

# Know Your Rights

## Disaster Shelter Accessibility

*People with disabilities and older adults have rights during disasters and emergency situations.*

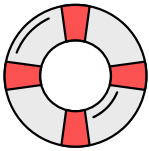
### Laws that Protect your Rights



The Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Older Americans Act protect these rights.

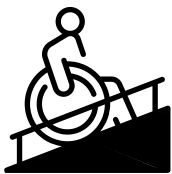
Local, state, and federal governments need to follow these laws to keep people with disabilities and older adults safe.

### Emergency Shelters and Resources



State/local governments provide people temporary shelter during an emergency.

Shelters are meant to protect you from the worst parts of a disaster or storm. Think of a shelter as a lifeboat and not a cruise ship. Shelters can be loud, distracting and crowded.



The ADA requires emergency shelters and its services to be accessible.

This means public shelters, Special Needs Shelters (sometimes called Medical Shelters), and all other emergency services must be accessible for people with disabilities.



People with disabilities must have equal access to safety, food, shelter, basic medical care, and communication while in the shelter. You also must have equal access to transportation to and from the shelter.

To ensure that a shelter will have the services you need, contact your county's Emergency Management office.



If you have a disability and rely on electricity for a mobility aid or medicine, apply for the Special Needs Shelter Registry.

### Making an Emergency Shelter Accessible



Visit the ADA Accessibility Checklist for Emergency Shelters on the Division of Emergency Management's website to learn more about shelter accessibility requirements.

# Know Your Rights

## Disaster Shelter Accessibility

### Your Rights at a Shelter



All shelters need to be physically accessible for everyone.



All information and communication needs to be accessible.

Information should be available in American Sign Language, plain or easy language, large font, Braille.

Deaf and hard of hearing people must have access to TDD or an interpreter (in-person or virtual).



All transportation, if it's provided to the public, needs to be accessible to people with access and functional needs.



It is recommended to bring food with you if you require specialized diet or pre-register for a Special Needs Shelter.



You have a right to bring your service animal with you. Emotional support animals (ESAs) are not considered service animals under the ADA. ESAs and other pets may not be allowed, and you should plan for them to go elsewhere. Check with your local Emergency Management office to check for pet friendly shelters.



You have a right to stay with your family or a person of your choice.

You have a right to bring a care attendant or keep getting your care services at a shelter.



You have the right to have any existing service provider, such as a Center of Independent Living, to continue coming to the shelter.



You have a right to request reasonable accommodations, or changes, from the shelter to make it accessible for you.



You have a right to have your assistive technology and durable medical equipment with you.



You have a right to shelter transition services that can help you get home or to a temporary or long-term shelter while your home is being repaired.

### When to Contact Disability Rights Florida

If you are concerned that a general population shelter or Special Needs Shelter that you need to use is not accessible to you, you can request assistance from us.

Phone: 800-342-0823 TDD: 800-346-4127  
Website: [DisabilityRightsFlorida.org](http://DisabilityRightsFlorida.org)