

Severe Storm Preparedness

Provided by the Office of the Governor of New York

Before the storm hits:

- Tie down or bring inside lawn furniture, trash cans, tools and hanging plants that could be projectiles during the storm.
- If you have a basement, check sump pumps to ensure they are operating and be prepared to use a backup system.
- Have a standby generator or alternative source of power available.
- Check on neighbors, especially the elderly and disabled.

As the storm approaches:

- Stay inside, away from windows and glass doors.
- Charge your cellphones and important electronic devices.
- Stay off roads. If you are traveling, find safe shelter immediately.

If you must travel:

- Do not attempt to drive over flooded roads – turn around and go another way. Water moving at two miles per hour can sweep cars off a road or bridge.
- Watch for areas where rivers or streams may suddenly rise and flood, such as highway dips, bridges, and low areas.
- If you are in your car and water begins to rise rapidly around you, abandon the vehicle immediately.

If you are at home or at work:

- Stay at home unless you have been ordered to leave.
- Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and open only when necessary.
- Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Unplug major appliances.
- Fill large containers with water.

If winds become strong:

- Stay away from windows and doors even if they are covered.
- Close all interior doors.
- Secure and brace external doors.
- If you are in a two or multiple-story house, go to an interior lower-floor room.
- Remain indoors during a severe thunder storm. If warned of a tornado, go to a basement or other low area in your home or business or in a room with no windows.

If you lose electrical service:

- Call your utility first to determine area repair schedules. Turn off or unplug lights and appliances to prevent a circuit overload when service is restored. Leave one light on to indicate power has been restored.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to help reduce food spoilage.
- If you have space in your refrigerator or freezer, fill plastic containers with water, leaving an inch of space inside each one. This will help keep food cold.

If you need to use a generator:

- Before installing a generator, be sure to properly disconnect from your utility electrical service. If possible, have your generator installed by a qualified electrician.
- Run generators outside, downwind of structures. Never run a generator indoors. Deadly carbon monoxide gas from the generator's exhaust can spread throughout enclosed spaces.
- Fuel spilled on a hot generator can cause an explosion. If your generator has a detachable fuel tank remove it before refilling. If this is not possible, shut off the generator and let it cool before refilling.
- Do not exceed the rated capacity of your generator. Most small, home-use portable generators produce 350 to 12,000 watts of power. Overloading your generator can damage it and appliances connected to it, and may cause a fire. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep children away from generators at all times.

Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Do not operate generators indoors; the motor emits deadly carbon monoxide gas.
- Do not use charcoal to cook indoors. It, too, can cause a buildup of carbon monoxide gas.
- Do not use your gas oven to heat your home -- prolonged use of an open oven in a closed house can create carbon monoxide gas.
- Install a carbon monoxide alarm.

The best way to receive emergency information is to subscribe to NY-ALERT, the State's alert and notification system. Visit www.nyalert.gov.