

Special Needs is defined as that population requiring specialized assistance in meeting daily needs and may require special assistance during emergency situations. Individuals may need specially trained health care providers, special facilities equipped to meet their needs, and specialized vehicles and equipment for transport.

The Chatham County Special Needs Plan will be implemented by the Director of the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) with the approval of the Chatham County Chairman, Board of Commissioners in concurrence with the Mayors of the Municipalities and the Director of the Coastal Health District.

1. Persons with special needs are encouraged to be prepared for an evacuation. The following steps are considered a last resort when no other evacuation alternatives are available.

**DO NOT WAIT TO REGISTER  
REGISTRATION IS TAKEN  
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR**

- A. Call the Special Needs Coordinator (SNC) at the Chatham County Health Department, **(912) 356-2441**.
- B. The SNC will request your mailing information.
- C. The SNC will send you a Special Needs Enrollment Form to complete and return to the Health Department.
- D. Or, the Application can be downloaded from the Coastal Health District website at:  
<[www.gachd.org/emergency-preparedness](http://www.gachd.org/emergency-preparedness)>  
and mailed to:

Chatham County Health Department  
Attn: Special Needs Coordinator  
1395 Eisenhower Drive  
Savannah, GA 31406

2. Once the SNC receives the completed Enrollment Form, they will pass the information to the Chatham County Health Department Nursing Section for screening.
  - A. Special Needs persons are categorized into 5 levels. If you meet the criteria of Level 3, 4, or 5 special needs, you will be entered in the Special Needs Registry. You will be notified by phone and in writing of the Care Level you have been assigned.
  - B. If you are not accepted into the Special Needs program, you will be immediately called by the Health Department and advised to make other arrangements for evacuation and sheltering.
  - C. The Special Needs Registry does not include Level 1 or Level 2 clients. If a County Mandatory Evacuation is ordered, Level 1 and 2 clients who do not have personal transportation will be advised to go by any CAT bus to the Civic Center for evacuation to a public shelter.
  - D. If accepted into the Special Needs Registry at Level 3, 4, or 5, you will be advised by the SNC.
  - E. If a mandatory evacuation order is about to happen, you will be advised by the United Way 2-1-1 staff to prepare. As the evacuation begins, you will be called a second time by the United Way staff and told the specific time you will be picked-up by Teleride or, ambulance.

- 1) Level 3 and 4 clients will be taken to a Special Needs Center for evaluation and transportation to a Special Needs shelter.
  - 2) If the Special Needs Center evaluation results in a designation of Level 1 or 2, you will be taken home where you may take a CAT bus to the Civic Center for transportation to shelter.
  - 3) If the evaluation process results in your being designated at Level 5, you will be taken to a local hospital or inland shelter.
- F. Clients accepted at Level 5 will be told that in the event of an evacuation you will be called by the United Way 2-1-1 staff and told the time of pick-up. When you receive the call, you will be told to be prepared to evacuate immediately and will be given a list of things that you must take to the hospital.
3. During an evacuation or unexpected emergency, when there is not enough time for normal registration:
    - A. All requests to be placed on the Special Needs Register will be recorded by the SNC.
    - B. The SNC will refer you to Public Health Nursing for telephone screening.
    - C. When the screening is done, if you are evaluated at Level 1 or 2, you will be told to take a CAT bus to the Civic Center for transportation to shelter.
    - D. If accepted into the Special Needs Registry at Level 3, 4, or 5, you will be told by the SNC and asked to await instructions from United Way 2-1-1.

4. Persons registered in the Special Needs Database will be contacted twice a year to verify their medical condition and update their information.
5. When a storm is about three days (72 hours) from Chatham County, you will be called by United Way 2-1-1 and told:
  - A. That an evacuation is possible.
  - B. To prepare your essential items' kit that includes medications and important documents.
  - C. Be prepared to evacuate within one hour of the next call.
6. You will be picked up by Teleride or by ambulance and taken to a Special Needs Center or local hospital where you will be given a document pouch for use during transportation to your destination.
  - A. Your Registration Form, medical history, allergies record and medications list will be placed in the document pouch.
  - B. Your name will be placed on a Special Needs Tracking Form and you will be given an Identification number. This number, and your name and destination will be placed on a bracelet that you will wear to your destination during the evacuation.
7. Pets will only be allowed at the Special Needs Center if they are in a carrier and you have your pet's current immunization records; or if they are service animals assisting disabled persons (these animals must remain with their owner at all times).

8. Animal Control will provide staff and equipment to temporarily care for animals that are brought to the Center.
9. When reentry is authorized, the evacuation process will be reversed and you will be returned to your home.

**NOTE:**

In the event that a storm is expected to make landfall as a Category 4 or higher hurricane, local hospitals will be forced to evacuate.

Hospital procedures will require they concentrate on the evacuation of existing critically ill patients. They will not accept Level 5 clients. Available assistance will be provided through the Chatham County Emergency Operations Center and both state and local resources will be arranged to evacuate Level 5 clients to inland facilities that can provide the necessary level of care.

**REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY**

**For Registration and Additional Information Contact  
Chatham County Public Health Department  
(912) 356-2441**

**CHATHAM COUNTY  
SPECIAL NEEDS**

**HURRICANE  
EVACUATION  
GUIDELINES**



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
&  
CHATHAM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**