

Important Information for Residents of Niagara County with Special Needs

In the aftermath of the "October Surprise" storm many lessons were learned. Local first response agencies are creating a list of Niagara County residents who may need special assistance in the event of severe weather conditions or other emergencies. Agencies hope that people will voluntarily provide contact information and information about their special needs so emergency responders can give appropriate help in an emergency.

Following last year's storm, non-profit agencies, county departments and utility companies in Niagara County met to address the problems that occurred during the storm for special needs residents. The committee decided it needed a list of such people in order to better serve them. Another list was compiled naming service agencies and resources they owned that can be called upon in an emergency.

If you or someone you know has special needs, and would like contact information added to the Niagara County list, please contact the Niagara County Office for the Aging at 716 438-4021 or Niagara County's Emergency Services Department at 716 438-3171.

Drug-Resistant Staph Infections

State and local health departments have received inquiries about the public health risk from the methicillin-resistant staph aureus (MRSA). MRSA is an increasing public health concern.

Staph infections occur when the bacteria known as staphylococcus aureus ("staph") enters through a break in the skin. These infections occur most frequently among people in hospitals and health-care facilities. Hospitals and nursing homes are required to report to the NYS Health Department outbreaks or increased incidences of MRSA.

Some steps to take to help prevent infection:

- Keeping hands clean by washing them thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until they are completely healed.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

The State Health Department recently issued a public health advisory at www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/communicable/staphylococcus_aureus/methicillin_resistant/community_associated/ about community-associated MRSA. This advisory includes crucial information about antibiotic resistance.

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Disaster Planning Tips from FEMA for Pets

The Humane Society of the United States Offers Disaster Planning Tips for Pets, Livestock & Wildlife. For the complete article visit <http://www.fema.gov/library/diztips.htm>.

All emergencies with home evacuation affect your pet. Create a plan that includes your pet to ensure their safety and well-being!

- If you need to evacuate your home, DO NOT leave your pets behind! Pets most likely will not survive on their own; and if by some chance they do, you may not be able to find them when you return.
- Many emergency shelters cannot accept pets. Find out in advance which motels and hotels in your area allow pets. Include your local animal shelter's number in your list of emergency numbers. They might be able to provide pet information during a disaster.
- Make sure identification tags are current and securely fastened to your pet's collar. If your pet gets lost, his tag is his ticket home. Make sure you have a current photo of your pet for identification purposes.
- Have a secure pet carrier, leash or harness for your pet so that if he panics, he can't escape.
- Take pet food, water, medications, veterinary records, food dishes, toys and other necessary supplies with you in case they're not available. Consider creating a "pet survival" kit.
- If you are unable to return home right away, you may need to board your pet. Most kennels, veterinarians and animal shelters will need medical records to make sure vaccinations are current. Include copies in your "pet survival" kit.
- If it is impossible to take your pet with you to temporary shelter, contact friends, family, veterinarians, or boarding kennels to arrange for care.

If you have no alternative but to leave your pet in an emergency, there are some precautions you must take. Remember that leaving your pet alone can place your animal in great danger! Confine your pet to a safe area inside; NEVER leave your pet chained outside! Place a notice outside in a visible area, advising what pets are in the house and where they are located. Provide a phone number where you or a contact can be reached as well as the name and number of your vet.

CERT Meeting!

Greater Niagara Falls CERT

Saturday, November 3, 2007 (9:30 AM - Noon)

Niagara Falls Public Library

1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls

Conference Rescheduled!

The "Crossing Borders" Emergency Preparedness Conference is rescheduled. It will be on **Thursday and Friday, March 13 & 14, 2008** at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center in Buffalo, NY. Please share this information and visit the **conference website** for updates: <http://www.niagara.edu/bordercommunityservice/2007-conference.htm>.

Training Opportunities

American Red Cross

Saturday, November 3 (9AM to 4:30 PM)

**Eastern Niagara County Chapter
637 Davison Road, Lockport**

The Eastern Niagara County Chapter of the American Red Cross (Lockport) has scheduled **free** emergency preparedness training. Lunch will be provided. Training topics include:

- "Introduction to the American Red Cross"
- "Mass Care"
- "Shelter Operation"

A day of training can greatly enhance personal preparedness and can lead to joining an American Red Cross Disaster Action Team. Please consider attending this comprehensive emergency training: **Call 716-434-8876 to register.**

County Animal Response Team

This course overviews of the types of disasters that can affect animals, why it is important to plan for animals, New York State Animal Response Teams, County Animal Response Teams (CART), and the Incident Command System. It's designed for new members, those who are interested in joining a CART, or individuals interested in helping people and animals in the event of an emergency. The course is **free** and open to the public. Visit <http://www.ualbanycph.org/learning/default.cfm> to register.