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

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

06-011

July 21, 2006

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

The City's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has been coordinating response to the blackout situation affecting the northwest sections of Queens. On Tuesday, July 18 OEM activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to coordinate City agency responses to the power outage. City agencies have dispatched additional personnel and equipment to the affected areas to respond to any issues. A Special Services Center has also been opened at 45-22 32<sup>nd</sup> Place in Long Island City to assist area residents with questions about food spoilage claims and other blackout-related issues. Residents and business owners without power should 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 latest update of City agency of resources deployed to the affected areas in Queens:

*Police Department*

The NYPD has deployed an additional 500 police officers, 50 traffic agents, eight mobile response vehicles, and 13 commands posts throughout the affected areas in the 114<sup>th</sup> and 108<sup>th</sup> Precincts. Twenty-seven light towers are operating in the area and all intersections without functioning traffic signals are being staffed by NYPD personnel. Department vehicles are patrolling with turret lights to increase NYPD visibility in the area. In addition, the NYPD Aviation Unit is also surveying the area.

*Fire Department*

The FDNY has ordered the 16 local fire companies in the affected areas to be mobile. In addition, the FDNY Safety Battalion has also been dispatched to the area. The Fire Safety Education Unit has also been deployed to the area to hand out fire prevention and safety information.

*Department of Transportation*

DOT has enhanced its services throughout the affected area. Additional electrical inspectors have been deployed to survey traffic signal equipment; DOT sign shops are providing additional STOP signs at traffic lights that have no power; and DOT staff continues to work with private electrical contractors to resolve power issues. DOT is also



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working closely with the NYPD to provide additional traffic control personnel as needed. Currently, there are eight traffic signals malfunctioning at steady, 33 at flashing and 44 are completely out in the area.

*Department of Sanitation*

Sanitation has enhanced service throughout the affected areas. In addition to service normally assigned to the area, tonight three additional collection trucks will be dispatched. Through the weekend, 17 more collection trucks will be added to trash routes. Sanitation trucks will also be responding to 311 calls and will be driving neighborhood routes to collect any additional refuse including spoiled foods.

*Department of Environmental Protection*

DEP, in conjunction with DOHMH, will conduct additional water testing at the Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant. Power has been restored to DEP's Bowery Bay facility. Scheduled emergency fuel deliveries to Bowery Bay have been cancelled and the facility's fuel reserves are full.

*Taxi and Limousine Commission*

TLC has assigned two squads of 10 officers to assist with traffic control in the 114<sup>th</sup> Precinct. TLC had also provided personnel to staff the OEM Emergency Operations Center.

*Human Resources Administration*

HRA has opened a Special Services Center at the Astoria Job Center (45-22 32<sup>nd</sup> Place, between Queens Boulevard and 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue) and is providing information for residents in the affected areas. Agencies including Small Business Services, Department of Consumer Affairs, Department for the Aging, Health and Hospitals Corporation, Economic Development Corporation and the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit have all provided staff to the Center. The center will remain open until power is restored. To date, representatives from HRA and the Department for the Aging have received 320 cases of bottled water to be distributed at relief centers. Over the weekend, HRA will deploy three commuter vans to transport area residents to the Center or other needed services.

*Health and Hospitals Corporation*

HHC has deployed a mobile medical unit at the intersection of Ditmars Boulevard and Steinway Street. The medical unit is staffed with medical personnel to address any health issues that may arise for affected residents. HHC will also deploy three commuter vans to



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transport area residents to the mobile medical unit, the Special Services Center, or local hospitals if needed.

*Department for the Aging*

To ensure continuity of service the Department for the Aging has been operating its nine senior centers on backup generator power all week. They will remain open through the weekend and until power is restored. Aging has also deployed two access-a-ride vans to transport area seniors to these centers. To date, more than 480 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 also completed today.

*NYC Small Business Services*

SBS has reached out to nearly 400 businesses in the affected area. Businesses with perishables were provided with ConEd claim forms for reimbursement for up to \$7K. Another 300 small businesses have also been targeted for outreach. SBS staff is also staffing the HRA Special Services Center through the weekend.

*Department of Consumer Affairs*

In addition to DCA staff at the HRA Special Assistance Center, DCA Inspectors are on-call to investigate any reports price gouging in the area. To date, DCA has received four calls from 311 regarding overpriced ice and other price increases involving food. 311 will route any inquiries related to black-out specific reports of price increases or shortages of the following: milk, large gallon (more than 1 gallon) bottled water, and ice.

*Department of Parks and Recreation*

The Parks Department has opened a mini-pool (for children accompanied by parents) at P.S. 10, which will be open from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. In addition, the Astoria Pool will continue to operate its normal hours and will remain open until 7:00 p.m. for open swim and until 8:30 p.m. for lap swimming will.

*Department of Finance*

The Department of Finance has directed City Marshals to suspend towing vehicles for unpaid parking tickets in the 114<sup>th</sup> and 108<sup>th</sup> Precincts until power is restored to the area. This suspension only affects the tows of cars where the owner owes more than \$350 in parking judgment debt when the debt is older than 90 days. NYPD will continue to tow cars for violations, such as parking in a bus lane.



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*Department of Citywide Administrative Services*

In addition to providing staff to the OEM Emergency Operations Center, DCAS provided assistance in speeding up procurement process to provide emergency food to Rikers Island – which had been operating on generator power.

*Economic Development Corporation*

EDC has 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.

*Mayor's Community Assistance Unit*

CAU has reached out to more than 20 local civic leaders and elected officials and providing them with information on where additional City resources are being dispatched and how the community can access assistance. CAU has been in contact with every local elected official and continues to redirect resources as needed.

*Community Emergency Response Teams*

The Queens Community Board 1 CERT will be deployed to Astoria Park. The East Sixties Neighborhood Association CERT will support American Red Cross operations later today