

DUTCHESS COUNTY DIGS OUT FROM SNOW

Poughkeepsie... With as much as 20 inches of snow in the last 36 hours, Dutchess County residents are slowly digging out. Dutchess County Department of Public Works highway crews have worked tirelessly to clear roadways and county roads are reported in good condition. Dutchess County Public Transit LOOP Bus has resumed normal service, although delays are being experienced.

In the Town of Washington, Supervisor Gary Ciferri has declared a State of Emergency (SOE) in effect until 5am on Saturday, February 15th that includes an emergency order stating all non-essential vehicles remain off town roads. For more information on the Town of Washington's SOE, please contact the Town of Washington at 677-3419.

Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro stated, "Thank you to Dutchess County residents for your diligence and patience. We are grateful to our crews who have been working long hours to ensure our roadways are open and safe to travel as well as our first responders and emergency dispatchers who have stood watch through the storm and continue to do so. Please continue to be patient and make safety a priority as we all try to clean out from the storms."

The Dutchess County Department of Emergency Response has a number of safety reminders for residents as they dig out from the snow.

Snow Shoveling Safety

Be safe when shoveling and remember cold temperatures put an extra strain on the heart. Heavy exertion, such as shoveling snow, clearing debris or pushing a car, can increase the risk of a heart attack. To avoid problems, remember these tips:

- If you begin to have chest discomfort, especially with one or more other signs of heart attack, call 911 right away.
- Stay warm, dress warm and SLOW DOWN when working outdoors.
- Take frequent rests to avoid over exertion and drink fluids.
- Shovel small amounts of snow at a time.
- Push the snow instead of lifting where possible.
- Use proper form if lifting is necessary: keep your back straight and lift with your legs.

Snow Blower Safety

The majority of snow blower injuries happen because the operator did not read the operating instructions. Please your machine's manual and follow these tips:

- Never leave your snow blower running and unattended.
- Make sure the discharge chute is not aimed at passing motorists or pedestrians.
- Never put your hands into the discharge chute or augers to clear stuck snow and ice.
- Never add fuel when the engine is running and hot.
- Make sure you know how to turn the machine off quickly.

Clearing Off Rooftops

With so much snow and ice, many homeowners will be clearing it off their home's roofs. Clearing roofs is a dangerous task, always put safety first!

- When possible, use long-handled snow rakes or poles.
- If you must use a ladder, make certain that the base is securely anchored. Ask a friend, neighbor or adult family member to hold the ladder while you climb.
- Know where the snow is going to fall before clearing the area.
- Make certain not to contact electrical wires.
- If possible, do not attempt to clear the roof alone.
- If you are afraid of heights or think the job is too big for you, HIRE HELP.

Driver Safety

· Vehicles need to be clear of ice and snow, including rooftops! Good vision is a key to good driving. Make sure you have full visibility when driving and make sure there is no snow blowing off from your vehicle to hinder visibility for other drivers on the road.

- Be sure that your exhaust pipe is cleared of snow before warming up your vehicle. A blocked exhaust pipe can cause deadly carbon monoxide to build up in your vehicle.
- Plan your stops and keep more distance between cars. Be extra alert. Match your speed to the road and weather conditions.
- With so much snow, snow banks along driveways and roadways are very high, limiting visibility for vehicles that are pulling onto roadways. Use extra caution when approaching intersections and/or driveways.

Other important safety tips:

- The Dutchess County Department of Public Works reminds people never to build tunnels or forts underneath roadside snow banks. Snow removal crews may not be able to see children playing in the snowbanks, and cave-ins are also possible.
- Emergency responders need your help clearing out fire hydrants. Clear out the nearest fire hydrant. The life or home you save may be your own!

For a wide variety of winter safety tips from protecting your home to being safe outdoors, check out the resources available on Dutchess County Government's website at

<http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/countygov/departments/EmergencyResponse/12052.htm> or on the County's social media pages on Facebook at

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Dutchess-County-Government/73646813346> or Twitter at

<http://twitter.com/DutchessCoGov>.

###