

# Hurricane Sandy emergency workers still at risk after the storm

The aftermath of Hurricane Sandy has left many in Pennsylvania and throughout the East Coast in disarray, without power or a place to live. The hurricane also impacted thousands of emergency responders and relief workers during the storm and current cleanup efforts.

Emergency responders and cleanup workers face several hazards and risks while working during and after Hurricane Sandy. It is important for all workers involved in Hurricane Sandy relief efforts to be aware of the safety hazards they may face and the ways they can take safety precautions.

Storm and cleanup workers face increased safety risks because they are required to work during and after the storm, when more hazards and health risks may be present. Emergency responders and rescue crews face immediate safety threats when they work during the storm. Responders have to work through the storm to attempt rescues. After the storm is over, these workers still face hazardous risks as they assess the area for damage and attempt more rescues.

Emergency responders and other rescue workers face many hazards while working during a hurricane. The most common hazards associated with hurricane rescue and cleanup efforts include: electrical hazards, fires, Carbon Monoxide poisoning, hazardous materials, confined spaces, falls and musculoskeletal hazards.

Emergency response programs and other rescue efforts can take steps to be prepared for the safety hazards they will face. It is vital for these workers to be educated about the safety hazards and threats before they begin rescue efforts. While

there are many safety situations workers should be prepared for, below are a few ways to stay safe while working during and after a major storm like Hurricane Sandy:

- Have appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing for all workers to protect against working in the cold, unsafe air quality and other exposures workers may face.
- Understand electrical safety, especially for generators and how to prevent electrocutions.
- Understand fire safety guidelines and ways to prevent injuries during rescues and cleanup efforts.

**Source:** CDC, "[Storm/Flood and Hurricane Response](#)," Feb. 1, 2012