
For Immediate Release

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NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ISSUES WINTER STORM UPDATE

Winter Weather Advisory and Flash Flood Watch are in effect for New York City

Hazardous travel advisory remains in effect for New York City through Monday

January 19, 2019 — The New York City Emergency Management Department today issued an update about the upcoming winter storm. The National Weather Service (NWS) has issued a Winter Weather Advisory in effect for New York City through 4 a.m. Sunday. A Winter Weather Advisory means that periods of snow, sleet, or freezing rain will cause travel difficulties. New York City Emergency Management has issued a Hazardous Travel Advisory in effect for New York City through Monday. The snow and wintry mix of sleet, freezing rain and rain, combined with the rapid drop in temperatures Sunday afternoon will turn any slush or wet roadways to ice, causing extremely dangerous travel conditions. New Yorkers are advised to avoid unnecessary travel Saturday night through Monday.

National Weather Service has also issued a Flash Flood Watch in effect for New York City from 1 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday. A Flash Flood Watch means that conditions may develop that lead to flash flooding. New Yorkers are advised to monitor forecasts and be prepared to take action should flood warnings be issued.

According to the latest National Weather Service forecast, light snow may develop Saturday evening, becoming moderate to heavy. By late Saturday night, snow will transition to a wintry mix of sleet, freezing rain, and rain. By early Sunday morning, all precipitation will continue as moderate to heavy rain through noon. Rain is expected to taper off early Sunday afternoon, though a lingering shower is possible. A total of 1 to 3 inches of snow accumulation is possible with this event, with higher totals of up to 4 inches possible in northern parts of the city. A total of 1 to 2 inches of rain and a glaze of ice are also possible.

Temperatures are also expected to plummet throughout the day on Sunday, according to National Weather Service. Temperatures begin to drop quickly on Sunday afternoon, and with one hour, temperatures could drop at least twenty degrees. By Sunday night, temperatures take a dive into single digits, with wind chill values as low as between zero and ten below zero. The arctic blast sticks around Monday, with temperatures in the teens and sub-zero wind chill values. Low temperatures Monday night are around 10 degrees, with sub-zero wind chill values. The sharp drop in temperatures will cause any liquid on the roads to flash freeze, making travel extremely dangerous. New Yorkers are advised to avoid unnecessary travel through Monday. High winds are also in the forecast Sunday into Monday, with gusts up to 45 mph.

The forecast for heavy rain during the Sunday morning high tide cycle could produce flooding along coastal areas throughout the city. National Weather Service has issued a Coastal Flood Advisory in effect from 5 a.m. through 9 a.m. Sunday for vulnerable areas near the waterfront

and shorelines along Staten Island, Manhattan, and Brooklyn; and from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. for vulnerable areas near the waterfront and shorelines along northern Queens and The Bronx.

A Coastal Flood Advisory indicates that onshore winds and tides will combine to generate flooding of low areas along the shore. Some roads and low-lying property including parking lots, parks, lawns, and homes or businesses near the waterfront will experience shallow flooding. Widespread minor to moderate coastal flooding is possible during the Sunday morning high tide cycle.

A Coastal Flood Warning is also in effect for southern Queens from 4 a.m. to 11 a.m. Sunday. A Coastal Flood Warning means that flooding is expected or occurring. Widespread flooding of low-lying property including parking lots, parks, lawns, and homes or businesses with basements near the waterfront and shoreline is possible. Vehicles parked in vulnerable areas near the waterfront will likely become flooded. Flooding will also extend inland from the waterfront along tidal rivers and bays. Coastal residents in the warned areas should be alert for rising water and take appropriate action to protect life and property.

“New York City Emergency Management continues to work closely with the National Weather Service and key city agencies to monitor and coordinate the City’s preparations for the storm,” said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. “Despite the change in the forecast for snow accumulation, the sharp drop in temperatures combined with wet roadways can produce a flash freeze, causing extremely dangerous icy conditions. We advise New Yorkers to avoid all unnecessary travel Saturday night through Monday.”

NYC Emergency Management continues to coordinate the City’s preparations for the upcoming storm. The City’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) opened Saturday afternoon. Key agencies and partners are staffing the EOC to coordinate any response to potential impacts associated with the forecast. NYC Emergency Management has activated the Downed Tree Task Force, a multiagency task force responsible for coordinating the response to a large downed tree event. The Tow Truck Task Force has also been activated to mitigate vehicles blocking roads for critical response vehicles. NYC Emergency Management’s Flash Flood Emergency Plan is also activated to ensure a quick, effective, and coordinated preparation and response to any flash flood events. NYC Emergency Management works closely with NYPD, FDNY, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Sanitation, Department of Transportation, Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to mitigate the impact of flash floods. These actions include pre-inspecting and clearing catch basins in vulnerable locations throughout the city. New Yorkers are encouraged to report clogged catch basins and areas of standing water to 311.

The New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) has dispatched more than 695 salt spreaders across the five boroughs. DSNY will activate PlowNYC and will dispatch 1,600 plows if more than two inches of snow accumulates on roadways. DSNY has assigned 2,300 workers to split 12-hour shifts through the weekend. The City’s Department of Transportation (DOT) has pre-deployed crews to the East River bridges. DOT has pre-salted walkways at the ferry terminal, pedestrian overpasses, muni lots and step streets, and will continue to monitor these

locations. Crews from JC Decaux have pre-treated all city bus shelters and are monitoring bus shelters citywide. DOT will monitor conditions on the citywide Transportation network at the Joint Transportation Management Center with State DOT and NYPD, and coordinate efforts to address any issues. Ferry vessels are currently expected to operate on a normal schedule, but passengers are advised to allow extra time for travel.

NYC Ferry service is currently anticipated to operate on a normal schedule this weekend, including Monday, January 21 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. However, due to impending winter storm conditions, riders are advised to prepare for possible cancellations or delays. Please allow for extra travel time and check the NYC Ferry app and website for real-time updates. You can also sign up for push notifications by selecting your preferred routes within the notification section of the NYC Ferry app.

Due to inclement weather expected tonight and potential travel conditions that may result, the Department of Education (DOE) has rescheduled Sunday's Gifted and Talented (G&T) testing for Sunday, January 27. DOE has notified students and families with appointments about the cancellation and new date of testing.

Code Blue

A Code Blue Weather Emergency notice is issued when the temperature is forecast to drop to 32 degrees Fahrenheit or less between 4 p.m. and 8 a.m., including National Weather Service calculations for wind chill values. No one who is homeless and seeking shelter in New York City during a Code Blue will be denied. Should you see an individual who appears to be homeless and in need out in the cold, please call 311 and an outreach team will be dispatched to offer assistance. During Code Blue Weather emergencies, experienced outreach teams work to connect homeless New Yorkers with the following resources:

- **Shelters:** During a Code Blue, shelter is available system-wide to accommodate anyone who is reasonably believed to be homeless and is brought to a shelter by outreach teams. Accommodations are also available for walk-ins.
- **Drop-in centers:** All drop-in centers are open 24-hours per day, including when Code Blue procedures are in effect, and will assist as many people as possible for the duration of the emergency. Drop-in staff and the dedicated outreach teams they work closely with each day can also make arrangements for homeless individuals at other citywide facilities.
- **Safe havens and stabilization beds:** Chronically homeless individuals may be transported directly to these low-threshold housing programs.
- **Street homeless outreach:** Teams will contact vulnerable individuals on their Code Blue Priority Lists a minimum of once every four (4) hours beginning at 8 p.m. during Code Blue Alerts and once every two (2) hours beginning at 8 p.m. for Enhanced Code Blue Alerts to encourage them to accept services, including transportation to a shelter placement. DSS coordinates borough-level Code Blue efforts directly with partner City agencies, including but not limited to NYPD, DSNY, and the Parks Department.

Cold weather can cause or worsen health problems. Certain individuals, including the unsheltered homeless, people with disabilities and those with access and functional needs are at an increased risk for injuries, illness or death. Others at an increased risk also include people who drink heavily or use drugs and become incapacitated outdoors, or those who live in homes without heat, and:

- Are 65 years of age or older.
- Are infants.
- Have certain medical conditions such as heart or lung disease, high blood pressure, diabetes.
- Have serious mental health conditions or developmental disabilities.

To learn more about winter weather safety, visit the Health Department's interactive [online infographic](#).

Prolonged exposure to cold can lead to frostbite – which often results in red and painful or pale skin – and hypothermia. Symptoms of hypothermia include:

- Intense shivering
- Dizziness
- Trouble speaking
- Lack of coordination
- Sluggishness or drowsiness
- Confusion
- Shallow breathing

If you see symptoms of hypothermia or frostbite, call 911 and follow instructions, or go to the emergency room.

Safety Tips

- New Yorkers are advised to avoid unnecessary travel. If you must travel, use mass transit where possible.
- Small accumulations of ice can be extremely dangerous to motorists and pedestrians. Bridges and overpasses are particularly dangerous because they freeze before other surfaces.
- If you drive, use extra caution. Vehicles take longer to stop on snow and ice than on dry pavement.
- Four-wheel drive vehicles may make it easier to drive on snow-covered roads, but they stop less quickly than other vehicles.
- Use major streets or highways for travel whenever possible.
- Know your vehicle's braking system. Vehicles with anti-lock brakes require a different braking technique than vehicles without anti-lock brakes in snowy conditions.

- If you are driving and begin to skid, ease your foot off the gas and steer in the direction you want the front of the car to go. Straighten the wheel when the car moves in the desired direction. If you have an anti-lock braking system (ABS), apply steady pressure to the brake pedal. Never pump the brakes on an ABS equipped vehicle.
- Try to keep your vehicle's gas tank as full as possible.
- Pedestrians should exercise caution and avoid slippery surfaces; some ice may not be visible. Wear sturdy boots that provide traction to reduce slipping. Use handrails when using stairs.
- Seniors should take extra care outdoors to avoid slips and falls.
- Have heightened awareness of cars, particularly when approaching or crossing intersections.
- Be careful when shoveling snow. Follow your doctor's advice if you have heart disease or high blood pressure. Cold weather puts an extra strain on the heart.
- If you go outdoors, wear dry, warm clothing and cover exposed skin. Keep fingertips, earlobes, and noses covered. Wear a hat, hood, scarf, and gloves.
- Shivering is an important first sign that the body is losing heat. Shivering is a signal to return indoors.
- Be safe at work. Workers who spend a lot of time outdoors are at risk for cold-related health impacts. If you are an employer, implement safe work practices, provide appropriate protective equipment, and train workers on how to stay safe during cold and winter weather.
- Limit alcohol intake. Drinking alcohol may make you feel warmer but it causes your body to lose heat faster. Alcohol also impairs your judgment, which limits your ability to take appropriate precautions or remove yourself from a dangerously cold environment in time. As a result, alcohol actually increases your chances of hypothermia and frostbite.

Power Outages

- To prepare for a possible power outage, charge cell phone batteries, gather supplies, and turn your refrigerator and freezer to a colder setting. If you lose power, items that need refrigeration will stay cooler for longer.
- If your power goes out, disconnect or turn off appliances that would otherwise turn on automatically when service is restored. If several appliances start up at once, the electric circuits may overload.
- Make sure your flashlights and any battery-operated radios or televisions are working. Keep extra batteries.
- If you lose power and have a disability, access and functional needs or use Life Sustaining Equipment (LSE) & need immediate assistance, dial 911.
- Do not use generators indoors.
- Heavy accumulations of ice can bring down trees and topple utility poles. Ice can disrupt communications and power.

NYC residents living in coastal areas expected to experience minor or moderate coastal flooding should take the following preparedness steps:

- Prepare a [Go Bag](#) — a collection of things you would want if you have to leave in a hurry — for every member of your household, including pets.
- Learn the safest route from your home or workplace to safe, high ground in case you have to evacuate. This should be part of your [household emergency plan](#).
- If you live in a flood-prone area, keep materials such as sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, and lumber on hand to help protect your home.
- Stay informed. Before and during an emergency, the City will send emergency alerts and updates to New Yorkers through various channels, including Notify NYC. New Yorkers are encouraged to sign up for Notify NYC, the City’s free emergency communications program. To sign up for Notify NYC, download the [free mobile application](#), visit [NYC.gov/NotifyNYC](#), call 311, or follow @NotifyNYC on Twitter.
- When outside, avoid walking and driving through flooded areas. As few as six inches of moving water can knock a person over. Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars, causing loss of control and possible stalling. One or two feet of water can carry away a vehicle.
- Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters.
- If you see downed electrical wires, do not go near them. Never attempt to move or touch them with any object. Be mindful that tree limbs, leaves, or water can cover downed wires from view. Always stay away from downed power lines because they could be live.
- Report downed wires immediately. If a power line falls on your car while you are in it, stay inside the vehicle and wait for emergency personnel.

For more safety tips, visit [NYC.gov/EmergencyManagement](#). New Yorkers are also encouraged to download the Notify NYC mobile application, which is available for free download from iTunes or Google Play. Notify NYC is the City’s free emergency notification system. Through Notify NYC, New Yorkers can also receive phone calls, text messages, and/or email alerts about weather conditions and other emergencies. To learn more about the Notify NYC program or to sign up, visit [NYC.gov/NotifyNYC](#) or call 311. You can also follow @NotifyNYC on Twitter.

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