



STATE OF OHIO
Emergency Operations Center

John R. Kasich, Governor
2855 West Dublin Granville Rd.
Columbus, Ohio 43235

MEDIA RELEASE
www.ema.ohio.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 31, 2012

Contact: John R. Ratliff 614-728-0253, Ohio Department of Aging
Tamara McBride 614-799-3695, Ohio EMA,

Statement from Bonnie Kantor-Burman, Director, Ohio Department of Aging
Re: October 29-30 severe storm and older adults

“On Monday and Tuesday, the remnants of Hurricane Sandy moved through Ohio, bringing with it high winds, rain and snow. While the worst of the storm has passed, its effects continue to be felt, particularly in northeast Ohio. Power outages and flooding continue to be concerns for many in the area.

“We are concerned for all Ohioans who were and continue to be impacted by this storm. Please be safe: stay away from downed power lines and trees, as well as other objects that may be susceptible to falling. Also, stay clear of flood waters, which can have strong currents and carry debris.

“If you are safe, please check on your friends, family and neighbors in your community to ensure they have power, food, water, medicines and necessary supplies to stay safe and healthy until things return to normal. Also, staying warm will be a big concern, as older adults can be more susceptible to conditions like hypothermia.

“Older adults, people with disabilities and their families can call 1-866-243-5678 to be connected to their local area agency on aging’s resources and programs that can provide help in their communities.”

Tips for checking on your neighbors during and after severe weather:

Communicate Effectively

- Always treat adults as adults. If someone isn’t making sense, don’t assume it is dementia. Dehydration, stress, and fatigue have similar symptoms.
- Use a natural tone of voice and conversational style of communication. Be calm and reassuring, speak slowly and distinctly, and make eye contact. Use positive language: Instead of “Don’t ...” suggest what they should do.
- Ask open-ended questions. Instead of “Are you staying warm/cool?” ask “What are you doing to stay warm/cool today?” “Where will you go if the power does not come back on tomorrow?”
- Don’t ask “testing” or “challenging” questions. Instead of “Do you know your name?” ask “What would you like me to call you?” Instead of “Do you know where you are?” say “I’m glad that I came to visit you at your home today.”
- Don’t correct an adult who appears to be confused. For example, if the person calls you by someone else’s name, say “I haven’t seen ‘Joe’ lately but my name is ... and I’ll stay with you

until your family comes by” or “I’ll call someone so ‘Joe’ will know where you are.” Avoid arguing, but validate feelings.

Do a Risk Assessment

While visiting, observe his or her surroundings and ask questions that will help you determine if this person is healthy and safe, or if he or she may need some assistance.

- Does the person depend on oxygen?
- Does he or she need help walking?
- Does he or she need help getting to the bathroom?
- Does he or she have skin that is grey-ish? (If so, he or she may require medical attention.)

Also check if individuals have what they will need for the next several days, including water, non-perishable food, temperature control and medications. Refrigerated food should be thrown out after 2 hours without electricity. Also, some medications may need to be refrigerated or stored on ice to remain safe and effective.

Make Sure They Can Get Help

Make sure the person is able to call for help if he or she needs it. Don’t assume the person’s phone is working: check the connection and battery charge. Some may not realize that cordless phones need electricity to work and/or charge. Instead of asking, “Do you have someone to call if you need help?” saying, “Show me how you would call your daughter if you need her to come help,” will be more effective.

For residents without power, please contact your local 211 for information and lists of resources. Call 911 in an emergency. Information is also available online at www.ema.ohio.gov. Follow along on Twitter with #OHwx.

###