

New Yorkers Urged to Use Caution during Winter Storm

Issued By:NYS - Emergency Management Office

Issued On:2/23/10 4:57 PM

Affected Jurisdictions:New York

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Travel with Care on Roadways; Avoid Overexertion when Clearing Heavy, Wet Snow

With a forecast of heavy wet snow for tonight and tomorrow across much of eastern and northern parts of the State, the New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) today urged New Yorkers to use caution while traveling and avoid overexertion while clearing snow from walks and driveways.

“The word of the week is safety. With two back-to-back storms predicted over three days, we urge New Yorkers everywhere to take heed and use some common sense,” said John R. Gibb, Director of SEMO.

“If you’re out traveling, match your speed and drive according to weather conditions,” he said. “Before you get behind the wheel, make sure you have all of the snow cleared from your vehicle to give you clear vision. Be extra alert, plan your stops and keep more distance between vehicles. Remember, the stopping distance increases tremendously on snow-covered roads.”

Motorists should also make sure their vehicles are stocked with survival gear such as blankets, a shovel, flashlight and extra batteries, extra warm clothing, battery booster cables, some quick energy foods and a brightly-colored cloth to use as a distress flag in the event of a breakdown.

The SEMO Director said that weather conditions over the next three days could put many New Yorkers at risk over the next three days.

“Cold temperatures and physical activity put an extra strain on your heart,” Gibb said. “Heavy exertion such as shoveling snow, clearing debris or pushing a car increase the risk of a heart attack.”

Gibb said that to avoid problems, people should heed these tips:

- Stay warm, dress in layers and slow down when working outdoors.
- Take frequent rest to avoid overexertion.
- If you feel chest pain, stop and seek help immediately.

He also urged citizens to be aware of local weather conditions by listening to local television and radio stations or the NOAA Weather Radio and then plan activities accordingly. The best way to get emergency information, Gibb said, is from NY-ALERT, the State's all-hazards alert and notification system. To subscribe to this free service, visit www.nyalert.gov.

Finally, he emphasized that winter is especially challenging for the elderly and physically disabled. "Keep an eye on your neighbor and be prepared to lend a helping hand," he said.

For more information on how individuals can be better prepared for emergencies and for the winter months ahead, visit www.semo.state.ny.us.

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