

New Jersey: Overview

Everything in the main manual and the skill guides applies in New Jersey exactly as written. What's different here is the specific hazard profile and the state, local, and legal context around it. This page is the starting point; the other three pages under New Jersey go deeper on laws, local resources, and the data behind the risks named here.

Hurricane Sandy: the actual landfall, not just the surge

New York's page on this site covers Sandy's storm surge into New York Harbor; New Jersey's story is different, this is where the storm actually came ashore, near Brigantine in Atlantic County, on October 29, 2012, with 80 mph sustained winds. The Jersey Shore took the brunt of it directly: storm surge reached 4-9 feet in Raritan Bay and a record 8.9 feet at Sandy Hook, and 346,000 homes across the state were damaged or destroyed. See the Risks page for the full data.

A chronic, distributed risk: the most Superfund sites of any state

New Jersey's dense industrial history along its highway corridors left it with more federal Superfund sites, contaminated locations serious enough for direct EPA-led cleanup, than any other state in the country: 115 active sites still in some stage of investigation or remediation, with another 37 already cleaned up and removed from the list. Unlike a hurricane, this isn't a single event with a clear before-and-after, it's a standing, geographically distributed legacy risk that shapes where contamination concerns are worth checking before assuming a property or area is clean.

What this means for how you use the rest of this manual

The manual's Tier structure and the skill guides apply without modification. What's different in New Jersey: coastal and shore-area households need real hurricane evacuation and storm surge planning, this state has already absorbed a direct hurricane landfall, and anyone buying property or doing renovation work, especially in older industrial or urban areas, benefits from checking EPA and NJDEP contamination records for the specific site, not just the general neighborhood.

Sources

- Hurricane Sandy New Jersey landfall, storm surge, and housing damage: Wikipedia, sourced to NOAA and NJ state records
- New Jersey Superfund site count: NJDEP; EPA Superfund Sites in Reuse

New Jersey: Laws & Legal Considerations

Rainwater harvesting: legal, with almost no state-level rules at all

New Jersey takes a hands-off approach at the state level, most of the practical regulation that exists happens at the county or municipal level instead.

Rule	New Jersey
Source water	Rooftop or other catchment
Permit required	No, for small-scale non-potable systems like standard rain barrels
Permitted uses	Non-potable: irrigation, toilet flushing
Potable use	Not permitted unless the system meets stringent state health standards
Local variation	Counties and municipalities may add their own zoning, size, or installation-code requirements

Where to find it: the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (dep.nj.gov) for state guidance; your local municipality for any additional zoning or code requirements.

Water rights: riparian, plus a distinctive requirement for tidal waterfront

New Jersey follows ordinary riparian reasonable-use doctrine for its waterways, but its coastal geography adds a wrinkle most inland states don't need: a specific state grant requirement for building on or using land that was historically underwater.

Concept	How it works in New Jersey
Inland riparian rights	Standard reasonable-use doctrine; rights are appurtenant to the adjoining land and can't be sold separately from it
Tidal waters and tidelands	Held under the public trust doctrine; land seaward of the mean high water line is generally reserved for public use
Riparian grants	A specific state grant from the NJDEP is required to build structures like piers or bulkheads on formerly tidal land, or otherwise claim rights to it

Why this matters more in New Jersey than most states covered so far

A lot of New Jersey’s current shoreline, especially around the Jersey Shore and Raritan Bay, sits on land that was once tidal and has since been filled or built up. Anyone buying waterfront property here specifically needs to check whether a riparian grant already exists or is required, a step that isn’t part of ordinary real estate due diligence in most inland states.

Where to find it: the NJDEP’s Bureau of Tidelands Management administers riparian grants.

Concealed carry: the most restrictive system covered on this site

New Jersey became a shall-issue state only after the Supreme Court’s 2022 *Bruen* decision forced it to drop its old discretionary standard, and the state responded with one of the most demanding permit processes and broadest carry restrictions covered anywhere on this site.

Requirement	Detail
Standard	Shall-issue since 2022, but with roughly 25 categories of legally off-limits locations added within days by Chapter 131
Minimum age	21
Character requirement	"Good moral character" standard with four personal references required
Training required	16 hours, including live-fire qualification with a state-approved instructor
Cost	\$200 application fee
Purchase limit	One handgun per 30 days, each requiring a separate Permit to Purchase
Magazine capacity	Capped at 10 rounds

A restriction New York's CCIA doesn't have

New Jersey recognizes no other state's concealed carry permit at all, full stop. New York's CCIA, restrictive as it is, still participates in some reciprocity; New Jersey does not. Open carry is also strictly prohibited statewide. Combined with the ~25 sensitive-location categories, this makes New Jersey's system the most restrictive covered on this site so far.

Sources

- New Jersey rainwater harvesting rules: LegalClarity
- New Jersey riparian rights and tidal grant requirements: NJDEP Riparian Buffer guidance; Wolf Commercial Real Estate
- New Jersey concealed carry permit requirements, Chapter 131, and reciprocity status: USA Carry; GunLawMap

New Jersey: Local Resources

NJOEM and ReadyNJ

The New Jersey Office of Emergency Management runs public preparedness outreach through ReadyNJ, working with federal, state, and local partners on all-hazards planning, natural and manmade alike, a framing that fits New Jersey's dual hurricane-and-industrial risk profile particularly well.

Where to find it: nj.gov/njoem.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension: New Jersey's version of the other states' land-grant Extension programs

Rutgers Cooperative Extension runs the same category of program as every other state covered on this site, through county offices statewide.

- **Rutgers Master Gardener Program:** initial volunteer service requirements vary by county, generally in the 60-70 hour range (Somerset and Burlington counties require 60 hours, Essex County 70), plus prescribed training and an exam, followed by roughly 25 volunteer hours and 10 continuing-education hours annually to maintain certification.

Where to find it: extension.rutgers.edu/master-gardeners lists the program by county.

CERT: the largest program in the country

New Jersey doesn't just have a CERT program, it has the largest one in the United States.

Scale

New Jersey's CERT program counts roughly 12,000 volunteers statewide, more than any other state, coordinated through NJOEM alongside individual county and municipal teams. NJOEM has also equipped CERT volunteers with specialized utility trailers, a level of resourcing that goes beyond the basic training-only model seen in some other states.

Where to find it: nj.gov/njoem for the statewide program; search “[your county] CERT” for a local team.

Sources

- NJOEM and ReadyNJ campaign structure: NJOEM
- Rutgers Master Gardener Program county-level requirements: RCE of Somerset County; RCE of Burlington County
- New Jersey’s CERT program scale: NJEMA

BY STATE › NEW JERSEY

New Jersey: Risks & Trends

Same standard as every other page on this site: every figure below is independently sourced, and figures that vary across sources, or measure genuinely different things, are flagged as such rather than collapsed into one number that looks more precise than the underlying data actually supports.

Hurricane Sandy (2012): where the storm actually came ashore

Metric	Figure
Landfall location and time	Near Brigantine, Atlantic County, ~6:30 PM EDT, October 29, 2012
Landfall winds	80 mph sustained
Total New Jersey deaths	38
Direct deaths	12
Indirect deaths from power-outage-related causes (hypothermia, CO poisoning, fires, oxygen deprivation)	13+
Storm surge, Raritan Bay	4-9 ft
Storm surge, Sandy Hook	8.9 ft, a record
Homes damaged or destroyed statewide	346,000
Homes/businesses destroyed or significantly damaged	~30,000
Households that lost power	2.7 million
Economic damage estimate	\$30 billion (initial); \$36.8 billion (Governor Christie's later repair-cost estimate)

Why the death toll doesn't cleanly split into two round numbers

The 12 direct and 13-plus indirect figures don’t sum to the full 38-death total; the remainder reflects other storm-related causes beyond the specific power-outage categories tracked separately (hypothermia, carbon monoxide poisoning, and fire deaths among them). This is presented as reported rather than forced into a tidier breakdown that the underlying data doesn’t actually support.

Unlike New York, where Sandy’s damage came from storm surge pushed into a harbor, New Jersey took the storm’s actual landfall directly on its coastline, which is part of why the Jersey Shore specifically saw some of the most concentrated physical destruction of the entire storm.

Superfund sites: a standing, statewide legacy risk

Metric	Figure
Active National Priorities List sites	115
Sites cleaned up and removed from the list	37
National ranking	Most of any state

This risk doesn’t work like a storm: there’s no single date or event, just a large number of specific, mapped locations, mostly tied to the state’s dense industrial history along its highway corridors, still in some stage of investigation or cleanup. It’s a genuinely different category from every weather-driven risk covered elsewhere on this site: chronic, geographically specific, and something a household can actually check for a given address rather than just plan a general response to.

What these two have in common

Sandy and the Superfund legacy operate on opposite timescales, one a single catastrophic week, the other a decades-long standing condition, but both illustrate the same thing about New Jersey specifically: its extreme population density and industrial development mean that when something goes wrong here, whether a hurricane or a contaminated site, it tends to affect more people, more directly, than the same event would in a less densely built state.

Sources

- Hurricane Sandy New Jersey deaths, landfall, and damage figures: Wikipedia, sourced to NOAA and NJ state records
- New Jersey Superfund site counts: NJDEP; EPA