

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****#21-16**

**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCES TWO NEW SAFETY  
INITIATIVES TO MARK THE BEGINNING OF THE 2016 ATLANTIC HURRICANE  
SEASON**

*City unveils new coastal storm evacuation route signs in Staten Island to direct residents to higher ground in the event of a coastal storm*

*City and FEMA unveil new high water mark sign to promote public awareness about storm surge risk*

**JUNE 1, 2016** — To mark the beginning of the 2016 Atlantic hurricane season, NYC Emergency Management today announced two new safety initiatives in Staten Island to increase public awareness ahead of a coastal storm. The City unveiled new coastal storm evacuation route signs throughout the borough and worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to erect a high water mark sign in a neighborhood park. The new coastal storm evacuation route signs increase year-round awareness of hurricane risks and direct residents living within the borough's six hurricane evacuation zones to higher ground. The new high water mark sign is part of FEMA's initiative to promote public awareness about storm surge risk and to encourage action to mitigate that risk. The sign was placed in Midland Beach "Splaza" (splash plaza), where storm surge waters reached five feet during Hurricane Sandy in October 2012.

"The effect of Hurricane Sandy has left an indelible mark on the minds of all New Yorkers, especially in Staten Island, where we experienced some of the most devastating impacts," said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. "These new initiatives are aimed to help New Yorkers understand the risks behind coastal storm season and encourage them to stay safe and know what to do to prepare ahead of the storm."

"This initiative serves to remind us that the threat of storm surge is ever-present, while also demonstrating the great recovery work by the residents of Midland Beach, the City and State of New York, and the federal government. We look forward to continuing our partnerships to build a safer, stronger, more resilient New York City," said **FEMA Region II Risk Analysis Branch Chief J. Andrew Martin**.

The High Water Mark Initiative is a community-based awareness program that increases local communities' awareness of flood risk. As part of the project, communities post high water mark signs in prominent places and conduct ongoing education and complete mitigation actions to build community resilience against future flooding. The high water mark in Midland Beach Splaza reminds New Yorkers that on October 29, 2012, Hurricane Sandy brought a storm surge

of five feet to the location. It is part of FEMA's pilot program for New York City and around the country. Other cities that have participated in the High Water Mark Initiative pilot program include: Harrisburg, PA, Nashville, TN, Orange Beach, AL, Sacramento, San Anselmo, and Roseville, CA, and Santa Rosa County, FL. to find out more about FEMA's High Water Mark Initiative, click [here](#).

The new coastal storm evacuation signs replace older signs that were deployed as part of the City's 2007 Coastal Storm Plan to direct drivers to specific evacuation centers along a designated route, as is common in the southern United States. The signs are now being redeployed to better adapt to New York City's unique, dense, coastal street grid, encouraging use of many streets rather than specific routes. The increased number of signs within evacuation zones across Staten Island provides more year-round public awareness of storm hazards in at-risk areas, along with clearer direction toward higher ground outside of evacuation zones in the event of a storm. NYC Emergency Management worked collaboratively with the Department of Transportation and New York City Police Department to consider the use of evacuation signage. NYC Emergency Management plans to roll out new coastal evacuation route signs in the remaining four boroughs over the next few years.

"Until the US Army Corps of Engineers completes its long-awaited seawall project on the East Shore, we will continue to be vulnerable. Information and preparation are key to protect ourselves," said **Staten Island Borough President James Oddo**.

"These signs will provide explicit warnings when a coastal storm is approaching and a clear indication of just how high the surging waters could go, so residents can make an informed decision about the safety of their homes and their families. They will also serve as a stark reminder, especially to those who have survived Sandy, that the dangers these storms present are very real," said **New York City Council Minority Leader Steven Matteo**.

"Too many people in our community were tragically killed by Hurricane Sandy. It makes sense for Staten Island to be part of FEMA's pilot project to install signage in coastal communities and around the country to promote public awareness about storm surge risk. This new initiatives will educate residents so they know when to leave and where to go should another hurricane hit our community," said **Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis**.

"Hurricane Sandy devastated Staten Island and other parts of the city, highlighting a growing vulnerability across our coastline to storms and the growing impacts of climate change," said **Daniel Zarrilli, Senior Director for Climate Policy and Programs and the Chief Resilience Officer in the New York City Mayor's Office**. "Today, we are safer than we were before Sandy thanks to improvements in emergency preparation, investments in our coastal defenses, and the launch of our comprehensive resiliency program. And we have more to do before we'll be satisfied. That's why these critical steps to increase public awareness about flood risk are so

important. Not only will they help Staten Islanders stay safe during storms and coastal flooding events but also help our communities withstand and emerge stronger from them.”

To raise awareness of the upcoming hurricane season, NYC Emergency Management launched the next phase of the “Know Your Zone” hurricane awareness campaign to encourage New Yorkers to find out whether they live in one of the city’s six hurricane evacuation zones. New Yorkers can visit [NYC.gov/knowyourzone](http://NYC.gov/knowyourzone) to find their evacuation zone designation and to get more information about how to prepare for hurricanes. The Know Your Zone campaign is supported with updated advertising for the 2016 hurricane season (radio testimonials and ads on bus shelters, online, and in newspapers), social media engagement (#knowyourzone), and community outreach (postcards and hurricane preparedness presentations in communities throughout the city). The new Know Your Zone campaign ads were designed by C&G Partners. Know Your Zone also has a dedicated web portal – [NYC.gov/knowyourzone](http://NYC.gov/knowyourzone) – with information about the city’s hurricane evacuation zones, hurricane hazards, and tips to prepare for storms.

“As designers, we wanted the campaign awareness material to create a sense of urgency but also be memorable and motivating,” said **C&G Partners Partner Maya Kopytman**. “Phase two of Know Your Zone continues to reinforce the color system first seen in the campaign logo that denotes each of New York’s six hurricane zones. This year’s system of posters, bus shelter promotion, and over 200 newspaper ads specifically targets each zone and the diverse residents that live in them.”

Through the Know Your Zone campaign, NYC Emergency Management aims to reach the roughly three million New Yorkers living within the city’s hurricane evacuation zones, which were revised in 2013. Hurricane evacuation zones are based on coastal flood risk resulting from storm surge (the “dome” of ocean water that is pushed ashore by the winds and low barometric pressure of a hurricane), the geography of the city’s low-lying neighborhoods, and the accessibility of these neighborhoods by bridges and roads. The City may order residents who live in a zone to evacuate depending on a hurricane’s forecasted strength, track, and storm surge. If you are ordered to evacuate, do so as directed.

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