

NEWS RELEASE

Aug. 7, 2008
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RUTGERS TO SURVEY NEW JERSEY RESIDENTS ON HOW THEY WOULD RESPOND, EVACUATE IN EVENT OF DISASTER, TERRORIST INCIDENT

Data to be gathered for New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness and New Jersey Office of Emergency Management

New Brunswick, N.J. –Rutgers University researchers will conduct random telephone surveys over the next several months with thousands of residents across the State of New Jersey, asking how prepared residents believe they are to respond to an emergency and evacuate the area in the event of a natural disaster or terrorist attack.

The survey is being undertaken for the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (OHSP) and the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM) to improve the state's capabilities in dealing with natural or man-made disasters as part of two federally funded evacuation planning studies. OHS&P has contracted with the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) at Rutgers to help the state enhance evacuation capabilities statewide.

Residents will be asked in the phone surveys to respond to questions about their own preparedness in the event of a disaster and how they think they would evacuate the area. Each respondent will be asked how they would respond to a series of scenarios, including incidents such as hurricanes, industrial accidents, flooding or terrorist attack. Respondents will be asked if they have had to evacuate their homes in the past due to emergencies, whether they know if their local government has an emergency evacuation plan, and where they would turn for information. If a disaster did strike, the surveyors will ask the respondents where they think they would go, such as a public shelter or a hotel, and how they would get there, such as by driving, riding public transit or walking. The survey will also attempt to gauge the extent to which households have residents with special care needs, such as vision, hearing or mobility impairments, or require the use of oxygen or dialysis equipment.

The Bloustein Center for Survey Research will conduct the surveys for VTC; both centers are part of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers.

#