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CITY UPDATES NEW YORKERS ON SEVERE WEATHER RECOVERY EFFORTS

Hundreds of Crews Continue to Remove Debris from City Streets and Sidewalks Following Severe Storm Damage

1,156 Reports of Fallen Trees Have Been Closed

7,870 calls to 311 to report tree damage, the most calls to report forestry damage in 311's history

Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno and Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe today joined Sanitation (DSNY) First Deputy Commissioner Bernard J. Sullivan, Transportation (DOT) Deputy Commissioner Leon Heyward, Police (NYPD) Deputy Chief James Molloy, Fire (FDNY) Deputy Assistant Chief James Leonard, Deputy Buildings (DOB) Emergency Response Team Director Amaury Perez, and Department of Design and Construction (DDC) Deputy Commissioner Eric Macfarlane to update New Yorkers on the progress of the storm clean-up, what's next for the recovery, and how New Yorkers can advance efforts in their neighborhoods.

"New York City has not seen storm damage of this magnitude since Hurricane Gloria hit us in 1985," said OEM Commissioner Joseph Bruno. "Although we had little notice of the impending storm, New York City agencies had already planned for an event like this and we quickly activated the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and mobilized all of our resources and even the resources of our neighboring counties to support the clean-up and recovery.

"This natural disaster has left behind a huge amount of work to be done, including removing thousands of tons of tree trunks and debris," said Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe. "Streets blocked by the storm damage are now open. However, the full clean-up is expected to take weeks, as will the restoration of hundreds of sidewalks destroyed or damaged by falling trees. We hope residents will be patient. We'll keep you up to date as work continues. 311 is available to take your service requests. On our website, you'll find a new and simplified set of steps for finding a private contractor and getting a permit to use one. Once you make a request, Forestry inspectors and crews will address it as quickly as possible working closely with all partners, with emergency situations continuing to take precedence."

"The Department of Sanitation has been working closely with other City agencies since the tornadoes hit last Thursday to reopen streets where trees had fallen and remove debris so that essential services can be restored to the affected homes," said Sanitation First Deputy Commissioner Bernard J. Sullivan. "We are committed to assisting in whatever way possible so that we can return a sense of normalcy to those hardest hit neighborhoods."

“From that first, difficult night, more than 30 DOT crews joined immediately with Parks and OEM to clear and reopen our roads,” said NYC DOT Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan. “Work continued in the storm’s wake to replace the many downed traffic signals, signs and street lights, and restore our neighborhoods’ storm-struck streets as quickly as possible.”

"After the storm hit last week NYPD officers were immediately dispatched to canvass neighborhoods for storm generated problems," said Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly. "The storm left behind a path of damage and since Thursday evening we have worked around the clock with other City agencies to clear hundreds of fallen trees and make sure our streets, major roadways, and rail tracks are clear of debris and safe for travel."

"The storm was sudden and short but it left a path of damage that significantly impacted thousands of New Yorkers - some for several days," said Fire Commissioner Salvatore J. Cassano. "Our members did a terrific job and made a huge difference in accelerating the clean-up. Both the Department and, more importantly - the thousands of New Yorkers they assisted - are appreciative of their hard work."

“The safety of every New Yorker and the structural stability of our buildings are paramount in the aftermath of severe weather,” said Buildings Commissioner LiMandri. “Following last week’s storm, the Department dispatched engineers and inspectors to sites throughout the City to inspect for damage and assess the condition of buildings that were impacted. Anyone who is concerned about the safety of a building should contact 311 so our inspectors can investigate immediately.”

"The Department of Design and Construction's emergency actions include rapidly mobilizing contractors with expertise in tree debris removal as well as sidewalk installation to be deployed where the need is greatest," said Commissioner David J. Burney.

The sudden storm hit New York City at approximately 5:45 PM on Thursday, September 16, and brought heavy rain and winds near 100 mph to neighborhoods in Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens. The storm also produced two tornadoes: one in Park Slope, Brooklyn, and another near Flushing and Bayside in Queens. In the aftermath of the storm 45,000 Con Ed customers were without power, more than 70 roads were blocked by debris, and thousands of trees and hundreds of homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed. OEM immediately activated the City’s EOC to coordinate the efforts of City agencies responding to the storm. Agencies represented in the EOC include OEM, Parks, DSNY, NYPD, FDNY, DOT and DOB.

Storm Impact

Since Thursday night, there have been more than 7,870 calls to 311 to report tree damage, the most calls to report forestry damage in 311’s history. Those calls included:

- 3,415 calls to report downed trees
- 1,325 calls to report hanging limbs
- 3,120 calls to report fallen limbs

More than 440 calls have also been logged through 311's Damage Assessment Tool, which collects information about storm damage to homes and businesses. In addition, DOB has issued 27 vacate orders to buildings due to storm damage. Two structures, including a house in Brooklyn, have also undergone emergency demolition.

The storm left nearly 45,000 Con Ed customers without power Thursday night. Power was restored to 95% of customers by Saturday night. Con Ed also distributed more than 40,000 pounds of dry ice to customers during the power outage.

Recovery Efforts

Since Thursday night OEM has been coordinating the efforts of City, county, state and federal agencies at New York City's EOC in downtown Brooklyn. Highlights of the agencies' work include:

- More than 200 crews from the City as well Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester Counties have been working daily to cut and remove damaged trees.
- Nearly 800 City employees from Parks, DSNY, and DOT have been assigned to tree removal duties daily.
- In addition, FDNY rapid response teams have responded to 1,350 tree cleaning assignments in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island.
- NYPD's Emergency Service Units have also responded to nearly 400 locations for tree removal assignments.
- The City has closed out 1,156 of the 3,459 reports of downed trees.
- Every street blocked by debris (more than 70 streets) was reopened to traffic by Wednesday night.
- 45,000 Con Ed customers have had their electricity restored by Sunday.

Federal Disaster Aid

Yesterday, representatives from OEM, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), New York State Office of Emergency Management (NYSOEM), and the federal Small Business Administration (SBA) began a preliminary damage assessment by touring the hardest hit areas of Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens. Over the coming days, the damage assessment teams will try to determine if New York City meets one or all of the thresholds to receive federal disaster aid. If New York City meets the federal thresholds, the City, through New York State, will ask the President for a federal disaster declaration. It may take several weeks for a disaster declaration to be issued if the City is eligible. For more information about federal disaster assistance in New York City visit: http://www.fema.gov/pdf/media/factsheets/2009/dad_disaster_declaration.pdf.

Private Tree Removal Service Improvement

In an effort to make it easier for residents to get trees in their neighborhood cleared, the Parks Department has put new information on its website. On the agency's homepage, under "features," Parks has a new form that allows residents affected by the storm to work with approved private contractors to remove or prune trees. Parks has also provided the names and phone numbers of approved tree care specialists. Homeowners will be responsible for paying the bill and can apply

for reimbursement from the Comptroller's Office. Information about reimbursements can be found at the Comptroller's website under "filing claims" at www.comptroller.nyc.gov or by calling 311. For more information on private tree removal visit www.nyc.gov/parks or call 311.

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