Guide to Emergency Information Collection in PA

People with autism may get scared or confused in an emergency. It can help first responders to know about a person with autism when they are responding to an emergency in the home so that they may help them. Some counties in PA collect information about which households have people with special health needs. If there is an emergency, the county will share this information with first responders. Each county is different; please contact your county's Office of Emergency Management to learn about your county. You can additionally reach out to your local police department to ensure they are aware.

This guide explains the three main ways that counties in PA collect information for an emergency:

1 SPECIAL NEEDS PAPER FORMS

If your county uses paper forms you can print these from a website and mail them. Or you can e-mail them to the Office of Emergency Management in your county.

2 INTEGRATED SYSTEMS

These systems have replaced special needs registries with online registries for everyone, with or without disabilities. An example of this is the Everbridge Critical Event Management Platform.

Another example of an integrated system is Smart911. This system shows a person's information if they call 911 and sends out periodic reminders to update the information when necessary. Some needs addressed in Smart911 are neurological/behavioral issues, autism, and medical devices.

3 ONLINE SPECIAL NEEDS REGISTRIES AND SURVEYS

These are done online. If you do not have access to a computer, call your county for assistance. Here are the types of online registries:

- The Special Needs Survey (SNS) – this tool helps identify those in the community who are most at risk during an emergency. It is an online data collection system.
- The Special Needs Registry – this is a system that collects information about people with disabilities.

GENERAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND SAFETY TIPS

Some counties do not have forms to collect information about people with or without special needs. They provide tips and general plans, and who to call in case of an emergency:

- If your county does not collect emergency information, you can also contact your local Police Department and Fire Department. You can let them know that your family member has autism. Knowing that first responders are informed about your family's needs can be helpful in preparing for emergency situations. You can also visit www.paautism.org/PLAN for more information about preparing for an emergency.
- Create an informational handout about your child. Having a handout about your child can be helpful in making sure they stay safe. Make sure to include a photo of the child, your name, address, and phone number.
- Inform your neighbors about your child. Decide what is helpful for neighbors to know and share it with them. They also could provide guidance to emergency responders should you not be there at the time.

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