

## **NEW JERSEY STATE TROOPERS DEPLOYED AT SHORE TO PROVIDE ENHANCED SECURITY IN THE WAKE OF STORM**

TRENTON, NJ -- The Christie Administration today announced that the New Jersey State Police will be deploying troopers to the barrier islands that were hardest hit by Hurricane Sandy to work with local and county agencies to ensure safety and security for those Shore communities.

The State Police will provide an enhanced law enforcement presence to protect the property of residents and merchants against potential looting or other crimes, while also providing additional resources and personnel if needed for any rescue and recovery operations.

"As New Jersey continues to recover from this unprecedented disaster, many homes remain unsafe for habitation due to electric outages and property damage, particularly on the barrier islands," said Governor Christie. "A general state of emergency declaration continues, and local evacuations and curfew orders remain in effect. Property owners who are prevented from returning home should know that troopers and other police are on alert for individuals breaking curfews."

Attorney General Jeff Chiesa promised that anyone who engages in looting will face serious penalties.

"Anyone who would further victimize the people suffering from this storm deserve the maximum punishment allowed by the law," Attorney General Chiesa said. "We want those hardest hit by Sandy to know that there is an increased police presence in these Shore communities and that we will be vigilant with respect to their homes and businesses while they are forced to remain inland for their safety. At this time, fortunately, we have not received reports of any extensive looting."

Members of the public who witness potential looters should call 911 with as much descriptive information as possible. Do not approach suspected thieves, but leave the apprehension to police.

Nearly 30 detectives from the Division of Criminal Justice have been involved in conducting security patrols in Monmouth County over the past 24 hours.

The New Jersey State Police, local police and county agencies have been engaged in preparation, rescue and recovery efforts since well before the onset of Sandy. Many first responders have been put their personal and family needs on hold to selflessly serve the citizens of our state. Their efforts have resulted in large numbers of rescues, thousands of residents sheltered, and roadways re-opened.

"Communities are pulling together in impressive ways. Homeowners should continue to watch out for each other's safety and property. Check on your neighbors especially the elderly or those with special needs," said Colonel Rick Fuentes, Director of the State Office of Emergency Management and Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police.

Additionally, Fuentes advises residents to use common sense when it comes to heating, cooking and lighting during electric outages, offering the following safety tips:

- \* Never operate a generator indoors, but make sure it is in a well-ventilated area, free from combustible items
- \* Never leave candles unattended. Use flashlights when available.
- \* Retreat from, and report to utilities, any smell of gas or other fuel.
- \* Don't use gas or propane ovens for heating
- \* Don't consume food or drinks exposed to flood water
- \* Additional food safety tips can be found at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/foodwater/facts.asp>

The Christie Administration, through the Division of Consumer Affairs, is also deploying teams of investigators across New Jersey in response to more than 100 calls that have been received from consumers alleging that gas stations, sellers of generators, hotels, and other merchants that sell other essential items, have violated state law by engaging in price gouging in the wake of Hurricane Sandy.

Consumers who believe they have been cheated or scammed by a business, or suspect any other form of consumer abuse, can file a complaint with the State Division of Consumer Affairs by visiting its website or by calling 1-800-242-5846 (toll free within New Jersey) or 973-504-6200.