

# NESEC NEWS

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## Summer Brought More Storms, Damage to Vermont



*A washed out section of route 125 in Ripton, VT.*

VEM NEWS PHOTO

MONTPELIER, VT – A round of severe rain storms in August caused even more problems for several towns and villages throughout Vermont. The storm hit the towns of Ripton, Hancock, and Middlebury particularly hard, causing hundreds of thousands of dollars of damage.

Heavy rains caused rivers in those communities to swell and spill over their banks. Officials in Hancock evacuated a number of residents as a precaution and the Colchester Swift Water Rescue Team was dispatched to the town to aid in evacuations and rescues if necessary.

There was significant damage to both the public infrastructure of Hancock and to a number of private homes. Residents were cut off from their homes as private roads and driveways were washed away. A summer camp for children lost an entire lake when one side washed away and the lake drained.

The town of Ripton was hit for the second time this summer. The town lost a number of roads and private drives in June. As repairs on those roads were progressing, the latest round of storms tore up even more roadways. Route 125 was washed out and took several days to be made passable again. Another summer camp was evacuated. Campers and counselors were taken to an emergency shelter in Middlebury, where some remained for three days.

Road damage was seen on Route 73 in Brandon. The Neshobe Golf Club in Brandon had about 3 feet of water running over its low-lying greens dur-

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## Safety Urged When Using Alternative Heating Sources

WASHINGTON, DC - As heating season approaches with cold winter weather, Emergency Management officials are urging citizens to think safety first, especially when using alternative heating sources.

According to the November *Short-Term Energy and Fuels Outlook* recently released by the Energy Information Administration, average household expenditures for heating fuels are projected to

decrease from last winter, with the largest decreases for households using heating oil (-17%), and propane (-10%). The report is viewable at: <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/steo/pub/contents.html>.

Residential heating oil prices are projected to average about \$2.75 per-gallon during this year's winter season, compared with \$3.22 per-gallon last winter.

While the decline in heating oil

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*EPA-certified inserts make your fireplace more efficient and reduce the risk from CO.*

EPA PHOTO

## Storm Damage in Vermont

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ing the storm.

Middlebury lost a major bridge on Lower Plains Road when floodwaters pushed the structure off its foundation. Salisbury also lost a major bridge on Route 53 near Lake Dunmore. Both structures were closed for an extended period of time for extensive repairs.

Shortly after the storm, Governor Jim Douglas, Vermont Emergency Management Director Barbara Farr, and FEMA Region I Administrator Art Cleaves toured the area on foot and by helicopter. A FEMA damage assessment team estimated damages to be within the thresholds needed to qualify the area for a disaster declaration.

On September 12, 2008, the President declared a major disaster for Vermont as a result of flooding from the severe storms. Aid for the summer storms has topped \$1 million to date.

## Safety Urged When Using Alternative Heating Sources

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prices this is good news for consumers, it is still unclear whether the economic downturn will nonetheless force people to search for alternate means of heating their homes. To address this concern, safety officials are warning residents to inspect their home heating systems to ensure they are as fuel-efficient and safe as possible to avoid the perils of fires and carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

“When it comes to heaters and stoves, people should follow the manufacturer’s instructions and ensure these devices are properly installed. They should be properly vented. They also should have their fireplace examined by a professional, including their chimney flues to ensure there is no build-up of creosote which is a common cause of chimney fires,” said John Gibb, Director of the New York State Emergency Management Office.

In addition to fires, there is the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, and toxic gas produced from burning fuel. Each year in America, CO poisoning claims more than 500 lives and sends another 15,200 people to hospital emergency rooms. The first signs of carbon monoxide poisoning include sleepiness, headaches, dizziness, disorientation, nausea and fatigue. “Think safety first,” Gibb said.

For additional information, please contact your local or state emergency management office.

## NWS Simplifies Winter Weather Advisories

WASHINGTON, DC – In order to simplify the delivery of winter weather products, the National Weather Service (NWS) has made significant changes to its weather advisories, warnings, and maps for the 2008 winter season.

Feedback from NWS forecasters, partners, the media, and other users revealed that there was much confusion among users of the original winter bulletins and maps. In recent years, NWS offices were issuing multiple bulletins and updates across metropolitan areas, even when updates were minor. As new NWS reports came in, meteorologists were uncertain as to when they should update their forecasts.

As a result of these concerns, the National Weather Service simplified their winter weather products, basing reports on weather impacts rather than precipitation types. You can find a guide to the changes, including examples, at: <http://www.weather.gov/os/winter/resources/wording.pdf>.

The majority of commenters support the proposed changes. According to the National Weather Service, the new system will streamline forecaster decision making, coordinate warning declarations between NWS offices in adjacent counties, reduce the number of update bulletins, and improve graphical presentation of winter maps.

For more information, contact Paul Stokols, Winter Weather Service Expert, at [Paul.Stokols@noaa.gov](mailto:Paul.Stokols@noaa.gov).

## NESEC Recognizes 2008 Emergency Managers of the Year

WAKEFIELD, MA - NESEC recently announced the recipients of the 2008 Emergency Manager of the Year Award. Each NESEC state nominated individuals who demonstrated the highest standards of excellence, dedication and accomplishment in the field of emergency management. The recipients were:

**Connecticut** - Scott Appleby, Director, City of Bridgeport

**Massachusetts** - Sgt. Michael Raskin, Director, Brookline

**Maine** - Dale Rowley, Director, Waldo County

**New Hampshire** - Neil “Al” Henry Jr., Director, Sullivan

**New Jersey** - Rosemarie Chisolm-Cohen, Director, Ocean County

**New York** - Peter Alberti, Director, Onondaga County

**Rhode Island** - Richard Tucker, Director, Scituate

**Vermont** - David Severebece, Director, Cambridge

The recipients will be presented a plaque in recognition of their outstanding achievement at a ceremony in their respective states.

## Forecasters Call for a Cold Start to Winter

ANDOVER, MA – The WSI Corporation ([http://www.wsi.com/corporate/news/releases/useg102108\\_ecoutlook.asp](http://www.wsi.com/corporate/news/releases/useg102108_ecoutlook.asp)) recently issued the seasonal outlook for November through January. WSI expects warmer-than-normal across the eastern half of the US and the Southwest, with below-normal temperatures confined to the northwestern quarter of the country. The WSI seasonal outlooks reference a standard 30-year normal (1971-2000).

The monthly breakdown for the upcoming fall/winter season is as follows:

**November:** Warmer than normal

**December:** Colder than normal

**January:** Warmer than normal

According to WSI seasonal forecaster Dr. Todd Crawford, “The ocean temperature signals in the Pacific Ocean are generally suggestive of a relatively warm period in most of the eastern US during late fall and winter, with the exception of December. Further, neither ocean tempera-



*Hoboken, NJ after a snowstorm in February, 2006.*

WIKIMEDIA

tures in the Atlantic nor the snow cover build up at Arctic latitudes are suggestive of sustained cold and snowy weather in the East this upcoming winter. We expect the best chances of sustained cold weather to occur prior to the New Year, with mild conditions prevailing after that.”

## NESEC Participates in NEHRP Earthquake Scenario Workshop

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Even in earthquake-prone regions of the country, few communities have full disaster plans in place for earthquakes. By utilizing the latest scientific and engineering knowledge to simulate earthquakes, scenarios help decision makers understand the impacts that an earthquake will have on their communities. Scenarios help identify areas of greatest vulnerability so that plans can be focussed on problem areas in order to mitigate damage from future earthquakes.

On September 17 and 18th, The Earthquake Engineering Research Institute ([www.eeri.org](http://www.eeri.org)) convened a workshop in San Francisco on the development and use of earthquake scenarios. The workshop brought together individuals from across the country who were involved in the development and use of earthquake scenarios: from scientists, to private business, to local communities. Jonathan Salomon, GIS coordinator for NESEC, represented NESEC at the workshop. NESEC would like to thank EERI for supporting the travel and expenses required for NESEC to participate at this workshop. Recommendations from the workshop will be used to develop the Earthquake Scenario Guidelines to help communities who wish to start earthquake scenario planning.

For additional information and guidance on earthquake scenario development, visit: <http://www.nehrpsenario.org/?cat=19>

## Avoiding Carbon Monoxide this Winter

WASHINGTON, DC – Like oil and gas furnaces, fireplaces and wood chip stoves can also create dangerous levels of carbon monoxide if improperly used.

The US Fire Administration (USFA) and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) have some simple tips to help protect you from carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Have a qualified professional check all fuel burning appliances and fireplaces at least once a year.
- When using a kerosene heater, keep a window slightly open.
- Generators should not be operated indoors.
- Never use a range, grill, or oven to heat your home, and never use charcoal indoors.
- Never use a charcoal grill or keep a car running in your garage. Even if the garage doors are open, there will not be enough air circulation to reliably prevent a buildup of CO.
- Install at least one carbon monoxide alarm near the bedrooms of your home.
- CO alarms are designed to go off before most people would experience the symptoms of CO poisoning, so ventilate the area and call 911 when the alarm goes off even when you are not yet experiencing symptoms. If anyone is showing symptoms of CO poisoning (sleepiness, headaches, dizziness, disorientation, nausea and fatigue) vacate the premises immediately and call 911 from a neighbor's phone.

# Donate \$100 and Receive 6 FREE NOAA Tone Alert Weather Radios



Does your agency, department, institution, school, apartment complex, business, or large family home require multiple carbon monoxide detectors? If so, you can donate \$100 to NESEC and we will send you a **FREE** case of 6 First Alert® Carbon Monoxide Detectors as our thank you gift! Or, for a donation of \$25, you will receive one **FREE** First Alert® Carbon Monoxide Detector. Batteries are included, and shipping is free!

You can make your donation for either of our free gifts using PayPal or credit card at: [www.nesec.org/news/co\\_alarm.cfm](http://www.nesec.org/news/co_alarm.cfm). You can also send a check or money order, payable to “NESEC”, to:

*The Northeast States Emergency Consortium,  
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