

Storm Recovery RESOURCES



Keeping You and Your Family Safe During and After Severe Storms and Weather

Hurricane season does not end until November 30, which provides an opportunity to remind residents about the dangers of carbon monoxide exposure and other hazards during severe weather.

Carbon monoxide (or CO) is a colorless, odorless gas that cannot be seen, smelled or heard.

High levels of carbon monoxide can cause brain damage and even death, which is why it has been called the “silent killer.”

Many household items including gas and oil-burning furnaces, gas hot water heaters, portable generators, and charcoal grills produce this poisonous gas. The same is true with vehicles, snow blowers, or any gasoline-powered engine left idling in a garage especially one attached to a home or business.

From 2000-2019, 275 New Jersey residents died from non-fire related, accidental CO poisoning. In 2019 alone, 374 residents were treated in emergency rooms for non-fire related, accidental CO poisoning. Their age ranged from less than 5 years old to over 80 years old.

The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. CO symptoms are often described as “flu-like.”

What should you do in a carbon monoxide poisoning emergency? According to the [NJ Poison Center](#), go outside

to get fresh air immediately and call 9-1-1 if someone has stopped breathing or is difficult to wake up. Also, call your local fire department or gas company for a safety check, and do not go back into your home until the fire department tells you it is safe.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning



PORTABLE GENERATORS

- ✓ Never use a generator inside your home or garage, even if doors and windows are open.
- ✓ Only use generators outside, more than 20 feet away from your home, doors, and windows.

CO DETECTORS

- ✓ Install battery-operated or battery back-up CO detectors near every sleeping area in your home.
- ✓ Check CO detectors regularly to be sure they are functioning properly.



Annual inspection and maintenance of furnaces, stoves and fireplaces should be performed by a qualified licensed professional on all gas-powered household heaters. It is also important to have CO alarms installed throughout homes and other living spaces. Smoke alarms cannot detect carbon monoxide gas.

Resources:

- [Carbon Monoxide Fact Sheet](#)
- [Carbon Monoxide FAQ](#)

Protect yourself from floodwaters

When coming into contact with storm and floodwaters or working in a flood-affected area, there are steps you can take to help protect yourself against injury and infectious disease, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

Follow warnings about flooded roads.

Don't drive in flooded areas—cars or other vehicles won't protect you from floodwaters. They can be swept away or may stall in moving water.



If you have to be in or near floodwaters, wear a life jacket — especially if the water is rising.

Floodwaters can contain many things that may harm health, including downed power lines, germs, dangerous chemicals, human and livestock waste, wild or stray animals, and other contaminants that can make you sick.

Resources:

- [How to stay safe after a flood](#)

Cleaning Up and Protecting Your Home From Mold

Cleaning up after a flood and heavy rains can be both dangerous and challenging, leaving many homes open to potential mold.

Mold can grow in any environment, including hidden surfaces such as ceiling tiles and insulation.

To determine if mold spores are present, examine the walls, ceilings and floors for signs of water damage. Mold can also be recognized by a musty, earthy smell or bad odor.

Exposure to mold spores can be dangerous and cause nasal and throat irritation, coughing or wheezing, eye irritation, or, in some cases, skin irritation. People with mold allergies may have more severe reactions.

If your home or business has been flooded or experienced water damage, remove all items that have been wet for more than 48 hours and that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried such as leather, paper, wood and carpet. When in doubt, throw it out!

Scrub mold off hard surfaces with laundry or dish detergent and water, and dry completely so that mold does not grow

Be Sure to Protect Yourself When Cleaning Mold

- ❖ Wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, goggles, and N-95 mask
- ❖ Open windows and doors to get fresh air when you use bleach
- ❖ If available, use a shop vacuum equipped with a HEPA filter to trap dust
- ❖ Never mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaners



back. Never mix bleach with ammonia or other household cleaners.

When doing cleanup work, protect your health by wearing gloves, masks, boots, protective eyewear and respirators. Only specially trained and licensed contractors should remove asbestos containing materials.

Controlling moisture in your home and other buildings is the most critical factor for preventing mold growth, according to the CDC. Opening doors and windows can help dry out your home, and the use of an air conditioner or a dehumidifier during humid months can help control moisture.

Resources:

- [Mold After a Disaster](#)
- [Mold Cleanup and Remediation](#)

Tree Hazards:

Downed trees from severe storms can block roadways, take down power lines, and damage homes and property.

Serious injuries can also occur from post-storm tree hazards, especially while working with/near power lines, chainsaws, wood chippers, dead or diseased trees, and storm-downed or damaged trees.



Leave that work to the professionals. Individuals can search for a licensed professional at njtreeexperts.org.

If you are doing tree work, wear a hard hat, protective goggles and hearing protection. Don't wear loose-fitting clothing while using a wood chipper.

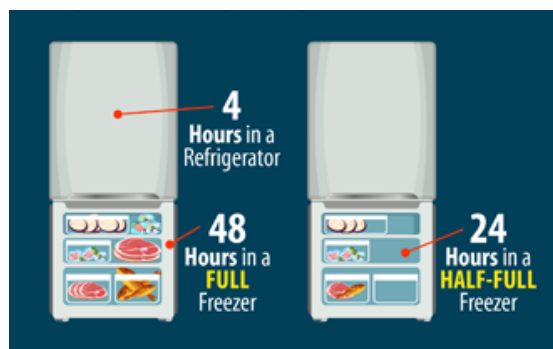
Resources:

- [Tree Trimming Safety](#)

Food Safety:

Food safety is also an important issue. Throw out perishable food in your refrigerator (meat, fish, cut fruits and vegetables, eggs, milk, and leftovers)

after four hours without power or a cold source like dry ice.



CDC

Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with floodwater. Perishable food such as meat, poultry, seafood, milk, and eggs that are not kept adequately refrigerated or frozen may cause illness if consumed, even when they are thoroughly cooked.

Discard any food that is not in a waterproof container. Also, throw out cardboard juice, milk or baby formula boxes.

Resources:

- [Food Safety Fact Sheet](#)