

FEMA Region II Webinar

Preparedness Resources for the Power-Dependent Medical Equipment Population |
August 18th, 2020

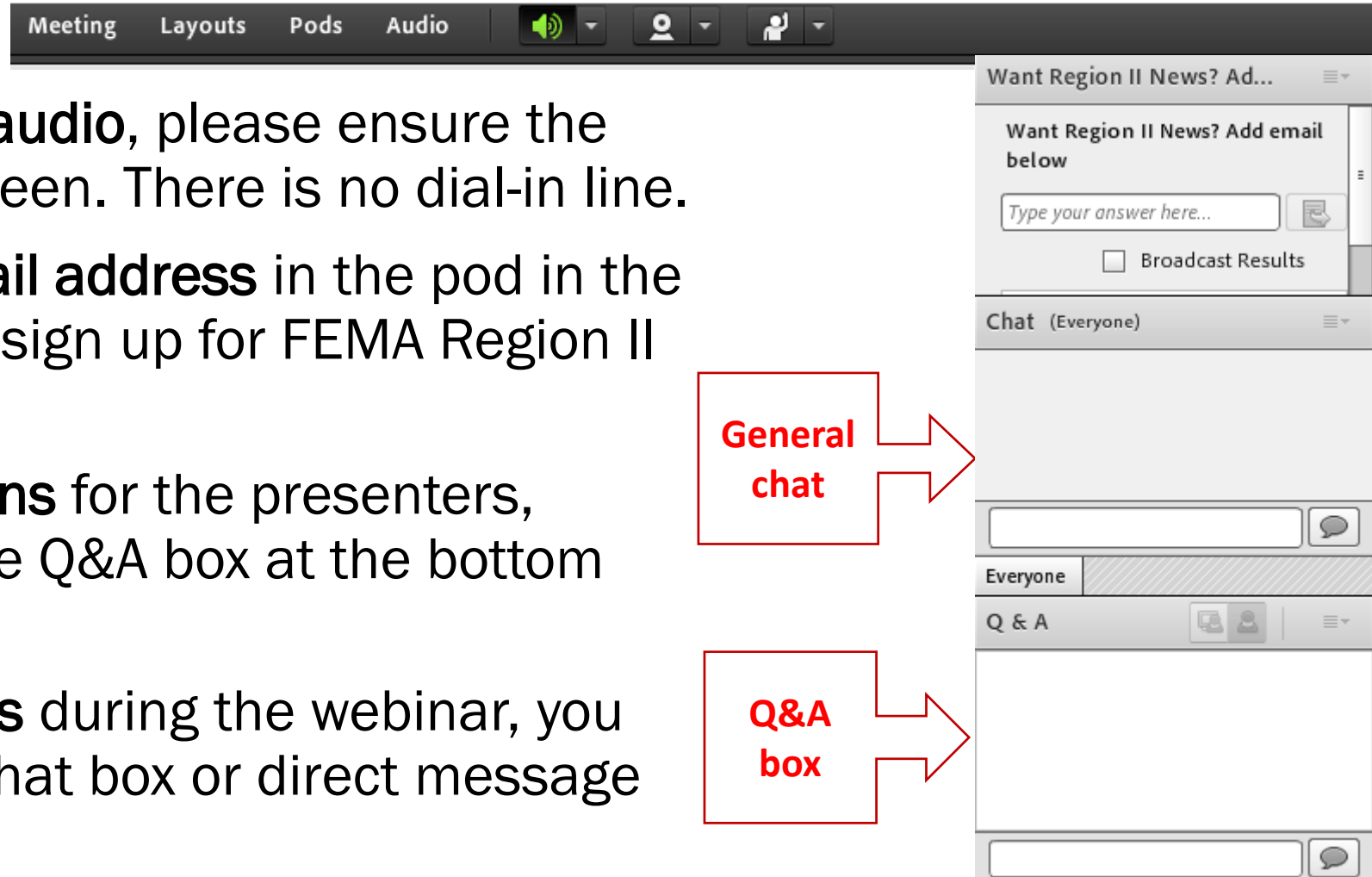


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Strategic Plan

Helping People. Together.

FEMA Mission: Helping people before, during, and after disasters.

STRATEGIC GOALS

I. BUILD A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS



1.1 Incentivize investments that reduce risk, including pre-disaster mitigation, and reduce disaster costs at all levels



1.2 Close the insurance gap



1.3 Help people prepare for disasters



1.4 Better learn from past disasters, improve continuously, and innovate

OBJECTIVES

II. READY THE NATION FOR CATASTROPHIC DISASTERS



2.1 Organize the "BEST" (Build, Empower, Sustain, and Train) scalable and capable incident workforce



2.2 Enhance intergovernmental coordination through FEMA Integration Teams



2.3 Posture FEMA and the whole community to provide life-saving and life-sustaining commodities, equipment, and personnel from all available sources



2.4 Improve continuity and resilient communications capabilities

III. REDUCE THE COMPLEXITY OF FEMA



3.1 Streamline the disaster survivor and grantee experience



3.2 Mature the National Disaster Recovery Framework



3.3 Develop innovative systems and business processes that enable FEMA's employees to rapidly and effectively deliver the agency's mission



3.4 Strengthen grants management, increase transparency, and improve data analytics

FEMA Vision:
A prepared and resilient Nation.



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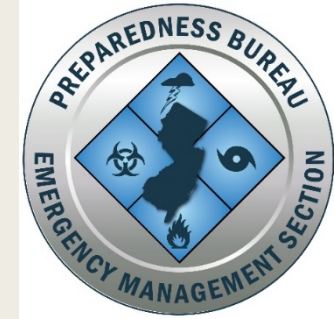
Introductions

Instructors:

Kelly Boyd- Ms. Boyd is an Access & Functional Needs (AFN) Planner for the NJ Office of Emergency Management and a Co-Chair of the NJ Group for Access and Integration Needs in Emergencies & Disasters (NJGAINED). Additionally, she is Chair of the NJ County AFN Coordinators group. Previously, she served as the Disaster & Disability Services Coordinator for the NJ Governor's Office of Volunteerism and as a Disaster Assistance Employee for FEMA.

Jamie Arasz Prioli, RESNA ATP- Ms. Prioli is the Interim Coordinator of Disability Services at Ocean County College in New Jersey. As a certified assistive technology professional, she is considered a subject matter expert in the area of disability, access and functional needs, emergency preparedness and assistive technology. She also serves as Chair of the Ocean County Core Advisory Group and has been involved in many collaborative efforts and presentations both regionally and nationally.





PART ONE

PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES FOR THE POWER-DEPENDENT MEDICAL EQUIPMENT POPULATION

Presented by:

Kelly Boyd, AFN Planner, NJOEM

Jamie Arasz Prioli, Chair, Ocean County Core Advisory Group



Objectives

- During this webinar, we will offer emergency preparedness tips and resources, including checklists, to assist individuals who rely on electricity- and battery-dependent assistive technology as well as durable medical equipment in planning for a power outage.
- We will also provide guidance on how people with disabilities and access and functional needs (DAFN) can prepare for extreme heat events.



Emergency Events

- Power loss can happen for a number of reasons, including but not limited to when power lines are damaged due to storms, high wind events, and accidents.



Emergency Events



- When Tropical Storm Isaias hit New Jersey recently, over 1 million people lost power—some for over a week.
- Many New Jersey residents also lost power for several days this summer during a derecho.
 - *A derecho is a weather event with extremely intense and fast-moving winds.*
- As a result of both events, many calls for help were placed by people who needed power for their durable medical equipment.

Recent Incidents



- Loss of power in single family home in Middlesex County
 - *Elderly woman was recovering from major spine surgery at home due to COVID-19 risk in rehab facility*
 - *Nurse and physical therapists wouldn't come due to power loss and extreme heat*
 - *Family purchased a generator for a fan and refrigerator since she couldn't relocate*
- Loss of power in group home for two days in Ocean County
 - *Couldn't use assistive technology/tablets*
 - *Need flashlight to change colostomy bag*
 - *Relied on generator to power refrigerator and fans*
 - *Behavioral issues worsened among residents*
- Family of 8 in Mercer County lost power at their home for several days during extreme heat
 - *Ruined over \$400 worth of food*
 - *Family (which included a 90 year old woman and a toddler) evacuated and stayed with a relative*

The Importance of Planning

For those who rely on power due to a medical condition, it is critical to have an emergency power-backup plan in place. Medical equipment and assistive technology that relies on power is often essential to helping someone remain independent or may be vital to keeping them alive.

Power-operated equipment needed for medical purposes includes:

- Breathing machines (respirators, ventilators)
- Power wheelchairs, scooters and Segways
- Oxygen, suction or home dialysis equipment
- A cell phone or tablet with specialized apps
- Communication devices
- Hearing aids
- Refrigerators for medication or special food that needs to be kept cool



Preparedness Checklist

- The ADA National Network shares information, guidance and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act. They also created a helpful emergency power planning checklist for individuals who have disabilities and use electricity and/or battery dependent assistive technology and medical devices.
- The next few slides will discuss the recommendations in the checklist, which can be found in the download pod at the end of the presentation.



General Planning Tips

- Read equipment instructions and talk your equipment suppliers and utility company to get information on backup power options.
 - *Keep copies of instructions for medical equipment (including the serial and model numbers) in a vinyl envelope or waterproof container and in your emergency go bag.*
 - *Create a list of alternate power providers.*
- Regularly check backup or alternative power equipment to ensure it will work during an emergency.
- Inquire as to whether you can charge medical equipment at your local police and fire departments, library or hospital if you lose power.
- Label your medical equipment with your name, address, and phone number. Also attach simple and clear instruction cards to equipment and laminate them if possible.



Personal Support Network



- Identify who should be part of your support network.
 - *This includes family, caregivers, friends, neighbors and coworkers.*
- Have a plan for communicating with your personal support network.
- Teach your support network how to operate your equipment and assistive technology, as well as how to use your backup systems.
- Share your emergency plan with your support network and test it out.

Community Resources in New Jersey



- In New Jersey, each County has an Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and a County Access & Functional Need Coordinator you can contact for assistance or planning advice. For contact information, visit: <http://ready.nj.gov/about-us/county-coordinators.shtml>
 - *Most municipalities also have an Office of Emergency Management.*
- If need be, County OEM staff will work with NJOEM during events that result in power loss. NJOEM collaborates with the Board of Public Utilities and other key agencies, such as the Department of Human Services (which assists with sheltering), during emergencies.
- Reach out to your utility company before a disaster strikes. They often keep a list of individuals who are power dependent.
 - *Also be sure to sign up for NJ Register Ready so staff from your local and County OEM are aware of your needs.*

Tips for Life-Support Device Users



- Prior to a disaster, contact your utility and water companies if you rely on life-support devices, such as in-home dialysis, suction machines, and ventilators, to see if they have a “priority reconnection service” registry and if you qualify.
- If you are entered into a registry, keep in mind that your power may not be quickly restored depending on the type of emergency that occurred.
- Let your local fire department know that you are dependent on life-support devices, as many have their own registries and may be able to assist during emergencies.
- All ventilator users should keep a resuscitation bag handy since it can deliver air through a mask when squeezed.
- If you receive dialysis or other medical treatments, ask your health care provider for their plans during emergencies and where you would go for treatment if your usual clinic is not open.

Tips for Oxygen Users



- Check with your health care provider to see if you can use a reduced flow rate in an emergency to extend the life of the system.
- Label your equipment with the reduced flow numbers so that you can easily refer to them.
- Let your fire department know that you are dependent on oxygen as they typically keep a registry of oxygen users.
- Follow oxygen safety practices:
 - *Avoid areas where there are gas leaks or open flames.*
 - *Post “Oxygen in Use” signs.*
 - *Always use battery powered flashlights or lanterns rather than gas lights or candles when oxygen is in use to reduce the risk of starting a fire.*
 - *Keep the shut-off switch for oxygen equipment near you so you can get to it quickly in case of emergency.*

Battery Tips

- Create a plan for how to recharge batteries when the power is out. To begin, check with your vendor/supplier to see if they can recommend alternative ways to charge batteries, such as by:
 - *Connecting jumper cables to a vehicle battery.*
 - *Using an inverter that plugs into a vehicle's cigarette lighter or accessory outlet. If you substitute a vehicle battery for a wheelchair battery, the charge will not last as long as a charge for a wheelchair's deep-cycle battery.*
 - *Assistive technology and cell phones can also be charged in a car or by using a power cell.*
- Even if they were never used, extra batteries require periodic charging if they have been in storage. If you store batteries, implement a recharging schedule.
- Keep enough chargers for the number of batteries you own.

Battery Tips

- Know how long batteries that support your medical equipment typically last.
- If possible, use medical equipment that relies on batteries that can easily be purchased from nearby stores.
- If you use a motorized wheelchair or scooter, try to have a manual wheelchair on-hand for emergencies.
- Know exactly how long the batteries will last when the power goes out. Will the batteries last 30 minutes or 9 hours?
- Respiratory therapists, equipment technicians or vendors will help inform you with general ideas how long batteries can last without interruptions.

Generator Tips

- Various types of generators exist and may be beneficial to invest in if you are dependent on medical equipment.
- A 2,000 to 2,500-watt gas-powered portable generator can power a refrigerator, a fan and/or several lamps.
 - *Keep in mind, a refrigerator needs to run only 15 minutes an hour to stay cool if you keep the door closed. Therefore, you can unplug it to operate other devices.)*
- A generator with 1,000 watt capabilities with surge protection will power most ventilators.
- Higher voltage generators may be needed to power the extra features, such as humidifier, heater and suction units.



Generator Tips

- Operate generators in open areas to ensure good air circulation.
- Safely store gasoline and a siphon kit. This can be especially challenging if you live in an apartment.
- Test your generator from time to time to make sure it will work when needed.
- Some generators can connect to the existing home wiring systems – consult with a licensed electrician.
- Always contact your utility company regarding critical restrictions and safety issues.

Generator Tips

Understand your alternative power options!

Various types of generators exist and may be beneficial to invest in if you are dependent on medical equipment. Examples include: portable, hybrid, solar, and smart home, among others.



Considerations for High-Rise Buildings

If you use a mobility device or critical medical equipment and live or work in a high-rise building, be sure to develop an evacuation plan with the building manager should the power go out. As part of your plan:

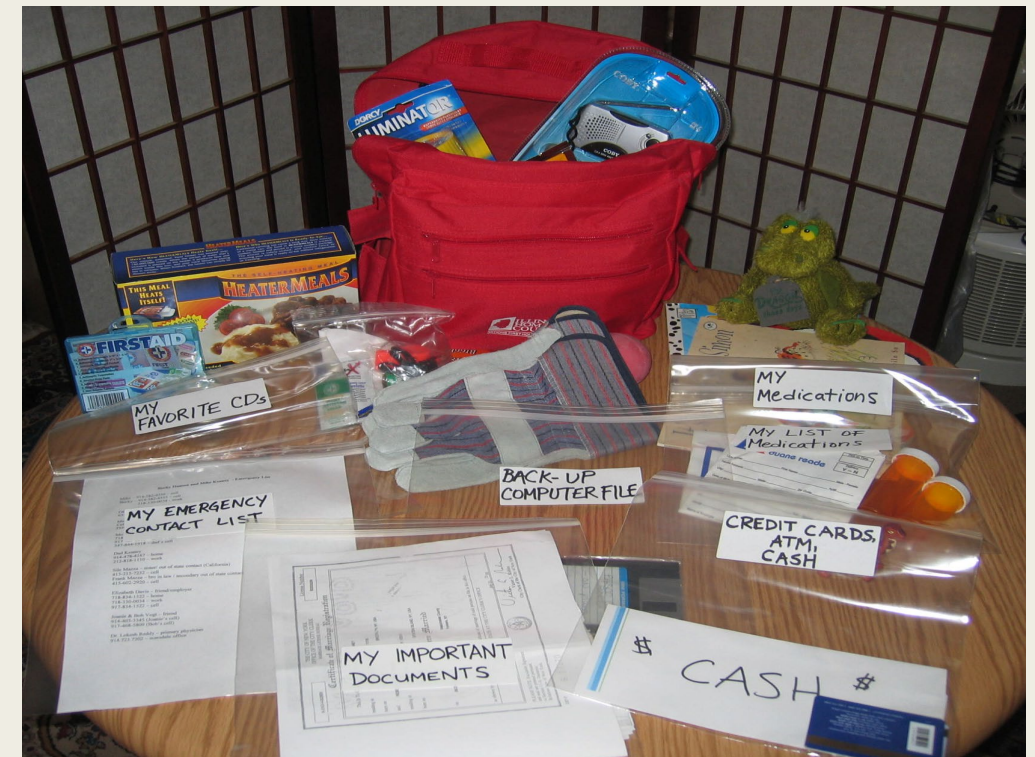
- Be sure to have a buddy system with backup assistants.
- If you rely on a mobility device and live on an upper floor, ask that an Evac Chair be kept on-site and that staff, coworkers and/or residents be trained on how to safely use it.
- Use red construction paper, a flag or another method to alert first responders if you are stuck on an upper level and need to evacuate.



Essential Items for Go Bags

Examples of items to put in your go bag include:

- Radio
- Flashlight
- Medications
 - Include a list of medications and dosages, and copies of prescriptions
- Any necessary medical supplies, a first aid kit, hearing aids & batteries, eyeglasses, lens cleaner, etc.
- An updated list of emergency contacts (doctors, insurance providers, family members, caregivers, etc.)



Essential Items for Go Bags

- Some cash and a list of bank accounts
- Copies of important documents
 - Also keep copies in another safe place
 - Thumb drive with crucial files
- Comfort items (such as games)
- Change of clothes
- Batteries/battery charger
- Gloves and personal protective equipment
- Snacks and water
- List of allergies

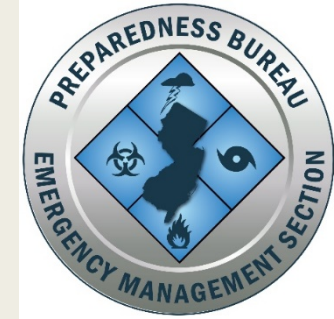


Power Restoration Phase

- Make sure the settings on your medical device(s) have not changed since they may reset to a default mode after the power goes out.
- Modify your emergency plans if issues were encountered.
 - *Staff at your local OEM or Center for Independent Living can provide advice.*
- Review and update your emergency plan/checklist every six months or as needed.
 - *A good time to update plans is when you set your clocks forward in the spring and back in the fall.*
 - *Give a copy of your plan to members of your support network.*

Questions or Comments?





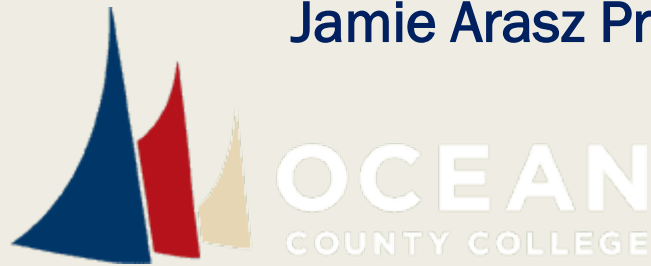
PART TWO

EXTREME HEAT PREPAREDNESS TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE DISABILITIES

Prepared by:

Kelly Boyd, AFN Planner, NJOEM

Jamie Arasz Prioli, Chair, Ocean County Core Advisory Group



Extreme Heat Events



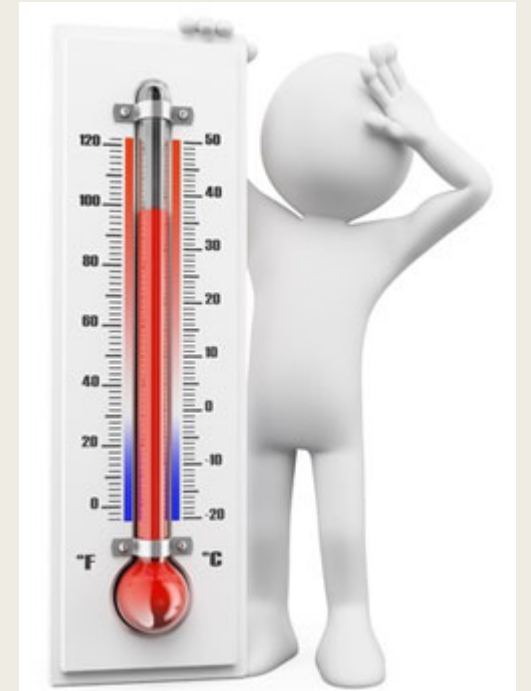
- As cited in the July 21, 2020, FEMA Region 2 Preparedness and Resilience Bulletin: Empowering People and Communities, “Extreme heat is a period of time marked by heat and humidity with temperatures above 90 degrees for at least two to three days.”
- During extreme heat events, be sure to listen to the advice of local officials, including emergency managers.
 - Watch the news or listen to the radio.
 - Sign up for emergency alerts.
 - Follow trusted social media sites.
 - Emergency notifications should be accessible for those who read Braille or use screen readers so they can keep informed.

Extreme Heat Events

- Extreme heat events can be dangerous because the body works extra hard to cool down in order to maintain a normal temperature. This causes the body to sweat. If the body overheats too quickly, the person loses fluid and salt due to dehydration and sweating. This can lead to death.
 - *Extreme heat is the cause of the most deaths annually among all weather-related events.*
 - *Individuals who have a disability such as a high-level spinal cord injury have difficulty regulating their body temperature, making them more vulnerable to extreme heat.*

Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness

- The combination of hot weather and high humidity can cause heat-related illness to set in. Symptoms include:
 - *exhaustion*
 - *heat stroke*
 - *dizziness*
 - *nausea or vomiting*
 - *cramps*
 - *elevated heart rate*
 - *general weakness*



Extreme Heat Preparedness Plan

As weather patterns continue to change, this means more extreme heat events will occur in the near future. If you don't have an Extreme Heat Preparedness Plan, now is the perfect time to implement one. Here are some tips to get started:

- Keep your home cool.
 - *Cover windows with drapes or shades.*
 - *Add insulation to keep the heat out.*
 - *Install an air conditioning system or window units.*
- If you do not have air conditioning, make arrangements to stay with family members. If that is not an option, visit a cooling center or spend time at a public place, such as a library or museum.
- Eat light and keep hydrated.
- Avoid strenuous activities and limit exercise.
 - If you must engage in a particular activity, try to do so early in the morning or in the evening when temperatures are cooler.

Extreme Heat Preparedness Plan

Another way to stay cool during extreme heat events is to go to a swimming pool, the beach, a lake or a recreation center. When spending time outside, be sure to:

- stay in the shade or by a fan
- wear loose, lightweight, and light-colored clothing
- put on sunscreen, sunglasses and a loose fitting hat
- never leave a child, adult, or animal alone inside a vehicle
- remain where someone can keep an eye on you
- remember to keep hydrated



Extreme Heat Considerations

Physical, social and psychological issues make those with disabilities more vulnerable to heat-related illness and even death during extreme heat events.

- For those who do not have air conditioning or cannot afford it due to financial constraints, relying on public places for cooling is important.
 - **Note:** If you visit places outside the home, it is important to maintain social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on public gatherings.
- Cooling stations should be set up in communities during extreme heat events and made accessible for individuals who have disabilities.
- It is recommended that individuals who cannot afford air conditioning look into the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and similar programs.

Emergency Preparedness Websites

- www.ready.nj.gov/plan/special-needs.html
- www.registerready.nj.gov
- www.fema.gov
- www.ready.gov/heat
- www.ready.gov
- www.redcross.org



Questions or Comments?



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Registration: <https://fema.connectsolutions.com/femaresponserole/event/registration.html>

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