

## What is a Special Medical Needs Shelter?

- An emergency shelter with limited support for people with special medical needs and their adult caregivers

## Is medical care provided at Special Medical Needs Shelter?

- Medical care is NOT provided in the special medical needs shelter except in emergency situations
- Medical cots will be provided in the special medical needs shelter
- Hospital beds may not be available at the shelter

## Who can use a Special Medical Needs Shelter?

People who are currently medically stable at home and not requiring hospitalization.

This includes people who

- Have medical conditions that require electricity support and/or
- Use a hospital bed/ specialized medical bed at home

Admission to the shelter is based on your medical needs and on the shelter's capacity to meet those needs. Registration and admission is done at the time of an event. Pre-registration prior to an event is not possible. Only service animals are allowed in the shelter.

## Can I bring my pet with me?

Only service animals are allowed in the shelter.

## Do I need to bring a caregiver with me to the Special Medical Needs Shelter?

- Yes - One family member or adult caregiver must accompany each person who seeks safety in a Special Medical Needs Shelter.
- Only one caregiver is permitted.
- The caregiver must remain with you in the shelter at all times.

### For more information:

SC Emergency Management Division  
[www.scemd.gov](http://www.scemd.gov)

SC DHEC  
1-855-4-SCDHEC  
1-855-472-3432

Or, consult your local telephone directory under the county government listings.



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# Special Medical Needs Shelters

## *A Preparedness Guide*

A circular blue sign with a white arrow pointing diagonally up and to the right. The words "EVACUATION ROUTE" are written in white capital letters across the center of the sign. The sign is set against a background of a road with cars and trees.

EVACUATION  
ROUTE

South Carolina Department of  
Health and Environmental Control

## Plan ahead!

A Special Medical Needs Shelter is a shelter of “last resort.” It is not like a home or hospital. It should be used only when other options are NOT available. If you have special medical needs, it’s best to plan ahead for possible emergencies. Talk to your doctor about the best place for you during a hurricane, storm or other event. Make plans to have one family member or adult caregiver stay with you from the time an evacuation is recommended until it is officially ended. If possible, make plans to stay with family, close friends or in a hotel away from the affected area.

### Examples:

1. If you receive dialysis several times a week, you should identify dialysis centers in other parts of the state. Ask your doctor what you should do if you can’t get to your preferred site. Make arrangements to stay near a dialysis center, either in a hotel, with family members or with friends.
2. If you have heart disease, consider staying with relatives in another part of the state to avoid the stress associated with sharing a small shelter space with others.



## Remember

Shelters should be used only when no other options are available.

## What should I do to prepare if I have to evacuate my home?

Make a list of the items you need to take with you to the shelter and post it where you will be sure to see it before leaving your home. Use this list to help you get started.

### You will need to take:

- ☐ Enough **medications** for seven days. Bring all prescription medications in the original containers even if your supply is low.
- ☐ Enough **medical supplies** for seven days. These are items that you use on a daily basis such as glucometers, syringes, dressings and bandages.
- ☐ **Medical equipment** used at home such as wheelchairs, canes or walkers, hearing aids, and eyeglasses.
- ☐ **Breathing devices** including oxygen concentrators, extra tanks or canisters.
- ☐ Any **special food** items you need.
- ☐ **Personal items** like a toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, diapers and clothing.
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### If you have to use a Special Medical Needs Shelter, remember to:

- Make arrangements with your durable medical equipment company to assure extra canisters or refills can be supplied if you are oxygen dependent. Be sure to bring the name and phone number of your supplier with you.
- Make arrangements with your home health agency to continue services while in the shelter. Have the name and phone number of your home health agency with you.
- Bring blankets, sheets, pillows and folding chairs. Some shelters do not have cots or beds for the caregiver
- Make arrangements with your dialysis center for your next treatment. Bring the name and phone number of the center.
- Bring only one adult caregiver with you to the shelter. The adult caregiver must remain at the shelter for your entire stay.
- Inform family members where you will be during the storm.
- Bring a cell phone and charger if you have one. Your caregiver can make contact with your family members, if needed.
- Ask a relative or friend who lives more than 100 miles away to be your emergency contact person. Bring the name, address and phone number of your contact person.
- Keep in mind that a caller is more likely to connect with a long-distance number outside the disaster area than with a local number within it. Shelter workers will need this information in case of an emergency.