



# NEWS from STATE OEM



## NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor

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FOR RELEASE:  
IMMEDIATE, Monday  
March 7, 2011

### WINTER STORM SAFETY: HEED LOCAL OFFICIALS' EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Snow, ice and rain over the last 24 hours has made driving conditions treacherous in many areas of the state. The New York State Office of Emergency Management today reminded New Yorkers that they should heed emergency orders and protective actions issued by local officials.

“Local states of emergency have been declared in several counties impacted by this late-winter storm,” Andrew X. Feeney, Director of the New York State Office of Emergency Management (OEM). “This empowers the local chief elected official or law enforcement officer to issue emergency orders such as no unnecessary travel. This is done to protect the public. This gives highway crews the chance to keep up with snowfall to clear major arteries.”

Feeney also advised that residents in storm affected areas should be aware of local conditions and urged them to monitor local media broadcasts for the latest information from local officials. Many counties also issue emergency information via NY-ALERT, the state’s free alert and notification system. To register, visit, [www.nyalert.gov](http://www.nyalert.gov).

With scattered power outages being reported in various sections of the state, snow still falling and flood watches and warnings still in effect, Feeney urged New Yorkers to review their emergency plans and to use common sense.

“If you are without power, report it to your local utility,” he said. “If you see a downed wire, don’t touch it. Assume it is live and report its location to your utility.”

The State OEM Director also cautioned that gas-powered electric generators should be operated only outdoors and downwind of the residence or building. “Never use charcoal to cook indoors or use your gas oven to heat your home. Both activities can lead to a buildup of carbon monoxide gas which can be fatal.”

If travel is permitted in your area, motorists should always adjust their speed according to the weather conditions. Before venturing out onto the highway, Feeney advised motorists to check travel conditions and follow these tips:

- Start your vehicle and allow it to warm up.

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- Before getting behind the wheel, clean all of the snow and ice from the entire vehicle. Ensure the windshield is clear of frost. Don't start to drive if you only have a small area of the windshield clear. Good vision is a key to good driving.
- Plan your stops and keep more distance between cars. Be extra alert. Remember, snowdrifts can hide smaller children. Moreover, always match your speed to the road and weather conditions.
- Leave plenty of time to arrive at work or appointments without having to rush.

When driving on snow or ice, remember the following:

- Slow Down! Adjust your speed to the existing conditions.
- Increase the following distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you.
- Watch out for other drivers and scan the road ahead.
- Slow down prior to making a turn.
- Do not slam on the brakes.
- Do not use the cruise control.
- Steer smoothly without jerking the wheel.
- Always wear your seat belt.

Feeney also pointed out that many rivers, streams and tributaries are running extremely high because of the warm temperatures, rain and snow melt. "Nearly half of all flash flood fatalities are vehicle related," he said. "When driving your automobile during flood conditions, look out for flooding at highway dips, bridges and low areas."

He also advised motorists to remember:

- Even the largest and heaviest of vehicles will float. Water moving at two miles per hour can sweep cars off a road or bridge.
- As little as six inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle. Do not drive through flowing water!
- Road beds may have been scoured or even washed away during flooding creating unsafe driving conditions.
- Those who repeatedly drive through flooded low-water crossings may not recognize the dangers of a small increase in the water level.
- Driving too fast through low water will cause the vehicle to hydroplane and lose contact with the road surface.
- Heed all flood and flash flood watches and warnings.

For more information on how individuals can be better prepared for winter and flood emergencies, visit [www.semo.state.ny.us](http://www.semo.state.ny.us)

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