

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Declares State of Emergency In Response to Expected Winter Storm

12/16/2020

State Offices to Close Beginning at 1:00 P.M. Today for Non-Weather Essential Personnel

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today declared that New Jersey will enter a state of emergency beginning Wednesday, December 16, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. in response to the expected winter storm. The storm is anticipated to start in the late morning and hazardous conditions may continue through Thursday evening. Executive Order No. 208 declares a state of emergency across all 21 counties in New Jersey, allowing resources to be deployed throughout the state during the duration of the storm. The Governor has also initiated a staggered closing for state offices beginning at 1:00 p.m. this afternoon. The early dismissal does not include weather-essential employees, who shall remain until the normal close of business. Private companies and businesses should dismiss their employees at their own discretion

"Heavy snow and high winds are expected in many parts of the state today," **said Governor Murphy**. "Safety is our top priority. We ask that residents stay off of the roads as we deploy resources to clear snow."

"New Jersey's transportation agencies are prepared and ready for the storm. NJDOT, the Turnpike Authority and SJTA combined are activating nearly 4,000 plows and spreaders," **said Transportation Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti**. "We ask the public to stay off the roads during the storm so our crews can do their jobs to get the highways clear."

"Troopers throughout the state are ready to assist residents and commuters both on and off of the highways for the duration of this storm should the need arise," **said Colonel Patrick Callahan of the New Jersey State Police**. "But we cannot do it without the help of our communities. Please use caution if you must travel and prepare emergency kits for use at home and in your vehicle."

"This is a major winter storm event and, as always, the BPU is in close contact with the utilities," **said James Giuliano, Director of Reliability and Security at the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities**. "The predicted heavy wet snow and wind does have strong potential to impact trees and utility lines, causing outages. We encourage residents and businesses to make preparations for potential loss of service by charging cell phones, computers and other devices and have spare batteries for flashlights. Report any outages as soon as possible and please use extreme care when using any generators, and assume every downed wire is live and avoid that area. The utilities will restore power as quickly and safely as possible. Above all, stay safe."

"NJOHSP works closely with critical infrastructure operators and our partners to prepare for all hazards. It continues during the fight against COVID and as we prepare for New Jersey's first significant snowfall of the season," **said Jared M. Maples, Director of the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness**. "True to form, 2020 has presented us with yet another challenge. As always, we're working with our partners to minimize the effects of this storm, and doing so while still in the fight against a global pandemic and monitoring for other potential threats. Staying home and off the roads will help us do that."

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Parts of New Jersey are expected to experience heavy snow. To prepare for the winter storm, the New Jersey State Police will activate the State Emergency Operations Center in order to monitor the storm. The New Jersey Department of Transportation will also deploy nearly 4,000 plows and spreaders to keep roads and communities safe.

The Governor encourages New Jerseyans to visit ready.nj.gov for important weather updates and safety information. New Jersey residents should also pay attention to local forecasts, warnings, and watches.

For those living in Central and Southern New Jersey, visit the U.S. National Weather Service Philadelphia/Mount Holly at <http://www.weather.gov/phi/> (<https://www.weather.gov/phi/>)

For those living in Northern New Jersey and the New York Metro area, visit the U.S. National Weather Service New York, N.Y. at <http://www.weather.gov/okx/> (<https://www.weather.gov/okx/>)

Important Tips to Remember When Preparing for Winter Weather:

- Secure loose items in your yard such as trash cans, children's toys, and lawn decorations.
- Build an emergency kit that includes supplies for the whole family, including pets. Due to COVID-19 there are a few updates to preparing for this winter season such as including hand soap, hand sanitizer, disinfectant supplies and cloth face coverings in your emergency kits/go-bags.
- Have cash on hand. If the power is out, so are the ATMs and credit card machines.
- Know how to report a power outage to your utility company.
- Know where your utility shut off valves (gas, electric, water) are and how to use them.
- NEVER use a generator inside homes, garages, crawlspaces, sheds, or similar areas, even when using fans or opening doors and windows for ventilation. Deadly levels of carbon monoxide can quickly build up in these areas and can linger for hours, even after the generator has shut off.
- Be sure to keep an adequate amount of gas in your car.
- Be sure to check on friends and neighbors who have access or functional needs. Due to COVID-19, in person visits may not be ideal under certain circumstances. Please adhere to social distancing guidelines and wear a mask. Use other means of communication such as phone, text or video chat to check on neighbors and help prepare them.
- Be sure to have extra medications on hand and keep them in a water-resistant container.
- Get all of your vital records and insurance papers together now. Keep them in a water-resistant container. If you can, scan and email them to yourself so you have a copy of important numbers and policies, etc.
- Charge your cell phones and try not to use them if the power goes out.

A copy of Executive Order No. 208 can be found here (<https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-208.pdf>).

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