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**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ENCOURAGES NEW YORKERS TO PREPARE
FOR THE START OF HURRICANE SEASON**

OEM Kicks Off Hurricane Preparedness Week with Updated Hurricane Guide

Reminding New Yorkers that hurricanes can and do affect the city, New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno kicked off National Hurricane Preparedness Week in Red Hook, Brooklyn – an area that was inundated with storm surge flooding from Hurricane Irene last August. Commissioner Bruno was joined by New York City Councilwoman Sara M. González, Fairway Market spokesman Bruce Bobbins, Food Industry Alliance Vice President Patricia Brodhagen, and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Chief Glenn Wolin to encourage city residents to take steps to prepare for the upcoming hurricane season.

“When Hurricane Irene made its way up the East Coast last year, New Yorkers were confronted with the dangers of storm surge flooding, high winds, and heavy rain that accompany tropical storms,” said OEM Commissioner Bruno. “As the 2012 Atlantic hurricane season officially begins on June 1st, it’s time to start thinking about your emergency plan.”

Last week, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released its 2012 hurricane season outlook, which calls for nine to 15 named storms, four to eight hurricanes, and one to three major hurricanes. Before the official start of the season this Friday, two storms have already arrived: Tropical Storm Alberto formed off of the South Carolina coast on May 19th, and Tropical Storm Beryl made landfall near Jacksonville, FL, early Monday.

“It is important to remember even one storm can make a difference,” Commissioner Bruno said. “Irene was the only hurricane to make landfall in the U.S. during the 2011 hurricane season.”

Last August, Hurricane Irene was downgraded to a tropical storm shortly before it made landfall in New York City. In preparation, the City issued the first-ever mandatory evacuation of coastal areas on August 26, 2011, affecting 370,000 residents and 43 health care facilities. The City sheltered 10,000 evacuees at 82 shelters. With winds of 65 mph, Irene dropped up to seven inches of rain across the five boroughs.

“Last year, I felt it was my duty to spend that rain-soaked day working with OEM and the 76th Precinct in Red Hook as we drove through the streets broadcasting warnings. I went into buildings throughout Red Hook Houses in order to assist people who had not yet evacuated. My concern is that many stayed and defied the odds. God smiled on us and the brunt of the storm passed us but we cannot rely on good fortune when Mother Nature is involved. We must be vigilant and prepared and I believe OEM has developed revised guidelines that will keep us from the dangers that Coastal Storms and hurricanes present,” said Councilwoman Sara M. González.

While New York is most at risk for tropical storms and hurricanes from August to October, the City plans and prepares year-round for coastal storms. OEM encourages residents to take three key steps to prepare for hurricane season:

- **Determine whether you live in an evacuation zone** – Areas of the city subject to storm surge flooding are divided into three zones based on how storms of different strengths will affect them. Residents in these zones may need to evacuate depending on the hurricane’s track and projected storm surge.
- **Gather Supplies** – Pack a Go Bag (a collection of things you would want if you have to leave in a hurry) and put together an emergency supply kit, with items including bottled water, non-perishable food, a flashlight, and extra batteries.
- **Get Notified** – Sign up to receive emergency updates and information online and via e-mail, text, or phone through the City’s Notify NYC program at www.nyc.gov/notifynyc.

In preparation for the upcoming hurricane season, OEM released the 2012 edition of the “Ready New York: Hurricanes and New York City” guide. The guide offers instructions for making a hurricane emergency plan, and features a map of the City’s hurricane evacuation zones and a list of hurricane evacuation centers in all five boroughs. Visit nyc.gov/hurricane to download the guide, or call 311 to request a copy.

In the coming weeks, OEM will mail guides to elected officials, non-profit organizations, as well as faith-based organizations, schools, and senior centers in the city’s most vulnerable areas.

OEM has partnered with Fairway Market, which has locations that were directly affected by Hurricane Irene last summer, to promote hurricane preparedness.

“As a growing institution that started as a one-store-front, being a part of our surrounding community has always been very important to us. Fairway Market is privileged to come to the aid of our patrons, neighbors, and citizens across the country. In collaboration with OEM, we hope to help spread awareness and education about hurricane preparedness so that people will know where to go and what provisions they need to stay safe,” said Dan Glickberg, Executive Vice President of Fairway Market.

New York City has a comprehensive Coastal Storm Plan that includes detailed procedures for evacuating and sheltering residents. In a major coastal storm, such as a category 3 or 4 hurricane, as many as 2.3 million people would need to evacuate coastal areas and up to 600,000 people would require temporary shelter. To meet those needs, the City’s shelter system consists of 65 evacuation centers and up to 509 hurricane shelters, including eight special medical needs shelters. To supply and staff the shelter system, OEM maintains an emergency stockpile of essential supplies and a database of thousands of City employees and volunteers who would be called upon to manage evacuation centers and emergency shelters.

For more information on how to prepare for hurricanes, visit www.nyc.gov/hurricane or call [311](tel:311).

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