

For Immediate Release

#42-18

Update #2, 7/20/2018, 6:00 p.m.

UPDATE ON THE CITY'S RESPONSE TO THE MANHATTAN STEAM MAIN EXPLOSION

All Air Samples Have Been Negative for Asbestos

Clean-Up Plan for Debris That Tested Positive for Asbestos Began Overnight

Individuals Who Live and Work in the Affected Area Will Not be Permitted to Enter the Area During Clean-Up

July 20, 2018 – The City's Emergency Management Department continues to coordinate the interagency response to the steam main explosion that occurred in Manhattan at West 21st Street and 5th Avenue on Thursday, July 19. City agencies continue to operate in the area, including the FDNY, NYPD, and the Departments of Environmental Protection, Buildings, Health and Mental Hygiene, and Emergency Management. Con Edison, the American Red Cross in Greater NY, and the federal Occupational Safety & Health Administration are also coordinating response operations.

The following is an update of the City's response to the affected area:

HOT ZONE REMAINS IN PLACE:

- In an abundance of caution, and to facilitate clean-up operations, a hot zone will remain in place. The hot zone boundaries include:
 - 5th Avenue from 19th Street to 22nd Street (midway down the block on 19th Street and most of 20th and 21st streets on the west side).
 - The entire block on East 20th and 21st Streets and midway down the block on East 19th Street.
- Individuals are not permitted to enter the zone from outside the area. As clean-up work progresses, the City will work to shrink the size of the frozen zone.

ASSESSMENT AND CLEAN-UP OPERATIONS:

- 44 buildings have had their facades visually inspected for asbestos contamination. No buildings have been cleared for reoccupancy as of 5:00 p.m. on Friday. Visual inspections are ongoing.
- An assessment is underway to determine how many building have been contaminated. Once the assessment is completed, the exterior washing of buildings will begin. This operation will be conducted by outside vendors hired by Con Edison.
- The Departments of Environmental Protection and Health and Mental Hygiene will determine when it is safe for residents to reoccupy buildings.

RECEPTION CENTER FOR AFFECTED RESIDENTS:

- A reception center for affected individuals remains open at the Clinton School at 10 East 15th Street until 8:00 p.m. tonight. The reception center will operate from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. through Sunday, 7/22. This reception center is for information inquiries only and is currently

staffed with representatives from the New York City Departments of Emergency Management and Health and Mental Hygiene along with Con Edison, the American Red Cross in Greater NY, ASPCA, and the Animal Care Center of NYC. Individuals who live or work within the potential affected area and need to retrieve needed medical supplies or pets should report to the reception center, where escorts will be coordinated if possible. The reception center assisted seven households yesterday affected by the steam main explosion. One family was sheltered in a local hotel by the American Red Cross in Greater NY.

STREET CLOSURES:

Street closures are still necessary to facilitate assessment and clean-up work. The following full street closures are in effect:

- West 20th Street between Broadway and 6th Avenue
- West 21st Street between Broadway and 6th Avenue

Partial closures:

- North side of West 19th Street between Broadway and 5th Avenue is partially closed, but we are working on opening the street entirely as soon as possible.
- West 22nd Street between Broadway and 5th Avenue

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & MENTAL HYGIENE (DOHMH):

- The public should stay away from the affected area. Emergency crews are still on scene.
- All air samples have been negative for asbestos. Some debris samples contained asbestos. However, it is very unlikely that people exposed to this event will develop an asbestos-related illness. Asbestos-related illnesses usually develop after many years of exposure. People with asthma and other respiratory conditions may be experiencing breathing difficulties. Irritation to the eyes, nose and throat from exposure to the debris is also possible. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, contact your doctor.
- If you had been exposed to debris from the steam-pipe explosion, you should shower and seal all clothing you were wearing at the time of the explosion in a clear plastic bag. Con Edison is accepting bagged clothing from people who were in the immediate area of the steam pipe rupture at 5th Avenue and 21st Street in Manhattan.
- People who live or work within the affected area should keep windows closed until clean-up is completed. Window air conditioners should be set to re-circulate indoor air. If you see or have debris from the steam pipe explosion, you should notify your landlord, building owner, or building manager. Debris should not be disturbed. New York City agencies are working to determine what contamination is present and the extent of impact.
- The Health Department and other city agencies will continue to provide updates as new information is made available. For current information, visit nyc.gov/health.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP):

- DEP is monitoring asbestos levels while the cleanup and reoccupancy continues. All air samples have been negative for asbestos.
- DEP asbestos inspectors are conducting physical assessments of each building in the area, coordinated with NYPD, FDNY, and DOHMH.

FDNY:

- FDNY has two decontamination task forces on scene – one at 22nd Street and Broadway and another at 19th Street and Broadway. These task forces will decontaminate FDNY members, workers, and civilian walk-ins, as needed.
- A fire task force remains on scene, with three units standing by if needed (1 chief, 1 engine company, 1 ladder company).
- An alarm investigation team also remains on scene. This two-person team can respond to alarms in buildings in the immediate area and advise dispatch quickly if additional resources are needed. These teams are put in place during big events, and useful to prevent sending in several resources if not needed for a false alarm.

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS:

- Buildings inspectors and forensic engineers remain on the scene to assist with structural assessments and engineering expertise.

NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:

- The Emergency Operations Center remains activated in response to the steam main explosion. NYC Emergency Management continues to coordinate the interagency response on scene.
- NYC Emergency Management and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services have moved 4,000 sandbags to the location to support clean-up operations.

MTA:

- There are no service impacts to the R & W subway lines, and the station at 23rd Street has been reopened.
- MTA buses:
 - Detoured - M1, M2, M3, M55, BM1, BM2, BM3, BM4, X1, X7, X9, X10, X12, X14, X17, X27, X28, X42, X63, X64, X68, BxM6, BxM7, BxM9, BxM10, BxM11
 - Delayed - M1, M2, M3, M55

CON EDISON:

- Con Edison personnel will be at three locations in Manhattan today to assist those affected by yesterday morning's steam pipe rupture at 5th Avenue and 21st Street. The locations are:
 - **10 E. 15th St., inside Clinton School.** Residents who cannot get back into their homes because of the evacuation should meet with Con Edison personnel who will be on-site for financial assistance from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

- Near **19th Street and Broadway** and near **22nd Street and Broadway**. Con Edison personnel will be at these two locations from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and will provide claim forms and accept clothing that was worn by people who were in the area at the time of the explosion.
- Con Edison advises that anyone who was within a block of 5th Avenue and 21st Street yesterday at or just after the time of the 6:40 a.m. rupture bag their clothing and bring it to one of the designated sites.
- The claim forms also are available at coned.com.

-30-

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