



NJ Office of Emergency Management

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NJOEM's Winter Weather Awareness Week: Road Safety in the Land of Ice and Snow

(TRENTON, NJ) – Colonel Rick Fuentes, Superintendent of New Jersey State Police and Director of the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management, is celebrating Winter Weather Awareness Week, continuing today and ending Friday.

Each day will bring a new message for family preparedness during the winter months.

Today's message:

Road Safety in the Land of Ice and Snow

If at all possible, avoid driving during a winter storm. Blowing snow, icy slick spots and fewer daylight hours all create hazards. If you must drive, use the following information for a safe trip.

Maintenance

Winterize your vehicle to avoid breakdowns. Have a mechanic check the following:

- Battery
- Wipers and windshield washer fluid
- Antifreeze
- Ignition system
- Thermostat
- Lights
- Exhaust system
- Flashing hazard lights
- Heater
- Brakes

- Defroster
- Oil level
- Tires and air pressure. Consider getting snow tires or chains.

Before You Leave

Remember to create your Emergency Supply Kit and Emergency Action Plan, and know which radio or TV stations you will listen to for emergency warnings and for official public safety instructions. (See "General Emergency Preparedness" at the bottom of this release).

Also bring: Road maps, a cell phone, a shovel, a windshield scraper, a towrope, booster cables, and a brightly colored cloth to use as a distress signal. Also include a bag of sand or non-clumping cat litter to spread under tires if stuck in snow.

Check for current road conditions at the New Jersey Department of Transportation website <http://www.nj.gov/transportation/commuter/trafficinfo/> or at the South Jersey Transportation Authority website <http://www2.sjta.com/sjta/>.

Tell someone that you are taking a trip, where you are going, the routes you will travel and when you expect to return. When you reach your destination, call to report you have arrived.

Before leaving town, fill your gas tank. While traveling, stop frequently to refill your tank. The breaks will help you stay alert.

On the Road

Use common sense and the following guidelines:

- Always buckle your seat belt.
- Brake properly to avoid skidding. If driving on snow or ice, start slowly and brake gently. Begin braking early when you come to an intersection.
- If you start to slide, ease off the gas pedal or brakes. Steer into the direction of the skid until you regain traction, then straighten your vehicle. If you have antilock brakes, apply steady pressure.
- Visibility and speed:
 - In fog, drive with headlights set on dim or use fog lights.
 - In rain, fog, snow or sleet, stay within the limits of your vision. If it is too difficult to see, pull off the road and stop.
 - Drive slowly and increase your following distance. Your speed should adjust for conditions and match the flow of traffic.
 - Watch for slick spots. Be physically and mentally prepared to react.
- Other vehicles:
 - Never try to pass a vehicle in blinding snow, as there may be vehicles ahead you cannot see.
 - Be alert for snowplows. When a plow is coming toward you, allow plenty of room for it to pass. Its blade may cross the centerline. Allow extra distance between your vehicle and service vehicles as they may be spreading salt.
 - Be alert when you approach a cloud of snow that obscures the road, especially on passing lanes of interstates or freeways. A snowplow may be ahead clearing the lane or preparing to turn around.
 - Be careful after any minor accident. If you are bumped from behind and do not feel comfortable exiting your vehicle, motion to the other driver and drive to the nearest safe place to stop, such as a 24-hour store.
- Be prepared to turn back and seek shelter if conditions become threatening.

If You Become Stranded

If you break down, pull as far off the road as possible. Your greatest threat at this point is that of being hit by passing cars.

Use common sense and the following guidelines:

- Stay in the car. You may become disoriented and lost while wandering in a snowstorm.
- If you have a cell phone, call for help.
- Display a trouble sign. Attach a brightly colored cloth to your car's antenna.
- Run the engine occasionally, to keep warm. Turn on the engine for 10 minutes each hour. Run the heater during this time.
- Beware of carbon monoxide poisoning. Clear snow away from the exhaust pipe and open a downwind window slightly for ventilation.
- If it is dark, turn on your vehicle's interior light to make it easier for rescuers to find you.
- Avoid overexertion. Cold weather puts added strain on the heart. Shoveling snow or pushing the car in freezing temperatures can cause a heart attack or make other medical conditions worse.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia or frostbite. Symptoms of hypothermia include uncontrollable shivering, memory lapses and drowsiness. Symptoms of frostbite include numb or pale fingers, toes, nose and ears.
- If you see these symptoms, warm the torso area first and work outward, finishing with the extremities. Use a blanket. Occasionally moving arms and legs will stimulate circulation.

General Emergency Preparedness

For New Jersey residents, the basics of preparedness for nor'easters and winter flooding are virtually the same as preparedness for all hazards, natural or manmade:

- **FIRST:** Arm yourself and your family members with an **Emergency Supply Kit** and an **Emergency Action Plan**.
 - Your **Emergency Supply Kit** should include a blanket, a battery-powered radio, a first aid kit, one week's prescription medications, personal toiletries, infant care items, three days' worth of non-perishable food and water (one gallon of water per person per day), a can opener, and cash or travelers checks. For more, visit the American Red Cross website: www.redcross.org/disaster/safety/fds-all.pdf.
 - Your **Emergency Action Plan** should include an out-of-town contact your family members will call or email to check on each other, a predetermined meeting place away from your home, and specific plans for individuals with special needs or disabilities. For more, visit the American Red Cross website: www.redcross.org/static/file_cont36_lang0_23.pdf.
- **NEXT:** Pay attention to **weather media and your local radio or television stations** for **weather updates** and for **official instructions** from **Public Safety Officials**.
- **If you live in an area prone to flooding: Know your evacuation route.** You can find maps of New Jersey's coastal evacuation routes at the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management's website, www.state.nj.us/njoem. In all areas, call local Emergency Management officials or Police Department for details on your evacuation plan.

Further information on all-hazards preparedness for families can be found at the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management's website, www.state.nj.us/njoem.

Similar information can be found in "Plain Talk on Terrorism Preparedness," available from the New Jersey Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force at www.njhomelandsecurity.com/Plain-Talk-12.08.04.pdf; and in "Ready Together New Jersey," from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, at <http://www.njhomelandsecurity.com/ready-together-brochure.html>.

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