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NEW YORK CITY **OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
Office of Public Information

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

July 23, 2006 – Update #4

Contact: Andrew Troisi, 347-386-1315

**UPDATE ON THE CITY'S RESPONSE TO POWER OUTAGES**

The City's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) continues to coordinate inter-agency response to the blackout situation affecting the northwest sections of Queens. City agencies continue to provide enhanced services throughout the affected areas. The Special Services Center, located at 45-22 32<sup>nd</sup> Place in Long Island City, will remain open again today to provide information about food spoilage claims and other blackout-related issues to area residents. OEM Emergency Operations Center (EOC) continues to be activated.

Residents and business owners without power should continue to call Con Edison at 1-800-75-CONED. Residents with questions about the Special Services Center or about food spoilage claims should call 311. All emergencies should be reported to 911.

The following is the Sunday, July 23 update of City agency of resources deployed to the affected areas in Queens:

*Police Department*

The NYPD continues to provide additional personnel in the affected areas. The Department has deployed hundreds of additional police officers and traffic agents throughout areas in the 114<sup>th</sup> and 108<sup>th</sup> Precincts. There are also eight mobile response vehicles in the area and 12 commands posts staffed with a Community Affairs Police Officer. Light towers are also operating in the area and all intersections without functioning traffic signals are being staffed by NYPD personnel. Department vehicles continue to patrol with turret lights to increase NYPD visibility in the area. In addition, the NYPD Aviation Unit continues to survey the area. The NYPD continues to work with OEM to identify customers with life sustaining equipment to ensure they have the resources they need.

*Fire Department*

Response times for both fire and EMS continue to remain stable. The Fire Department's 16 local fire companies in the affected areas continue to be mobile. Fire Battalions 45 and 49 reported no increase in structural fire activity overnight and continue to respond to numerous manhole and transformer fires. The firehouses of Engine 325/Ladder 163 and Engine 263/Ladder 117 continue to run on back-up generators.

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EMS has not reported any unusual increase in medical emergencies. EMS Station 49 continues to be mobile. The EMS Mobile Emergency Response Vehicle (MERV) is stationed at Steinway Street and Ditmars Boulevard with a BLS Ambulance. The Fire Safety Education Unit has also been deployed to the area to hand out fire prevention and safety information.

*Department of Transportation*

DOT continues to enhance its services throughout the affected area. Crews of electrical inspectors continue to survey traffic signal equipment and inspectors and electricians are in the field trying to get signals working at locations where it is feasible. On Saturday, DOT electricians were able to return eight locations on Queens Boulevard to service through overhead wiring from adjacent working signals. To date, DOT has installed and removed temporary STOP signs at more than 100 locations. Currently, there are six traffic signals malfunctioning at steady, 38 at flashing and 59 are completely out in the area. DOT is also working closely with the NYPD to provide additional traffic control personnel as needed.

*Department of Sanitation*

Sanitation continues to enhance its service throughout the affected areas. Since Friday afternoon, Sanitation has had 14 additional collection trucks working in the area. These trucks have made 3,110 stops throughout the neighborhoods collecting a total of 63.6 tons of waste. In addition, a mechanical street sweeper continues to be deployed in the area alongside a motorized litter patrol unit to pick up any debris that may have fallen into the street and street gutters. Additional equipment will be dispatched on Monday as needed. Sanitation trucks will continue to respond to 311 calls and will be driving neighborhood routes to collect any additional refuse including spoiled foods.

*Human Resources Administration*

HRA opened the Special Services Center at its office in Long Island City at 45-22 32<sup>nd</sup> Place (off Queens Boulevard) today at 8:00 a.m. Personnel from numerous city agencies continue to staff the Center to provide information and referrals to residents in the affected areas. Over the weekend, HRA has had more than 1,000 cases of water onsite and in-stock and more than 500 heater meals. These meals were shared with senior centers run by the Department for the Aging. There are three vans and seven cars available to transport residents to the Center and deliver supplies and services to homes and locations within the community. Crisis workers and volunteers are available during hours of operation and are on-call 24 hours. These services will remain in place until power is restored.

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*NYC Small Business Services*

SBS has reached out to 474 local small businesses in the affected area. Of these businesses, more than 100 had perishable items. These businesses were provided with ConEd claim forms for reimbursement for up to \$7,000. Today and on Monday, SBS staff will continue its outreach in the neighborhood. In addition, in conjunction with the EDC, SBS is working to provide information to businesses on emergency loan applications and availability.

*Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*

DOHMH dispatched 25 food inspectors over the weekend to address food safety issues in area restaurants and ensure that restaurants discard spoiled food. In addition, two mental health professionals have provided assistance via phone to residents seeking help at the Special Assistance Center. DOHMH also intensified its analysis of syndromic surveillance trends so that the city can quickly detect any heat- or diarrhea-related increases in the affected areas and citywide. To date, there have been no such increases. DOHMH is also prepared to intensify rodent control activities in the area if needed.

*Health and Hospitals Corporation*

HHC has deployed a mobile medical unit at the intersection of Ditmars Boulevard and Steinway Street. The unit is staffed with medical personnel ready to address health issues that may arise for affected residents including providing emergency medications such as insulin and blood pressure medication. On Saturday, 25 area residents utilized these services. No one required hospitalization. HHC will also continue to deploy three commuter vans to transport area residents to the mobile medical unit, the Special Services Center, or local hospitals if needed. HHC has also put on alert its home health care agency to monitor patients in the affected community and will be ready to provide additional assistance to any other homebound individuals.

*Department for the Aging*

Department for the Aging will continue to operate its senior centers today. All senior centers are running on full power and will continue to provide food and water to seniors. DFTA has also deployed two wheelchair accessible vans to transport area seniors to these centers. To date, nearly 700 seniors have visited these centers. Affected homebound seniors can call 311 for transportation to a center. During the power outage, 150 seniors receiving Meals-on-Wheels or senior home health services were checked on and contacted. Meals-on-Wheels food deliveries were completed Friday.

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*Department of Consumer Affairs*

In addition to DCA staff at the Special Assistance Center, DCA Inspectors will be in the field to monitor any reports of short supply and price gouging in the area. To date, there have been no calls to the DCA reporting short supply and/or price increases on milk, water by the gallon and ice. 311 will continue to route to DCA any inquiries related to blackout specific reports of price increases or shortages.

*Department of Citywide Administrative Services*

DCAS continues to provide staff to the OEM Emergency Operations Center. This morning, the DCAS Central Storehouse will open and respond to any additional requests for bottled water to be distributed in the affected communities. In addition, three DCAS vans will continue to provide shuttle service between Special Services Center in Long Island City and Astoria.

*Economic Development Corporation*

Together with SBS, EDC is looking into developing an emergency loan program for businesses affected by the blackout. During the power outage, EDC has also assisted several companies and housing co-ops obtain emergency generators from Con Edison including Silvercup Studios, National Envelope, Playbill, Inc., and two housing co-ops in the NW Queens Boulevard Gardens. EDC also reached out to 18 area companies to offer assistance.

*Department of Environmental Protection*

The Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant remains on the grid for power and is functioning normally. No increased odors have been detected in the community. Scheduled emergency fuel deliveries to Bowery Bay have been cancelled and the facility's fuel reserves are full.

*Mayor's Community Assistance Unit*

CAU has reached out to more than 250 local civic leaders and elected officials and provided them with information on where additional City resources are being dispatched and how the community can access assistance. CAU has also provided staff at each NYPD Command Post. CAU is also operating four commuter vans in the Sunnyside and Woodside neighborhoods handing out bottled water and food reimbursement forms. CAU is also organizing a volunteer effort in the area to staff vans and hand out food and water with the American Red Cross on MTA bus routes. CAU staff is also coordinating other agency commuter vans and advising on which neighborhood routes have the most people requiring transportation to City facilities such as the Special Assistance Center and the HHC mobile medical unit.