

Public Safety Guidance for Weather and Weather-Related Events

Weather situations are carefully monitored by numerous government agencies. When severe weather is predicted, you should take the warning seriously.

Severe weather warnings are issued to protect the public. Weather conditions will impact traffic and road conditions. New Jersey provides a real-time web link for road conditions which can be accessed at <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/commuter/trafficinfo/>.

Here are some general tips to be prepared for a weather emergency:

- Plan ahead. Become familiar with where to locate traffic information sources which are helpful for your geographic location and the roads and areas you travel through during your commute to and from the University. Be sure to save them among your favorite websites, radio stations, etc., so they are readily accessible during a weather event.
- Examine and plan alternate routes to and from the campus when the weather conditions are good. Be aware of the roads and environment on your travel route. Speak with your colleagues about alternate routes and methods which they may use to travel to and from the University.
- Should current or predicted weather conditions forecast an emergency condition or hamper University operations, check the normal information outlets the University uses to transmit this type of information such as the Rave Mobile Safety System, email, voice mail, and the home page for announcements regarding University operations.
- If you are on campus during a severe weather event, remain in a secure area. Do not evacuate a facility unless an alarm activates, an order is given by a University official, or the situation could be life threatening if you remain in place.

- **NEVER** touch or go near downed wires, even if you think they are safe.
- Dress appropriately for the weather conditions. Check various media and informational resources for road and traffic conditions, and if traveling, allow adequate time to account for reduced speeds, traffic congestion, and detours.
- Make communication arrangements in advance with your students, colleagues, subordinates, or supervisor regarding notification procedures if you will not be at work because of a weather condition or other situation. Some options include making individual phone calls, using a telephone calling tree, modifying your voice mail to indicate you will not be present, or sending email or text messages.

GUIDANCE FOR SPECIFIC WEATHER EVENTS

Here is some guidance for specific weather situations you may have to deal with on campus:

Thunderstorm:

Avoid handling metal, electrical equipment, telephones, water faucets, sinks, and bathtubs, since lightning can follow the wires and pipes. Be especially careful with televisions, radios, and computer equipment. If a severe thunderstorm comes upon you quickly, seek cover immediately in a stable facility, and avoid taking shelter under trees or in gullies.

Tornado:

While this area is not known for tornado activity, it can and does occur sporadically. Move to a secure area away from windows. If there is a basement, seek refuge in the basement. If there is no basement, go to an interior room or hallway without windows. If you cannot find shelter, take cover in a ditch or other recessed area.

Flash Flood:

Seek high ground. Never attempt to drive your vehicle through standing water. The force of water can wash a vehicle away, trapping occupants inside the vehicle. Should you be caught in a large body of water and your vehicle stalls, call the police immediately. Do not exit the vehicle unless the water is continuing to rise to an unsafe level.

When you leave the vehicle, you may be exposed to potentially harmful or lethal hazards such as downed electrical wires that electrically charge the water. Sudden pressure changes in manhole/storm drain covers may release and, with great sudden force, suck water into the drain along with anything small enough to fit through the opening.

It is important to respect the power of water. Exiting a vehicle could result in being swept away by the force of rushing waters. In gauging whether to evacuate the vehicle or not, assess the conditions and remember it is extremely difficult to open a car door when the water level reaches halfway up the door.

Winter Weather:

Dress warmly and stay dry. Wear hats, scarves, and water-repellent coats. Dress in layers and wear adequate and appropriate foot attire.

Frequently, ice may develop under the snow and create a slippery condition. Good traction when walking is as important as good traction when driving. Observe the conditions when you are traveling, by foot or by car. Snow has a tendency to melt in daylight hours and refreeze as ice patches in the later hours. What might have been a clear path or road could have slippery ice conditions later in the day. The topography of the campus subjects it to a variation of wind and temperature conditions. A one- or two-degree difference can be the difference between water and ice.

Remember that mittens are warmer than gloves. Cover your mouth. Protect your lungs from extremely cold air by covering your mouth when outdoors.

Avoid overexertion. Take your time shoveling snow or pushing a car. Stretch before you go out and drink plenty of non-alcoholic, decaffeinated fluids.

Winter Car Safety:

Be sure to clear snow from your tail pipe before you start your car to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Avoid going out to your vehicle alone. Have a partner observe you as you remove ice and snow, in case of an accident. Keep a shovel, an ice scraper, and some ice melting material in your car. Store a spare blanket and gloves in the car in case you get stuck and need to keep warm.

Make sure to clear your car of all the ice and snow. Ice and snow blowing from your vehicle represents a significant potential hazard to other drivers. Check the tread condition on your tires before the winter season and replace worn or misaligned tires to provide better traction. Fill up the windshield deicer and verify antifreeze levels. Remember, all-wheel and four-wheel drive helps the car go but doesn't help it stop.

Utilize common sense and good judgment. Check the condition of your vehicle's battery before cold weather sets in. Starting a vehicle in cold weather places more demand on a battery than starting it in mild temperatures.

Cooperate with University Police and Physical Plant Operations in parking relocation activities which may go into effect during heavy snows. Your cooperation and assistance will aid in the snow removal efforts on the campus, improve safety, and reduce the potential impact the conditions have on University operations.

Nor'easters/Coastal Storms/Hurricanes:

These can be exceptional storms consisting of very heavy rain/snow, very strong winds, and flooding. Utilize various media options in order to remain up to date regarding weather conditions.

When severe conditions are in the forecast, prepare your facilities and equipment to withstand those conditions and reduce personal risk. If you are responsible for areas which are prone to flooding or leaks, or exercise control over materials or equipment which may represent a risk in high winds, implement appropriate measures to reduce the risks. Such measures might include relocating equipment, elevating it, disconnecting electrical fixtures and connections, removing or securing materials which might be impacted by strong winds, and covering items which may be damaged by leaks with plastic.