



NJ Office of Emergency Management

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

November 18, 2005

NJOEM's Winter Weather Awareness Week: Winter Safety at Home

(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, ending today.

Each day this week brought a new message for family preparedness during the winter months.

Today's message: **Winter Safety at Home.**

Winterize Your Home

Follow these steps to protect your home and ease your heating bills this winter:

- Have your **heating system** checked by a professional once a year. This will ensure it is working safely and efficiently, and will help save you money. If you heat by wood, clean your fireplace or stove and have your flue checked for any buildup of creosote.
- Make sure your home is properly **insulated**. If necessary, insulate walls and attics. This will help conserve energy reduce your home's power demands for heat.
- Caulk **doors and windows** to keep cold air out.
- Install **storm windows**, or cover windows with plastic from the inside. This will provide an extra layer of insulation and help keep cold air out.
- To protect **pipes** from freezing:
 - Wrap pipes in **insulation** or layers of old newspapers. Cover the newspapers with plastic to keep out moisture.
 - Let **faucets** drip a little, continuously.
 - Know how to shut off your **water valves**. Keep a wrench near the valves.
 - You can find more information in the American Red Cross document "Preventing and Thawing Frozen Pipes," available online at http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/0,1082,0_579_,00.html.

- Inspect and flush your **water heater**.
- Clean **gutters**. Leaves and other debris will hamper drainage.
- Replace **batteries** for smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. If you did not do this when you set the clocks back, do it now.
- Create a place where your **animals** can be comfortable in severe winter weather. Make sure any outbuilding that houses or shelters animals can withstand wind, heavy snow and ice.
 - Bring pets indoors. Horses and livestock should have a shelter protected from wind, snow, ice and rain. **Grazing animals need access to a protected supply of food and non-frozen water.**
 - Make sure your animals have access to high ground in case you do not have time to relocate them during a flood.
- Be aware of the potential for **flooding** when snow and ice melt.
 - Consider purchasing **flood insurance**. Homeowners' policies do not cover damage from floods. Ask your insurance agent about the National Flood Insurance Program, or visit <http://www.fema.gov/nfip/> if you are at risk.

Clearing Your Roof

Clearing snow or other debris from your roof is a dangerous task. Always think about safety first. If possible, do not attempt to clear the roof alone. If the job is too big, hire help.

When clearing the roof use common sense and the following guidelines:

- When possible use long-handled rakes or poles.
- If you must use a ladder, make sure the base is securely anchored. Ask someone to hold the ladder while you climb.
- Know where the snow is going to fall before clearing the area.
- Make sure you do not touch electrical wires.

Disabilities or Special Needs

Emergency preparedness information for individuals with physical, visual, auditory or cognitive disabilities can be found at this American Red Cross website: <http://www.prepare.org/disabilities/disabilitiesprep.htm>:

- These guidelines will help you create a personal needs assessment; keep emergency medical information handy in case you are unable to speak; and create a plan that will ensure your specific needs are met during an emergency.
- Make sure your personal assistant, friends or relatives know your plans. Guidelines on creating your Emergency Supply Kit and Emergency Action Plan can be found at the bottom of this page, under "General Emergency Preparedness."
- Be sure to register with your local Office of Emergency Management and Police Department, to make them aware of the assistance you may need during an emergency.

For all New Jersey residents, if you have a neighbor who is elderly or who depends on equipment such as a ventilator, respirator or oxygen concentrator, you should plan with them to make sure their needs will be met during a severe winter storm:

- Help your neighbor stock an Emergency Supply Kit as described below, under "General Emergency Preparedness."
- Check on them after a storm or power outage.
- Make sure they are registered as a special needs customer with their utility, to ensure they will become a priority customer during blackouts and emergencies.
- Make sure they are registered as a special needs individual with the local Office of Emergency Management and Police Department.

- Notify others who could help such as neighbors, relatives and nearby friends.
- Have a list of emergency numbers readily available.
- Have a standby generator or an alternate source of power available. Always be aware of the safety rules for its use.

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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