

Blizzards, Extreme Cold, Power Outages

Disaster Tips

Blizzards are the most common natural disaster in New Jersey. Heavy snowfall can cause major walkways and roadways to become extremely dangerous or impassable, as well as pose a major threat to the city's community services, health programs, schools, and child services. These winter storms can often be accompanied by power outages that can last hours, even days, in cold temperatures. Taking the necessary precautions to prepare for these storms and conditions is essential.

Blizzards:

- Make sure your home is well insulated, with the possibility for extra insulation by adding storm windows or cover windows with plastic from the inside.
- Have a professional inspect your heating system annually.
- Keep trees well-trimmed to prevent falling due to heavy snowfall or winds.
- Protect water pipes from freezing by turning both hot and cold faucets to continuously drip a little. Moving water takes significantly longer to freeze.
- Clean your gutters. Excess debris will block necessary drainage.
- Have an easily accessible snow shovel handy as well as salt or sand.
- Make sure your emergency kit is updated and ready for a storm (kit should be able to manage about three days of self-sufficiency).
- Fill the gas tank of your car in the event that you have to leave.
- Be wary of potential flooding from melting snow and ice. Homeowner's insurance does not cover flooding so consider purchasing flood insurance.
- Heart attacks are one of the most common injuries during a blizzard, mostly due to overexertion. Limit this additional strain by avoiding long stretches of intense shoveling, pushing a car, or walking in deep snow.
- Stay tuned in to your local radio/TV news and weather stations for updates.

Extreme Cold and Power Outages:

- Turn off and unplug any appliances and lights to avoid a short circuit when the power comes back on. Leave one light plugged in as a notifier that the power is back.
- Have an emergency charging option for any mobile devices (car, hand crank, solar, etc).
- Notify your utility provider and police department in the event of a power outage and you have someone in your home on life support or otherwise dependent on electrical machinery.
- Use flashlights over candles, as candles pose a tremendous fire hazard.
- Consider acquiring a generator. This is especially for anyone with a resident/loved one reliant on life-support machinery. Do not operate a generator indoors to avoid a buildup of carbon monoxide gas. Do not connect generators directly to a home's electrical system.
- Have an extra heat source in the event of a power outage, such as extra blankets/coats/sleeping bags, a fireplace, or a wood-burning stove.
 - Do not use charcoal indoors to cook or heat.
 - Do not use your gas oven to heat your home.
 - These actions can lead to a deadly buildup of carbon monoxide gas.