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## Department of Environmental Protection Releases New Homeowner's Guide to Flood Preparedness

### Guide Provides Homeowner's with Tips to Help Protect their Properties and Can be Viewed [Here](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today released a new guide to help homeowners protect their properties and valuables against flooding from heavy rainfall and sewer back-ups. DEP's Homeowner's Guide to Flood Preparedness informs New Yorkers about some of the common causes of flooding and provides tips about flooding solutions that range from installing check valves that prevent water from backing up through connections to the local sewer system, installing barriers to block water from flowing into low lying driveways, to simpler fixes, such as reducing the amount of paved area on a property, clearing catch basins ahead of storms, regularly maintaining sewer connections, and installing proper roof drainage and downspouts. The new flood preparedness guide was rolled out last night at a meeting of nearly 300 members of the Empowered Queens United in Action and Leadership (EQUAL) organization at St. Catherine's Catholic Church in Saint Albans.

"One of the consequences we are already seeing from climate change is an increase in the frequency and intensity of rain events that can result in flash flooding in low lying areas of New York City," said DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd. "However, there are steps homeowners can take that will help prevent flooding and this new guide is full of important information that will help New Yorkers protect their properties."

"As climate change continues to rear its ugly head with rising water tables and torrential downpours, we must be proactive in our efforts to reduce flooding and

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associated damages," said the Chairman of the City Council's Committee on Environmental Protection Donovan Richards. "Millions of New Yorkers know too well how quickly a home may flood, especially in Southeast Queens. I am proud to partner with DEP in efforts to educate and equip homeowners with preventative measures that will help to protect their property and save their hard earned money as we weather future storms."

"EQUAL was pleased to welcome Commissioner Emily Lloyd and the staff of DEP to its Assembly last night," said EQUAL President Reverend Patrick O'Connor of the First Presbyterian Church of Jamaica. "Through a productive working relationship between a public agency and organized citizens we have begun to create solutions for flooding problems in South East Queens."

The Homeowner's Guide to Flood Preparedness builds upon an extensive public outreach campaign to inform New Yorkers about one of the leading causes of sewer back-ups – the improper disposal of grease from cooking oil. Over the past year, grease buildup accounted for more than 60 percent of confirmed sewer backups. The outreach campaign began last year and included the development of a public service announcement video, door to door canvassing in neighborhoods with recurring grease buildup in the sewers, and a year-long collaboration with the New York City Housing Authority to provide intensive educational outreach about the proper disposal of used cooking oil. As part of that pilot program, residents of one building in a Manhattan housing complex served as a control group and received DEP's standard educational materials, while residents of another building in the development participated in additional meetings, workshops, and events focused on grease. The sewer service lines from both buildings were inspected and cleaned prior to the program, and crews will re-inspect the lines at the pilot's conclusion to measure the relative improvement as a result of the intensive curriculum.

The EQUAL organization is made up of congregations located in South East Queens, Sunnyside and Woodside and was formed to assist members in engaging in public decision making, empowering them to be directly involved in efforts to improve the quality of life in their communities, and strengthen their member institutions.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dep](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/nycwater](https://facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/nycwater](https://twitter.com/nycwater).

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