

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION TEMPORARILY
SUSPENDS WATER DISCHARGE PERMIT REQUIREMENT TO ASSIST
HOMEOWNERS AND BUSINESSES PUMPING WATER FROM
FLOODED PROPERTIES**

To assist in the recovery from Hurricane Sandy, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection today announced that permitting requirements for businesses and homeowners seeking to discharge water from flooded properties into the City's sewer system are temporarily suspended. If water contains significant recoverable material, such as fuel oil floating on water that could cause significant further damage to the structure if not removed first or significant environmental damage, all reasonable measures should be taken to collect and properly dispose of the material prior to pumping out the structure. This action is authorized under the attached communication from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The suspension of permitting requirements remains in effect until November 6, 2012, and applies only to flood-related discharges where an expedited response is needed.

Where a significant spill has occurred, the owner or operator must report the spill to the New York State Spill Hotline (1-800-457-7362) and use environmental contractors to handle, treat and dispose of such substances properly prior to discharging to the City sewer system. Contractors who collect and dispose of released petroleum or hazardous substances must comply with all requirements for the handling, treatment and disposal of the collected materials.

Additional guidance on the above requirements can be found at the following weblinks:

- <http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/2634.html> - spill notification requirements
- <http://www.dec.ny.gov/public/76659.html> - general storm response information
- <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/86505.html> - guidance on fuel oil clean ups in residences during storms/flooding

DEP encourages New Yorkers to exercise caution when coming in contact with floodwaters. In cleaning homes, business and properties that may have come into contact with contaminated water, New Yorkers should consult these tips from the Health Department for treatment and removal to prevent illness and further contamination:

What if the flood water contains sewage?

Take extra steps to protect your health if the flood water contains sewage. Sewage contains germs that may cause stomach or intestinal infections if swallowed. Contact with sewage may also cause infections in cuts, scrapes and eyes.

To prevent infection you should:

- Keep children, pets and people with compromised immune systems away until the area has been cleaned and disinfected.
- Throw away any food (including packaged food) that was touched by sewage water.
- Follow the steps listed below to protect against infection during cleanup.

Note: Unless otherwise notified, it is safe to drink tap water in an area with flooding. Sewage overflows usually do not affect water supplies in New York City.

How can I protect myself when cleaning up water containing sewage?

- Pre-rinse fabrics with cold water to help prevent staining.
- Launder with detergent. This will disinfect most items.
- Dry thoroughly.
- Dry clean items that cannot be laundered. This process will generally disinfect clothing.
- Throw out soaked leather shoes, as it may be very difficult to disinfect them.
- Speak to a professional trained in conservation methods about cleaning valuable papers and photographs.

How can sewage-contaminated rugs and carpeting be cleaned?

- Clean small contaminated areas with detergents and disinfectants.
- Dry thoroughly and quickly.
- Hire a professional to clean larger areas.
- Throw away soaked rug padding.

For more information about safely cleaning up after floods visit www.nyc.gov/health

DEP manages the city's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs, and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels, and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP employs nearly 6,000 employees, including nearly 1,000 in the upstate watershed. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater.