



## Snow Storm Event November 2023

### Erie County, New York

- November 18-21, 2014 Erie County, NY received unprecedented snowfall; some areas received 60-84 inches of snow
- The rapid accumulation resulted in stranded drivers, travel bans, and logistical challenges with snow removal
- Sporadic power outages affected some households
- Eleven deaths were linked to snow storm, one death was directly related, nine were indirectly related, and one possibly storm related
- To determine storm-related mortality, the Medical Examiner's Office worked with law enforcement, hospitals, urgent care centers, first responders, funeral homes, and nursing homes to investigate and classify reports
- Decedents ranged in age from 30-92, with a mean age of 64
- Cause of deaths include:
  - 1 – Hypothermia
  - 4 – shoveling/blowing snow
  - 2 – carbon monoxide intoxication deaths occurring in stranded vehicles
  - 2 – acute medical emergencies that could not be transported to facilities with appropriate levels of care
  - 1 – trying to free a stuck vehicle
  - 1 – emergency relocation of a nursing home resident, resulting in death
- Most of the deaths that occurred were potentially preventable

### Impacts:

- Increase in motor vehicle crashes and cardiac events
- Road closures or undrivable roads impacts staffs' ability to arrive for shifts
- Potential for loss of power – for facilities and homes
- Vulnerable populations at higher risk – especially those isolated or dependent on power (i.e., oxygen)

### Preparedness:

- Reinforce public health messaging, with specific emphasis on vulnerable populations
- Utilize emPOWER program data to identify medically dependent on power, assure power and perform wellness checks
- Educate staff on personal preparedness
- Prepare facility for keeping staff overnight: sleeping accommodations, personal hygiene supplies, etc.
- Consider transportation options to bring staff into work

## Sources:

- [Notes from the Field: Snowstorm-Related Mortality – Erie County, New York, November 2014](#)

## Resources:

- [St. Joseph's Medical Center Brainerd, Minnesota: Snow Emergency Plan](#)
- [How to Help Keep Staff Safe When Adverse Weather Strikes: 5 Hospitals Weigh In](#)
- [HHS empower Program: Story from the Field](#)