



New York State
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News

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STATE ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES REMINDS NEW YORKERS TO CHECK ON VULNERABLE LOVED ONES DURING STORMS

Severe weather expected to continue throughout the state, putting vulnerable adults in danger

Detecting warning signs in family members, friends, and neighbors can prevent tragedy

Rensselaer, NY, July 2, 2013 – Office of Children and Family Services Commissioner Gladys Carrión today highlighted the importance of checking in on elderly or disabled family members, friends, and neighbors, particularly during instances of severe weather. The announcement comes as a reminder during a time when ongoing rainfall, storms, flash floods, and power outages are putting New Yorkers in dangerous situations.

Any concerned person who sees an individual who is impaired and unable to cope with the stresses of the potentially-violent weather conditions and is faced with possible danger is encouraged to call the Protective Services for Adults (PSA) unit of the local Department of Social Services (DSS). [Phone numbers for each county can be found on the OCFS website](#). Anyone who recognizes their own need for help is also urged to reach out for help. If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger and requires urgent help, call 911.

The following are warning signs that relatives, friends, and neighbors should learn to recognize so that they can provide help to loved ones in need:

- No sign of activity from a person living alone. For instance, mail and newspapers may pile up.
- Showing confusion and forgetfulness over money, leaving essential bills unpaid.
- Appearing frail and malnourished, and refusing help or assistance.
- Showing bruises and other signs of possible physical abuse.
- Wandering outdoors in stormy weather without adequate clothing.
- Dependence on a stressed, mentally ill, or substance-abusing caregiver.

“PSA staff have assisted many vulnerable adults during past storms, not only helping them to formulate

evacuation or temporary alternate housing plans, but doing seemingly simple things like moving their possessions, and assisting them with shopping, medical, or transportation needs,” said Commissioner Carrión. “We know that PSA caseworkers throughout the State have provided critical assistance to flood victims in recent years, and are an important part of statewide efforts to assist vulnerable adults during and after significant storms.”

PSA is a state-mandated program that is provided without regard to income to assist adults who, due to mental or physical impairments, can no longer provide for their basic needs or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, or hazardous situations. PSA staff investigates reports of abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation, and meets with vulnerable adults to assess risks to their health and safety. Once it is determined that a services plan is needed, a staff member will design a plan to protect the vulnerable adult and maintain at home with supports.

OCFS, the agency that oversees the PSA, serves New York by promoting the safety, permanency and well-being of children, families and communities. For more information, visit ocfs.ny.gov, “like” the New York State Office of Children and Family Services Facebook page, or follow [@NYSOCFS](https://twitter.com/NYSOCFS) on Twitter.

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