

We always receive a lot of questions on what exactly it means when the Governor declares a “State of Emergency” as he did with the last couple of weather events. Many think that means no one is allowed on the highways and all non-essential businesses must close, including schools, but that is not the case. The Governor's declaration authorizes him to “speed State agency assistance to communities in need. It enables him to make resources immediately available to rescue, evacuate, shelter, provide essential commodities (i.e., heating fuel, food, etc.) and quell disturbances in affected localities. It may also position the State to seek federal assistance when the scope of the event exceeds the State's resources.”

It is the Office of Emergency Management that has the authority to declare a State of Emergency that could result in the closing of businesses, schools, etc. and restrictions on travel such as occurred with Hurricane Sandy.

Therefore, when an announcement is broadcast that the Governor has declared a State of Emergency, that does not necessarily mean that schools will automatically be closed. That is a local decision unless otherwise mandated by the Office of Emergency Management. The attached document articulates the difference between the two. [Click this link for details.](#)