

A Message From The Atlantic Highlands Office of Emergency Management

When it comes to massive storms like Hurricane Sandy, many dangers remain long after the weather event has dissipated. Some areas far from the front lines of the devastation won't make headlines, but will continue to feel the storm's effects for some time. Please discuss these post-hurricane safety tips daily with work crews as the likelihood for accidents increase when employees are performing unfamiliar tasks.

Trees, Limbs, Power and Gas Lines:

- Keep away from downed power lines or exposed gas lines, caution off the area and report immediately to the utility company.
- When performing work near trees, including cutting and trimming, trees should be inspected for stability, broken or damaged limbs.
- When using chippers and chainsaws for tree and brush removal, proper PPE such as eye / face protection, hearing protection, gloves, steel toe boots, and chaps (chainsaw) must be used. Ensure road work zones are set up following MUTCD requirements.
- Fall protection including a positioning device and full body harness must be utilized when employees are working from lifts and bucket trucks.
- Avoid overexertion. Get help if you have to lift anything over 50 pounds. Remember to lift with the legs and not the back. Stretch out muscles and ligaments prior to the start of your work day to reduce the likelihood of muscle strains and sprains.
- Maintain 10 feet of clearance from overhead lines.

Cold Stress:

- Monitor weather conditions and plan work activities so that outside work is conducted during the warmer parts of the day or rescheduled for days that are predicted to be warmer.
- Wear layers of clothing that are windproof and waterproof. Consider keeping additional clothing with you and changing into dry clothing as soon as possible after work clothing becomes wet.
- Take frequent rest breaks in warm, sheltered spaces.
- Know the signs and symptoms of cold stress (pain and numbness in extremities, excessive fatigue, severe uncontrollable shivering, drowsiness, irritability) and use the buddy system to monitor one another for these signs/symptoms.
- If someone shows signs of cold stress (frostbite or hypothermia), request immediate medical attention, move the individual to a warmer area in a sheltered space, remove cold or wet clothing, provide warm fluids, and monitor the person.

Driving Safety:

- NEVER go through flooded areas. Don't take risks. Even if you are familiar with the roads, it could turn out to be hazardous. The flooded area may contain dangers such as debris, tree branches or power lines that are not visible.
- Except when directed to proceed by a police officer or traffic control signal, every driver approaching an intersection should come to a complete stop before entering the intersection. The first vehicle at the intersection has the right-of-way. If two or more vehicles reach the four-way stop intersection at the same time, the driver of the vehicle on the left shall yield the right-of-way to the vehicle on the right.

Fatigue:

- Managers should afford employees regular breaks. Overworked or fatigued employees are at greater risk of losing concentration which could result in serious injuries.
- Conduct higher hazard or new activities during daylight hours using well-rested workers.
- Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration and limit the intake of caffeinated beverages.

Portable Generators:

- Inspect portable generators for damage or loose fuel lines that may have occurred during transportation and/or handling. Keep the generator dry.
- **Never attach a generator directly to the electrical system of a structure** (home, office or trailer) unless the generator has a properly installed transfer switch because this creates a risk of electrocution for utility workers.
- Always plug electrical appliances directly into the generator using the manufacturers supplied cords. Use undamaged heavy-duty extension cords that are grounded (3-pronged).
- Before refueling, shut down the generator. Never store fuel indoors.
- **Never use a generator indoors. Never place a generator outdoors near doors, windows, or vents.** Use CO detectors where extension cords enter the building.
- **If you or others show symptoms of CO poisoning — dizziness, headaches, nausea, tiredness—get to fresh air immediately and seek medical attention.**

Contaminated Areas:

- Flood waters and debris may be contaminated with sewage, dead animals and dangerous objects. Minimize skin exposure by wearing rubber boots and rubber gloves during clean up.
- Wash thoroughly with soap and water after handling contaminated articles.

- Properly protect any existing cuts, scraps, etc., so as not to come into contact with contaminated floodwaters. If you receive a puncture wound when working in a contaminated area, see your doctor immediately.