusted neighbors, caregivers, coworkers, or community/faith based group members.
- Discuss emergency plans with family members or caregivers taking into consideration special medical needs, mobility issues, communications, evacuation, and service animals.
- Prepare for special considerations like emergency exits, medical equipment, and transportation access.

Tuesday, September 22, 2020 - Preparedness for Older Adults

- Make sure your trusted support providers have an extra key to your home, know where you keep your emergency supplies, and how to use lifesaving equipment or administer medicine.
- Have a one-month supply of prescription medicine on hand and be sure to have two face masks, latex gloves, soap, and hand sanitizer (60%+ alcohol). Have a backup set of eyeglasses, hearing aid batteries, and extra mobility items like a cane or walker.
- If you depend on Social Security or other regular benefits, switching to electronic payments is a simple, significant way to protect yourself financially before disaster strikes. It also eliminates the risk of stolen checks.

Wednesday, September 23, 2020 -Evacuation Planning: Stay or Go?

- Plan how you will leave and where you will go during an evacuation. If you are living in a retirement or assisted living community, learn what procedures are in place in case of emergencies. Keep a copy of exit routes and meeting places in an easy-to-reach place.
- If you are unable to drive yourself, make plans with loved ones, trusted friends, or caregivers to evacuate you to safety outside the impacted area.
- If you use medical equipment or refrigerated medicine in your home that requires electricity, and do not have a reliable generator, consider moving to a location with stable power.
- Don't forget your pets or service animals. Not all shelters accept pets so plan for alternatives, including loved ones or friends outside of your immediate area. Prepare an emergency evacuation kit for your pet/service animal.

Thursday, September 24, 2020 - Assistive Technologies

- If you are deaf or hard of hearing, have extra hearing-aid batteries, a weather radio (with text display and a flashing alert), and a pen and paper (in case you have to communicate with someone who does not know sign language).
- If you are blind or have low vision, mark emergency supplies with Braille labels or large print. Keep communication devices for your particular needs, such as a Braille or deaf-blind communications device as part of your emergency supply kit.
- If you speak a language other than English (including ASL), use a family member or friend as interpreter, or learn to use an online translation application.

Friday, September 25, 2020 - Developmental Disabilities

- Caregivers should teach those with developmental disabilities the family emergency plan, the steps to take if there is a disaster, how to exit the house, how to call for help, and what to do if the family members get separated.
- Make sure your emergency information list notes any communication difficulties, including the best way to communicate with you or your loved one with a developmental disability
- It is the responsibility of an employer to provide emergency procedures in the workplace, to include employees with developmental disabilities.

Saturday, September 26, 2020 - Preparedness Resources

- *Alert Anne Arundel*, the County's free mass notification system, sends preparedness information, warnings, and emergency guidance in multiple languages. To subscribe call 410-222-0600 or click [here](#).
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency provides information and tips in multiple languages for people with disabilities and their caregivers [here](#). This includes closed captioned videos with ASL interpreters.
- Autism Speaks has a practical guide for emergency planning for those with sensory disabilities [here](#)

An alternate format is available upon request. Contact the Office of Emergency Management at 410-222-0600 or oem@aaacounty.org. TTY users, please call via Maryland Relay 7-1-1.

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