

OKEECHOBEE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTER
Individual Registration Instructions

The purpose of the Special Needs Shelter is to provide a safe refuge to persons with special medical needs. The Okeechobee County Special Needs Shelter is limited in its ability to provide all levels of care. A shelter is indeed a refuge of last resort. If an individual with special medical needs, has the opportunity to shelter with friends or family in a location that can safely meet their needs, that choice would be preferable to a public shelter.

SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTERS: The Okeechobee County Health Department, 1728 NW 9th Avenue, Okeechobee is designated as the county's Special Needs Shelter. It has the availability of 50 cots with a capacity for approximately 150 special needs residents. There is also a generator that can provide electrical support for medical equipment for approximately 135 shelter residents, as well as sustaining the normal operations of the building such as A/C and lights.

SHELTER REGISTRATION: Patients will need to be registered or re-registered each year beginning in March, using the Special Needs Shelter Request Form (attached). All patient forms, whether re-registering or registering for the first time, need to be submitted as soon as possible after March. The confusion created by those who wait until the threat of a disaster to register, should be avoided. Completed forms are to be submitted by mail to The Okeechobee County Health Department, Special Needs Shelter, PO Box 1879, Okeechobee, Florida 34973 or by fax to (863) 462-5219. Registration forms will be reviewed by the Health Department to determine if the needs of the applicant can be met safely within the capabilities of available resources. All applicants will be notified of the out come of their request.

OTHER INFORMATION: Special needs individuals will be accommodated on simple low to the floor (approximately 10" high) cots (if available)and must be able to ambulate to the restrooms (patients in wheelchairs must be able to assist with transfer to use restroom facilities). One person should accompany each patient as a caregiver. The caregiver is expected to provide all of the care the special needs patient requires. If the "caregiver" themselves qualify as special needs, a separate Registration Request should be filled out. In the event that all cots at the shelter are occupied by registered special needs individuals, a cot may not be available for the caregiver.