
For Immediate Release

#24-19

**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS NATIONAL FLOOD SAFETY
AWARENESS WEEK**

March 15, 2019 – Each year, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Weather Service (NWS) recognize flood safety through National Flood Safety Awareness Week. The week highlights flooding hazards and provides educational tips about the steps individuals can take to protect life and property.

According to the National Weather Service, more deaths occur due to flooding than from any other severe weather related hazard each year. They say the main reason is people underestimate the force and power of water. For example, [more than half of all flood-related deaths result from vehicles being swept away](#) by rising water, many of which, NWS says, are preventable. During the week, the National Weather Service features daily themes to bring awareness to flooding hazards and highlights tips people can take to prepare. These themes include flood safety, the importance of flood insurance, and the dangers of driving through floodwaters – turn around, don't drown.

TYPES OF FLOODING

New York City is vulnerable to four types of flooding events: coastal flooding, inland flooding, tidal flooding, and riverine flooding – each presenting its own unique set of hazards.

COASTAL FLOODING

Coastal flooding typically results from storm surge that accompanies strong coastal storms such as tropical storms, hurricanes, and nor'easters. Coastal flooding can cause erosion, structural damage, and can damage electrical equipment. During Superstorm Sandy, storm surge reached as high as nine feet in some New York City coastal communities.

During the Atlantic hurricane season, June 1 through November 30, NYC Emergency Management encourages New Yorkers to know their hurricane evacuation zone. Hurricane evacuation zones are based on coastal flood risk resulting from storm surge, the geography of the city's low-lying neighborhoods, and the accessibility of these neighborhoods by bridges and roads. Roughly three million New Yorkers live within the city's six hurricane evacuation zones. The City may order residents who live in a zone to evacuate depending on a hurricane's forecast strength, track, and storm surge. New Yorkers can find out whether they live in one of the city's six hurricane evacuation zones by accessing the [Know Your Zone](#) finder or calling 3-1-1.

Another measure used to mitigate the effects of coastal flooding is the Interim Flood Protection Measures program (IFPM). IFPM is designed to protect critical facilities, infrastructure, and low-lying areas in New York City from coastal flooding during a hurricane through the deployment of temporary, deployable measures. Interim flood protection measures provide a temporary level

of protection while permanent mitigation is constructed at the site. The City worked with engineering consultants and agencies to evaluate flood risks at 46 sites, and determined what measures would best reduce flood risk while having the smallest impact on the vulnerable location.

INLAND FLOODING

Inland flooding, commonly known as flash floods, is caused by short-term, high intensity rainfall associated with a storm. Flash flooding can occur if excessive amounts of rain fall upon low-lying areas, overwhelming the sewers or storm water management infrastructure. Improper street grading and clogged catch basins also contribute to inland flooding.

Prior to a flash flood, NYC Emergency Management activates the Flash Flood Emergency Plan, a coordinated response to flash flood events in New York City. The Flash Flood Emergency Plan activates when forecasted precipitation is at least an inch an hour. The plan contains procedures to mitigate the effects of flash flood events on people and property, and guides agencies and stakeholders through the decisions and actions that will be required before, during, and after such an event. Plan strategies include monitoring weather forecasts, catch basin cleaning and maintenance, and providing recovery assistance to affected households.

TIDAL FLOODING

Tidal flooding, also known as nuisance flooding, is the temporary inundation of low-lying areas during higher than usual tides. Even minimal rainfall during periods of high tide can result in tidal flooding to low-lying communities. As sea levels continue to rise, tidal flooding may become more common. Regular tidal flooding could significantly disrupt neighborhoods and gradually erode shorelines.

RIVERINE FLOODING

Riverine flooding can occur when the volume of freshwater flowing through a river or stream exceeds the holding capacity and water overruns the river or stream's banks. In New York City, riverine flooding is less common because most freshwater rivers and streams within the city are short and drain only small areas. While individuals should take steps to protect their family and property, New York City also works to mitigate flooding hazards. NYC Emergency Management works closely with City agencies and stakeholders to monitor and coordinate preparations for potential flood events.

GENERAL PREPAREDNESS

It is important that New Yorkers understand the risks and hazards associated with flooding to understand how to prepare. A great first step is to create an [emergency plan](#), which includes meeting locations and contact information. It is also important to pack a go-bag in the event you must quickly leave your home. Your go-bag should contain essential items such as water, nonperishable food, copies of documents, and portable chargers. Individuals who live in flood-



NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

nyc.gov/emergencymanagement

Press Office: 718-422-4888

susceptible locations should also keep materials such as sandbags, plywood, and lumber on hand to protect their property.

Another great way to reduce the risks of flooding is to stay informed. New York City Emergency Management works to inform the public about the hazards of flooding through [Notify NYC](#). Notify NYC is the city's free, official source for information about emergency events and important city services. Notify NYC alerts provide New Yorkers with safety tips and general information about the hazards associated with the emergency. New Yorkers can download the app via [iTunes](#) or [Google Play](#).

MEDIA CONTACT: Tashawn Brown (718) 422-4888

STAY CONNECTED: Twitter: @NotifyNYC (emergency notifications)
@nycemergencygmt (emergency preparedness info)
Facebook: /NYCemergencymanagement