

## **Winter Weather Tips for Seniors and People with Disabilities**

Extreme cold and harsh winter weather can dramatically increase the daily hardships and challenges for the Township's elderly and disabled residents.

With winter weather settling in soon, the Maine Township Office of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) says that now is the time to take a few easy steps to prepare for emergencies.

Seniors and people with disabilities should:

- Check with their physician or oxygen supplier about emergency plans for respirators or electrical-powered medical equipment;
- Plan now to have electrical backup for medical equipment;
- Develop a back-up communications plan in case land lines are disrupted by having a charged cell phone or a pager;
- Maintain a two-week supply of medications, both prescription and non-prescription;
- Have copies of medical records, prescriptions and medical needs readily available;
- Plan now to have accessible transportation in case of evacuation;
- Have contact lenses, extra eyeglasses and batteries for hearing aids ready to go;
- Include service animals and pets in plans; and
- Think ahead about neighborhood shelters that can accommodate the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

People with disabilities should stay in constant contact with a nearby network of neighbors, relatives, care attendants, friends and coworkers. Never depend on one person alone.

Emergency supply kits should include:

- A battery or hand crank-powered radio, extra flashlights and batteries, and a minimum of a week's worth of food and water;
- Adequate clothing and blankets for warmth; and
- First Aid Supplies.

Finally, it is important to understand the terms of declining weather and pending winter storms.

- A winter weather advisory means that cold, ice and snow are expected;
- A winter storm watch means severe weather such as heavy snow or ice is possible in the next day or two; and
- A winter storm warning means that severe winter conditions have begun or will begin very soon.

Remember that planning ahead, assembling an emergency supply kit, staying informed and keeping those in your circle informed are the best ways to stay safe through the uncertain days of winter.