

SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS AND GROUPS

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1. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

During a natural disaster the potential exists for certain groups of people to be disproportionately affected when compared to the general population. This chapter looks at those groups including the elderly, people with disabilities, homeless individuals, populations with language barriers, and people in mobile home parks, campgrounds, recreational/educational camps, and group quarters. Strategies and actions are included in Chapter 6 in order to address the particular needs of these groups.

2. THE ELDERLY

As a group, the elderly are especially vulnerable to natural hazards. This is particularly true when an elderly person lives alone or with an elderly spouse and do not have family or friends to help them prepare for natural hazards or react to and recover from an event.

The aging of the population is occurring throughout the nation and is also evident in Sauk County. The number of people between the age of 5 and 19 decreased between 2010 and 2016, while the number of people 45 and older generally increased, especially in the 55 to 74 age group (Table 3-1). As the population continues to get proportionately older, it will become increasingly important to address the needs of the elderly with respect to natural hazards planning.

Table 3-1. Age of Population; Sauk County: 2010 and 2016

Age Group	Percent of Total		Percent Change
	2010	2016	2010-16
Under 5 years	6.4	6.1	-0.3
5 to 9	6.5	7.1	0.6
10 to 14	6.7	5.9	-0.8
15 to 19	6.3	6.3	0.0
20 to 24	5.4	5.2	-0.2
25 to 34	12.4	11.9	-0.5
35 to 44	12.9	12.2	-0.7
45 to 54	15.4	14.2	-1.2
55 to 64	12.8	14.0	1.2
65 to 74	7.7	9.4	1.7
75 to 84	4.8	4.9	0.1
85 and older	2.5	2.7	0.2

Source: 2010 Census of Population and Housing, US Census Bureau
2016 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

3. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Like the elderly, people with disabilities¹ have increased exposure to some types of natural hazards. As shown in Table 3-2, the likelihood that an individual has a disability increases with age. Only 6 percent of county residents between 5 to 17 years had a disability, while over 33 percent that were 65 years and older had a disability.

4. HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

Homeless individuals are disproportionately affected by many types of natural disasters. Excessive heat and cold are especially hard on the homeless and particularly the elderly.

Resources for individuals who are homeless in Sauk County include

¹ The definition for a disability is from the US Census Bureau. A long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition. This condition can make it difficult for a person to do activities such as walking, climbing stairs, dressing, bathing, learning, or remembering. This condition can also impede a person from being able to go outside the home alone or to work at a job or business.

the Central Wisconsin Community Action Council, Hope House of South Central Wisconsin, Safe Harbor Homeless Shelter, and Sauk County Housing Authority.

It is not known how many homeless individuals live in Sauk County on a permanent or transient basis.

5. POPULATIONS WITH LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Although, the vast majority of people in Sauk County are able to communicate effectively in English, there is a small group of residents, most likely recent immigrants, who have not learned to speak English or have not become moderately proficient. According to the 2010 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, English was the primary language spoken in 94 percent of households in Sauk County (Table 3-3).

Even though the number of residents who do not speak proficient English is comparatively small, it is anticipated that the number may continue to rise barring a significant shift in public policy in immigration. The needs of those who do not speak proficient English should be considered when devising strategies to help residents prepare themselves for an impending disaster and recover from the aftermath of the event.

Table 3-2. People with Disabilities 2010

Age Group	Percent of Age Group with Disability
Under 5 years	1.9
5 to 17 years	6.0
18 to 64 years	8.1
65 years and over	33.3

Source: 2010 American Community Survey 3-year estimates

6. PEOPLE LIVING IN MANUFACTURED AND MOBILE HOMES

Manufactured housing and mobile homes are especially susceptible to damage from high windstorm events. As a result, people living in this type of housing are more vulnerable to injury and death when compared to those living in dwellings built with conventional framed construction. In 2010, there were 2,084 mobile homes, accounting for 8.6 percent of all housing units in Sauk County). In 2018, there were 31 mobile home parks in Sauk County (Appendix E). None of the mobile parks had a storm shelter where people could go during a wind-related storm event.

Table 3-3. Primary Language Spoken Home: 2010

	Percent
English	93.8
Spanish	3.3
Speak English only or very well	66.8
Speak English less than "very well"	33.2
Indo-European language	2.4
Speak English only or "very well"	74.1
Speak English less than "very well"	25.9
Asian or Pacific Island language	0.3
Speak English only or very well	86.5
Speak English less than "very well"	13.5
Other language	0.3
Speak English only or very well	73.4
Speak English less than "very well"	26.6

Source: 2010 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

7. PEOPLE IN CAMPGROUNDS

People staying in campgrounds are even more vulnerable to wind storm events than those living in mobile home and manufactured homes. Although many campers stay in hard-sided campers or RVs, some stay in soft-sided tents. During a windstorm or tornado, they have little protection from wind-borne debris and falling branches and trees.

In 2018, there were 23 campgrounds in the county (Appendix E and Map 6). The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources operated 3 campgrounds. The other campgrounds were privately operated.

8. PEOPLE IN RECREATIONAL/EDUCATIONAL CAMPS

In addition to the campgrounds in the county, there were 4 group camps operated by a nonprofit entity for recreational or educational purposes (Appendix E and Map 6). Housing in a group camp usually consists of lodging in one or more buildings and/or camping in tents and the like.

9. PEOPLE IN GROUP QUARTERS

While the majority of people in Sauk County live in a single-family dwelling or a multifamily building, more than 850 people lived in what are referred to as group quarters in 2010 (Table 3-4). If residents live in a controlled environment (e.g., correctional institutions and nursing homes), the group quarters are referred to as institutional. Those living in a group setting are referred to as noninstitutional (e.g., college dormitories, military quarters). Nursing homes are the most populated type of group quarter, accounting for over 53 percent of this population.

Table 3-4. Population in Group Quarters; Sauk County: 2010

Type of Group Quarter	Number	Percent of Total [1]
Nursing homes	475	53.9
Local jails and other confinement facilities	132	15.0
Halfway homes or rehab centers	53	6.0
Group homes	19	2.1
Religious group quarters	13	1.5
Homes for the mentally ill	12	1.4
Homes for the mentally retarded	7	0.7
Noninstitutional group quarters	183	21.3
Total	858	100

Source: Various sources including field verification and the 2010 U.S. Census Note.

1. Total may not add up to 100.0 due to rounding