

# Prepare the Elderly For Emergencies

Elderly is a relative term. Some people feel the effects of aging earlier than others. So, each family must determine for itself when it has members who can be categorized as elderly. One definition might be those persons whose faculties, senses, physical or mental capabilities are lessening and assistance from others is often desired or actually needed.

Some points to understand when assisting the elderly during a disaster:

- ❖ It can be more difficult for some of the elderly to understand the significance of what is taking place. Some could become easily confused or disoriented.
- ❖ Many elderly do not want to evacuate even when ordered to do so. They would rather “ride it out” at the home they know and feel comfortable.
- ❖ Their pets are key points in decision making for the elderly. Many will not go to a public shelter because their pet cannot accompany them.
- ❖ Elderly require more planning. They move more slowly and with greater effort than younger people. They are inclined to have more medicines, medical aides such as walkers, and other considerations which require more advanced planning and preparation time to move.
- ❖ They may require special medical attention, such as the assistance they would receive at a special needs shelter.
- ❖ When evacuating they could require more rest stops.

## **BEFORE THE DISASTER:**

- ❖ Know the threats in your home.
- ❖ Have a plan of where to go, such as a public shelter, special needs shelter, family or friends home.
- ❖ If you need assistance with transportation or special needs you should contact your County Department of Emergency Services to register for special assistance.
- ❖ Have a plan for your pet. Animals are not accepted into public shelters. The Humane Society and many area veterinarians will assist with boarding.
- ❖ Stock plenty of bottled water and non-perishable foods. At least one gallon of water per day and five days supply of food.
- ❖ Have your prescriptions up-to-date. Keep an adequate supply of prescription medicines on hand. Have the name and phone numbers of your doctor, insurance company and other important people or organizations where you can find them quickly and take them with you.
- ❖ Have a fully capable person who can help you evacuate. You could need help in driving a vehicle, carrying your belongings and dealing with the weather elements.

(Prepared by: PUTNAM COUNTY DEPT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES)



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