



# Natural Disaster & Hurricane Season Preparations

Families with a child using a ventilator or other specialized medical equipment have special needs especially during an emergency. Planning for emergencies should happen all year long, but hurricane season can bring extra complications. Whether it's a potential power loss or evacuation, here are resources to help your family plan.

**Know Your Zone:** Make sure you know your home evacuation zone and have a plan in case you need to leave. A friend or family member's house with a sturdy structure in a non-evacuation zone is a great option.

**Register for a Special Needs Shelter:** Each county has a registry for individuals with special needs who require shelter or transportation assistance. You can register at Florida Special Needs Registry ([snr.flhealthresponse.com](http://snr.flhealthresponse.com)) or through your county Emergency Management website. *Registration must be done ahead of time.* As a backup plan, please consider registering prior to hurricane season even if you have a primary shelter location identified.

**Take Advantage of Sales Tax Holidays for Supplies:** Check [FloridaDisaster.org](http://FloridaDisaster.org) for dates – usually before and during hurricane season – and useful tips to help prepare your home and make an evacuation plan.

**Medications:** Under a state of emergency, you can contact your pharmacy for an early refill. Consider the ways you can keep refrigerated medications cold.

**Durable Medical Equipment (DME):** Discuss with your DME company their emergency preparedness protocol and what they can offer for backup supplies.

**Electricity:** Reach out to your utility company to see if they offer a Medically Essential Program.

**Consider Alternate Sources of Power:** If you are in a safe location, here are options for backup power that can be used in a power loss event. Consult your DME company, equipment owner's manual or the generator and battery pack manufacturer to ensure it provides enough power to start and run your medically essential equipment.

- **Gas Powered Generators** – Portable generators can be used to power ventilators. Generators produce carbon monoxide and must be used outdoors and kept at least 20 feet away from your home. A heavy-duty extension cord can be used to provide power inside.
- **Back-Up Power Packs** – These must be charged ahead of time and are available in a variety of sizes.