



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12-13

Sunday, August 5, 2012

**SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS EXPECTED THIS EVENING INTO
MONDAY MORNING**

*OEM's Flash Flood Plan has been activated;
New Yorkers urged to take precautions during severe thunderstorms*

*National Weather Service could issue an emergency alert for flash flooding,
severe weather to mobile devices*

The New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) directs the city's response to extreme weather conditions. According to the National Weather Service, showers and thunderstorms developing this afternoon into Monday morning will be capable of producing torrential downpours and damaging winds. The City's Flash Flood Plan has been activated to ensure a quick, effective, and coordinated response to flash flood events. The plan is activated when it is forecasted to rain one inch per hour for the duration of an hour and/or the forecast predicts rainfall of two inches or more.

Flash flooding can occur with little or no warning due to the city's dense population and paved surfaces. These surfaces do not allow rainwater to be absorbed into the ground and can result in storm drains often being overwhelmed, causing localized flooding. OEM works closely with the NYPD, FDNY, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Department of Sanitation (DSNY), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to mitigate the impact of flash floods.

The activation includes precise weather monitoring to predict when and where flash floods will occur. OEM deploys Citywide Interagency Coordinators to locations with significant flooding to facilitate coordination and information collection. The Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Sanitation target recurring flood locations for catch basin cleaning and maintenance prior to major weather events. During the event, DOT patrols highways to identify and clear catch basin grates when possible.

This weekend, DEP crews have inspected flood-prone locations throughout the City and ensured that the catch basins are clear of debris and draining properly. Additional crews will be on stand-by to assist with possible storm related issues.

Communicating with the Public

The Office of Emergency Management communicates directly with the public through a variety of tools, including Notify NYC. This is just one way the City of New York communicates urgent information to city residents. In addition to sending e-mails, text messages, and phone calls, the emergency notification office has the ability to activate NYC's Emergency Alert System (EAS), which sends information immediately via television and radio. Residents can also visit Facebook, Twitter, and the agency's website, nyc.gov/oem for more information. The public can sign up for Notify NYC by calling 311 or going to www.NYC.gov/notifynyc.

In addition, the City and the Federal Communication Commission recently launched a new emergency notification service that can send geographically targeted messages to any enabled mobile device in the area of an emergency, providing details of imminent threats and critical safety information. The service, known as PLAN – the Personal Localized Alerting Network – can issue emergency alerts to users located in the affected area at the time of the emergency, regardless of where the user lives or purchased his or her phone. Authorized government officials will send messages, which participating wireless providers then transmit using their cell towers, to enabled mobile devices in the targeted geographic area. The first alert sent using the system was issued by the National Weather Service on July 18th, for severe storms that day. The National Weather Service could issue an emergency alert to mobile devices for flash flooding or severe weather.

Severe Weather Preparedness Tips

Downbursts and winds associated with severe thunderstorms can produce heavy gusts of wind. The resulting damage can equal that of most tornadoes. If a severe thunderstorm warning is issued:

- Stay inside and take shelter.
- Pay attention to local weather forecasts and bulletins issued by the National Weather Service on local radio stations.
- Shutter windows securely and lock outside doors.
- Secure outdoor objects such as lawn furniture or garbage cans that could blow away and cause damage or injury.

During any powerful storm OEM strongly urges New Yorkers to remain indoors. If you must go out:

- Never touch or go near down power lines, even if you think they are safe
- When outside, remember floods are deceptive. Try to avoid flooded areas, and don't attempt to walk across stretches of flood waters more than knee deep
- Do NOT drive through flooded areas. Parts of the road may already be washed out, and you could become stranded or trapped

If there is a power outage:

- First, check to see if a fuse is blown or a circuit breaker has been tripped.
- Call your power provider immediately to report the outage.
 - Con Edison 24-hour hotline: 1-800-75-CONED (752-6633)
 - National Grid 24-hour hotline: 1-800-867-5222
- Disconnect or turn off all appliances that will go on automatically when service is restored.

- In order to prevent food spoilage, keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Move milk, cheese, meats, and other perishables into the freezer compartment.
- Check on your neighbors including older New Yorkers and those with special needs.
- Report downed branches and power outage-related issues by calling 311.

For more information about severe weather, visit www.nyc.gov/oem.

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