

Dear Friend,

Whether it's a natural emergency like high winds, flooding or lightning, or a man-made threat, New Yorkers should know what to do when faced with a disaster, especially today as extreme weather becomes more frequent and dangerous.

Emergency-response personnel are trained to respond quickly and effectively, but every community's level of preparedness starts with individuals being aware and informed. We can't stop certain disasters from happening, but we can control the amount of personal devastation that results from those situations by taking the proper preventive measures.

I hope that you find this pamphlet useful. If you have questions on this or any other matter, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



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## Schenectady County Information

### Department of Emergency Management

[www.schenectadycounty.com/  
FullStory.aspx?m=151&amid=580](http://www.schenectadycounty.com/FullStory.aspx?m=151&amid=580)

### Department of Public Health Services

386-2810

### Red Cross of Northeastern NY

458-8111

[www.Redcross.org/ny/albany](http://www.Redcross.org/ny/albany)

### Northeast Region 2-1-1

[www.211eny.org](http://www.211eny.org)

2-1-1 functions as a powerful service to communities by connecting people with important services and volunteer opportunities. By dialing an easy-to-remember access code, people looking for help and those who want to help are connected to available community resources.



## Be Alert, Be Informed, Be Prepared

### A New York guide to weathering emergencies

### Make a "Family Emergency Plan" today because emergencies can happen in an instant:

- Hold a family meeting and discuss where to meet in case of an emergency. Pick two places: somewhere outside of your home in case of a fire, and a place away from your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
- Know how to contact all family members at all times, and designate an out-of-area friend whom family members can contact to report their whereabouts. Make sure your children know all important phone numbers, including 911.
- Install and check safety features, such as smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
- Know how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity in your home.
- Make a plan for what to do with your pets in case of evacuation, and know the rules of your local shelters.
- Review your insurance policy to see what kind of coverage, if any, is possible for damages caused by hurricanes and other natural disasters, as some companies require the purchase of additional insurance to cover such damages. Flood damage is excluded from insurance policies and must be purchased through the federal National Flood Insurance Program.
- Tune in to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio or your local radio and television stations.

### Emergency Kit Checklist

Be prepared to live without electricity, water, heat, air conditioning or telephone service for at least three days. Always have the following on-hand:

- Flashlights with extra batteries, which should be kept in various locations in the house.
- Portable radio or TV with extra batteries.
- First aid kit.
- Fire extinguisher.
- Food. Store a three-day supply of canned or dehydrated non-perishable food, powdered milk and canned juices.
- Water. Store a three-day supply of water in air-tight containers that should be replaced every six months.
- Extra blankets, warm clothes and sturdy shoes.
- A week's worth of medication, toiletries and hygienic items.
- Tools such as a crescent or pipe wrench to turn off the gas or water.
- Important documents in a waterproof container, such as insurance policies, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security cards, credit cards, and a small amount of cash.
- A full OSHA-approved gas can for car and generator. OSHA-approved gas cans are intended to hold combustible liquids and have special features that prevent spills and the escape of dangerous fumes.



## Hurricanes and flooding

New York State's hurricane season runs from June 1 through Nov. 30. While those living along the Atlantic coast are at more risk for high-wind and hurricane damage, everyone in the state is vulnerable to extensive flooding from inland-moving storms.

**High Winds:** Both hurricanes and tornadoes can produce violent, damaging winds. Unless you live in a coastal, low-lying area or manufactured home, you won't necessarily be evacuated. Take the following actions to protect yourself, your family and your property:

- Make sure your home meets current building code requirements for high winds.
- Protect your windows with commercial shutters or by having 5/8-inch plywood panels on hand.
- Trim dead wood and overhanging branches, and clear away excess gravel and rocks.
- Bring in all lawn furniture or other objects that could become projectiles.
- Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and only open when necessary.
- Turn off propane tanks and unplug major appliances.
- Designate an interior first-story room with no windows or external doors as a "safe room," even if it's a closet. Do not leave the "safe room" until local officials say so, even if the winds seem to have calmed.
- If instructed to evacuate, leave as soon as possible.

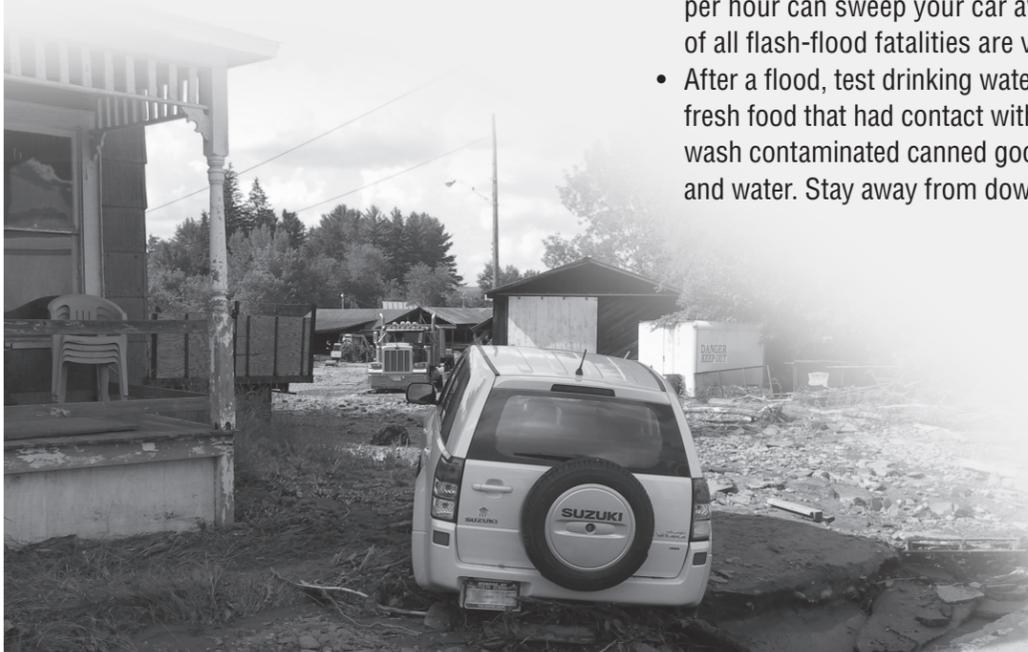
**Inland Flooding:** Severe storms produce large amounts of rain, which could lead to inland flooding. A Flash Flood or Flood Watch means that flooding is possible in your area. A Flash Flood or Flood Warning means that flooding is imminent or has been reported. Take immediate action:

- Know the elevation of your property, your insurance coverage and the fastest, safest route to high land.
- Fuel your cars because gas stations may not pump for several days.
- In flood-prone areas, keep sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, plastic garbage bags, lumber, shovels, work boots and gloves handy for emergency waterproofing.
- Make an itemized list of all valuables, including furnishings, clothing and personal property.
- Keep your rain gutters and downspouts clear of clogs.
- Move all outside possessions inside and, if there's time, move essential items and furniture to upper floors in the house. Disconnect electrical appliances that can't be moved.
- Avoid driving into water because there's no way to tell how deep it is. Two feet of water will float your car, and water moving at two miles per hour can sweep your car away. Nearly half of all flash-flood fatalities are vehicle related.
- After a flood, test drinking water. Throw away fresh food that had contact with flood water and wash contaminated canned goods with soap and water. Stay away from downed power lines.

## Lightning safety

Did you know lightning kills more people in this country each year than tornadoes? Lightning is simply the building and discharge of electric energy, which is released as a flash of light, or a bolt, that heats the air to 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit. This rapid heating of the air then produces a shock wave, thunder. Being struck by lightning is potentially fatal:

- During a storm, stay indoors whenever possible.
- Avoid contact with corded phones and electrical equipment. Phone use is the leading cause of indoor lightning injuries in the United States because lightning can travel through the wires.
- Avoid contact with plumbing, meaning don't wash your hands, shower or do the laundry.
- Avoid contact with concrete walls and floors, which may contain metal reinforcing bars or wire mesh.
- If you're outside, pay attention to the sky.
- During a storm, listen for thunder and immediately seek shelter when heard. Even if the sky looks clear, lightning can travel sideways for up to 10 miles. If there isn't a safe building nearby, find a hard-topped, all-metal vehicle.
- If the time between when you see the flash and hear the thunder is 30 seconds or less, the lightning is close enough to hit you.
- Lightning hits the tallest object - including trees - so make sure you aren't it. If there's nothing around you, crouch down as low as possible.
- Avoid metal. Drop metal backpacks, fishing rods, golf clubs and tennis rackets and stay away from bicycles, motorcycles, fences, clothes lines and exposed sheds.
- Stay out of the water, including puddles.
- Avoid huddling in a group.
- If someone is struck by lightning, call 911 and get medical attention as quickly as possible.



## NY-Alert

NY-Alert is part of New York State's ongoing commitment to provide New Yorkers with information that keeps them aware of threats and emergency situations, and teaches them how to respond accordingly.

Signing up for NY-Alert is free. By doing so, you will receive warnings and emergency information, including road closures, inclement weather events and protective actions recommended by state and local governments,

schools and the private sector where appropriate. Information can be sent to you via your cellphone, your home phone, email and other technologies.

When you sign up for NY-Alert, you will also be able to select the locations you would like to receive information about, such as your town or village, county, or the entire state.

You can sign up for NY-Alert by going to [www.nyalert.gov](http://www.nyalert.gov) or by calling 888-697-6972.