



Northern York County Unified Emergency Management Agency

HELEN'S PLAN- Preparing to leave home due to short term emergencies

My name is Helen, I'm 76 years old and I created a plan to help me leave my home safely in emergencies or disasters. The plan includes myself, my two grown children and my good friend Grace who lives close to me. I decided to create the Plan because I no longer drive and have trouble walking; if I need to leave my home in an emergency I will need others to help me. I learned that in emergencies and disasters there just aren't enough police and fire fighters to help; so, we must help ourselves.

I currently live by myself in Dillsburg. My husband passed away four years ago. I do have two children who live with their families in York and Harrisburg; they come to see me and stay in touch by phone, but I rely a lot on Grace who gets my groceries and stops by to see how I'm doing. I really hate to ask anyone for help so I try not to bother my children or Grace.

But last winter my furnace broke and I was without heat for a whole day; it got pretty cold in my home. I put on extra heavy clothes which kept me warm. Grace wanted me to stay with her or go to a motel, but I refused because it was so much to think about; I was so glad when the furnace was fixed!

Then over the summer we had some really hot weather in the 90's. My window air conditioner didn't work very well and I got very warm and weak. Grace called 911 and I ended up in the hospital; I was dehydrated! It took a while for me to feel normal again.

After my experiences with very cold and very hot weather, I took the advice of my children who gave me a very helpful brochure called "Preparing Makes Sense for Older Pennsylvanians". We read it and came up with a Plan for very short- term emergencies. I hope others will do the same as I did; using the brochure, do the following if you decide to leave your home for a short period of time:

Start by Making a Plan. We answered the obvious questions so there would be no doubt when the emergency occurs: where will I go, how will I get there, who will take me? Our Plan for evacuating due to short-term emergencies has Grace taking me to her home. The situation may require me to go to either of my children's home if my entire community is affected by the emergency. My support group is Grace and my children. We made lists that include all our contact information plus addresses. We all have a copy of the lists and we took time to get together at my house and review the list and talk about how the Plan will work.

Make a Kit. We stuck to just the essentials: medications, tooth brush, phone, charger, address of destination, list of important contacts (both kids and Grace), hearing aids & charger, extra change of clothing, snacks and water.

Be informed. We will use radio, TV and internet to determine the extent of the emergency. What we thought would be a short term emergency could be larger and more involved. My children will then take over for Grace. I am glad we took the time to create a Plan. I feel more confident about the future, not so anxious! I hope all the Senior Citizens in our area take the time to create a Plan. Call Tim H. with questions about Preparedness at 717-712-6681; Tim is the Coordinator for the local EMA group called NEMA.