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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO UPDATES NEW YORKERS ON WINTER
STORM**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Alright everyone I want to give an update on the storm conditions that we are facing here in New York City. And I want to start by emphasizing this is a very serious storm. This is a tough situation in the city. I was just out in Queens in Corona looking at the operations by the Sanitation Department. I want to thank them for the great work that they are doing clearing streets and helping to keep people safe. Thank you to all of our Sanitation workers and all of our public workers who are out there right now helping all of us.

But what's quite clear is this is a serious, serious storm between the very low temperature, the strong winds, the driving snow, everyone should take this one very seriously. And take precautions.

We, because of the fact that the storm has intensified in the last few hours, I am now declaring a Winter Weather Emergency for New York City. That will give our City agencies the ability to take additional actions to keep us safe.

And in particular I want to note that any vehicles that are blocking roadways, any vehicles that are in the way of our operations to clear streets will be towed. So I want to emphasize to everyone, do not leave your vehicle in a situation where it is going to be subject to towing. We want everyone to be kept safe but we have to do things quickly to clear the streets in the name of safety.

We are closely coordinating with the state of New York and with the MTA. As you know the Governor has declared a State of Emergency for the state and we are working with the State on all actions that we need to take in light of that.

And the conditions at this point are blizzard conditions in some parts of Queens. Obviously we feel a lot for our colleagues in Nassau and Suffolk County, who are going through so much right now. But Queens is getting some of those blizzard-like conditions as well.

What we are seeing around the city is very fast accumulations. This has been going on – basically started around 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm, in that range. For a few hours we've had one to two inches per hour of accumulations. That kind of speed of accumulation is what we found in the

past is really creates a lot of problems for people moving around and creates a real challenge for our good Sanitation workers to keep up with it.

That accumulation will be continuing into the next few hours but we do expect the heavy snow to taper off by the middle of the afternoon. But right now in a lot of parts of the city, visibility is very limited to as little as a quarter mile. So again, anyone who is out needs to take very seriously – driving conditions are really tough between the snow that's accumulated, the wind, and the limited visibility.

The snow as I said, we expect will end by the middle of the afternoon. The total in different parts of the city it will be different, the range we're talking about now is six to ten inches. That could change but in some parts of the city we expect to see up to ten inches. We hope by this evening there will be no longer any snow fall at all based on the latest report that I got from the National Weather Service.

Sanitation is out in force. 12 hour split shifts have been in effect since 7:00 pm last night. We've had salt spreaders out on the road since 4:00 am. There are 693 salt spreaders out.

Plows went out at 7:45 am when there was enough accumulation for them to be able to their work. There's now 1,500 plows out. This includes the smaller plows that we added into the fleet in the last year to be able to work the smaller streets in the many parts of the city including in areas like Corona, Queens where I was. And I saw those smaller plows in action. They are really doing great work. And they are reaching a lot of places that were unreachable in the past. So I think this is going to help a lot.

You're not going to see pavement on the roads in the short term. The intensity of the storm is too great right now, there's too much snow coming down to expect to see blacktop right away. And we got really tough conditions too in terms of the impact of the salt. When it's this cold the salt doesn't have as much effect. We expect these very low temperatures to continue. So I want all New Yorkers to have a little bit of patience with the fact that despite the great work of Sanitation, it's going to be a while before you see the black top in some parts of the city.

In terms of other precautions we're taking, Code Blue is in effect and will be around the clock because of the extremely cold temperatures. So we will be looking to make sure anyone out on the street is safe.

Also some updates on transportation. We are suspending New York City Ferry Service at noon today. Our expectation is that it will be up and running for the morning commute on all lines but it will be suspended on all lines as of noon today. Staten Island Ferry service is running as normal. It's on the midday scheduled now, we expect that to continue at this point. And as you know, MTA service is all running. Also in terms of transportation, both LaGuardia and JFK do not have flights going in or out at this point.

I want to emphasize to everyone these are a very, very dangerous conditions. So this is where New Yorkers have choices to make and I want people to make the smart choices. Stay inside if you can. If you do not need to be on the roads, don't be on the roads. That's both for your own

safety and to allow the Sanitation workers to do their work so they can clear the roads for everyone's safety. If you go out, go out for as little time as possible. If you have to walk somewhere, bundle up, take precautions because it's bitterly cold and with the wind it's even worse.

Driving conditions are going to be tough today. They'll certainly be tough for the next few days because we don't expect to see a lot of melting. So there will be a lot of ice out there and again, the high winds will continue certainly throughout today and into tomorrow. We're talking about gusts of up to 50 miles an hour. So whether you're driving, whether you're walking, tough conditions. Stay inside to the maximum extent possible. Don't go outside if you don't need to. Use mass transit if at all possible.

We expect a tough evening commute. So again, if you can take mass transit that's better. If you have to use your car to come back home in the evening, leave time, go slow. Take it slow because these are really treacherous conditions.

In looking ahead, we at this moment expect school to be open tomorrow, Friday. We'll have updates later in the day. But given that the storm is expected to abate in the next few hours essentially, we do expect school to be open. And an update on alternate side parking, it will be cancelled both – it's cancelled today of course, it will be cancelled both tomorrow and Saturday. So, again, if you can leave your car and not have to move it around please leave it in place.

So, we expect tough conditions for days to come particularly in terms of the cold. This is a very sobering reality. It's really going to be cold all the way through Sunday. National Weather Service told me that on Friday and Saturday night, when you take the temperature and then the wind chill we expect the temperature outside to be feel-like negative 20. So, National Weather Service is projecting a temperature of give or take zero and then still strong winds. The impact being a negative 20 wind chill. That's something to take very, very seriously.

Anyone who does not have hot water or heat in their building needs to call 3-1-1 right away. I want to remind people this, if your building management is not responding to the situation immediately you got to call 3-1-1. We will either make sure the building management fixes the problem or we will send City personnel to restore the heat and hot water and we will charge the building management for it. But either way we've got to get everyone's heat and hot water up and running. We can only do that if you report to us if there's a problem.

Also want to remind people, when it's this cold sometimes people try to find informal means to stay warm. That can be dangerous. Be careful with extension cords, with heaters, or leaving an oven door open, or using candles. Anything like that can be a danger. Please take precautions. Most importantly, again, if you're having a fundamental heating problem, let the City know so we can act on it.

If you see anyone in danger on the street, anyone who is homeless or in other distress and needs help you can call 3-1-1 if it's not an immediate emergency. If it looks like a life and death situation, of course, call 9-1-1.

We're going to keep you updated. There will be more news in the course of the day, but the most important thing is stay indoors, take precautions, look out for your fellow New Yorkers. Just a few words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

Look out for you neighbors, check in on any neighbors that may need help, particularly folks who are older or have any sicknesses. Let's look out for each other.

With that I want to turn to a couple of my colleagues in the administration to speak. I also want to give a special thank you to our new Deputy Mayor for Operations Laura Anglin who, just a few days on the job now, is coordinating this overall response to the storm. I want to thank her for her great efforts. It's now my pleasure to introduce our Commissioner for Emergency Management Joe Esposito.

Commissioner Joe Esposito, Office of Emergency Management: Thank you Mr. Mayor. The City's Emergency Operations Center has been activated since last night with a dozen of our agency partners working on the response to this storm. And the center will stay open until the storm is over, probably right through the weekend. We've been hosting daily inter-agency conference calls with the City, State agencies and public and private partners to coordinate preparation and response to this storm. We're in constant communication with National Weather Service who provide forecast updates. We just hung up with them about a few minutes ago.

We've placed several taskforces on standby including our tow truck taskforce and our down tree taskforce. We think with these winds we may be activating those – both those taskforces. We have more than 140 tow trucks available throughout the city to help clear stuck vehicles off the roadway. But we do encourage people to try and stay off the roadways as much as possible. There are some restrictions, the Verrazano has banned trucks at this point.

We also have Emergency Management personnel and City Hall folks deployed across the five boroughs to help provide information about conditions throughout the city to coordinate our efforts.

We are going – if you're going to go out to shovel please use common sense. You know, if you have any medical condition get the local kids to shovel for you. Don't do it yourself. But it's important to shovel as soon as you can once the snow does stop because with this cold weather, as the Mayor indicated, it can be around zero for the next few days. If you don't shovel it will be a sheet of ice in front of your house and that's going to create dangerous conditions. So, try and get out there if you possibly can. But again, consider hiring some local kids to do it. I find that's always the best way.

For information and updates related to the weather and travel conditions, sign up for Notify NYC. It's the best way to get up to date information. It's free. It's the City's free emergency notification system. Or you can call 3-1-1, and you can sign up for Notify NYC through calling 3-1-1.

Thank you very much.

Mayor: Thank you Joe, appreciate it. And now our Sanitation Commissioner Kathryn Garcia.

Commissioner Kathryn Garcia, Department of Sanitation: Thank you Mr. Mayor. As the Mayor said we have had all of our employees on split shifts since last night at 7:00 pm. We currently have over 2,400 plows, spreaders, we've started to run – roll out some of our front end loaders. We have been added to our capacity from DOT, DEP, and the Parks Department. I want to thank them.

And again as the Mayor said, we do not anticipate given these very, very cold temperatures that we are going to see blacktop. We are operating aggressively across all five boroughs. We have completed passes on nearly every street since the start of shift change this morning when plowing began. But because we are going to get very little traction out of the salt we do not anticipate seeing blacktop.

In addition, I really do encourage people to stay off the roads. One of the biggest challenges that we've had this morning so far is people who have gotten into accidents and impeded our ability to move forward. We've had a lot of assistance from PD helping us keep all of our spreaders and plows moving. But right at this moment we are anticipating that we could be seeing three inches of snow an hour over the next few minutes. So, I – we anticipate that will continue to impede our operations in terms of the fact that they are driving in basically whiteout blizzard conditions. But we will stay in split shifts until we are through this. And we anticipate that we will have to work through icy conditions tomorrow.

Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you very much Commissioner. Alright, ready to take your questions about this emergency and the City's response. Back there?

Question: Mayor, how many accidents have you guys seen this morning, and any reports of injuries or slips and falls? Do you have any of those numbers?

Mayor: Okay, between Fire, PD – you got it Terry?

Chief of Patrol Terrence Monahan, NYPD: Alright we're actually down in accidents. 86 vehicle accidents so far today. All minor, basically bumper to bumper sort of accidents. Down from 135 at the same point last year. So accidents are down, I think less people are on the road.

Mayor: Okay questions. Yes?

Question: I hear you're encouraging people to take mass transit but what should people expect like for the buses especially, you know, really significant delays would you say? And for the subways as well what could you –

Mayor: I think the MTA is here. Yes. Why don't you give them an update directly.

Darryl Irick, President of New York City Transit: Yes, considering the conditions and the coordination and planning that we've done over the last few days. I'm happy to report that we are holding our own on both the bus and the subways side. But you know, as it has been said earlier, we should expect some weather related delays.

Mayor: So basically keeping the schedule, at this point, you know it's right for people to assume some delays, leave extra time obviously. But so far the MTA is doing a great job keeping things going.

Question: Mayor, two things. Given the conditions today, do you feel, I guess vindicated if you will about your decision yesterday to go ahead and close the schools today because it is so bad? And the second thing is, what does the winter weather emergency give you the ability or the police department to do? What does that actually mean?

Mayor: Sure. On the second point it allows us to go and do the kinds of things we need to do to keep the streets clear and the most obvious example is to go ahead and do towing of any vehicles that are deemed to be in the way of plowing operations. Now, again, if you park normally you're not going to have a problem. But if you leave a car in a position that's going to block the tow – the plowing operations, if you know block a road during plowing by like double parking too long or things like that, we are not going to be polite about that.

We have to keep things moving and it's making sure people understand that we are going to take action very resolutely and it also encompasses a lot of things that we've already acted on in terms of the, you know, closure for schools for example and other actions that are unusual in this situation. It's simply a catch all that makes clear that the City will do anything it needs to do at this point to preserve public safety.

The first question on, I'm sorry, look Dave I respect the question. I would not choose that word because I don't think that's what this about. The question is when you make one of these decisions, and I've had to make this decision a number of times, take the information we get from the National Weather Service, do our best to anticipate the unanticipated. This is something we learned a couple times a hard way. I learned by experience a few times that we heard an early estimate of what the level of snow would be, and then it jumped up quite a bit. You remember the biggest blizzard we had, a day or two out, was still being estimated at eight to ten inches ended up being something like 27, 28 inches.

So, you know, experience has now taught me, try and think a few jumps ahead of where something might go. So yesterday morning it was already clear that the upper end projections were really troubling, here, and that we would have the snow potentially hitting at its hardest right at the time the kids would be going to school. When we factored in that, plus the wind dynamics and the cold, I felt very confident about the decision.

But again, no one can make these decisions with perfect information. You have to do your best to take the history and take the best information we have from National Weather Service and then be decisive about what will be the best action in terms of protecting our kids and all the

people who work in our schools, and taking the needs of parents into mind as well. Questions, yes?

Question: Yeah, Mayor, you discussed people who are without heat or hot water at this time there have been some issues in a couple NYCHA developments, the Redfern Houses in particular. Can you give us an update in what is going on for people who are in NYCHA who maybe having issues with their heat?

Mayor: Yeah, I am going to bring forward Michael Kelly who is the General Manager of NYCHA. I want to emphasize the challenge in our public housing buildings is that these are older buildings that honestly, for decades, did not get the kind of investment and maintenance they deserved. A lot of times the folks who work at NYCHA are trying to hold together something that really should have gotten investment a long time ago.

That being said the standard that I hold, and I talk frequently with the leadership at NYCHA about this, notwithstanding that reality, each time we have got to get the heat back on and we've got to take whatever extraordinary actions will allow us to get the heat back. So right now, Michael is going to give you the update.

General Manager Michael Kelly, New York City Housing Authority: Thank you for the question. On Redfern right now the heat is operational. We have 24-hour watch to ensure that mobile boiler is in operation, so if it should go down again, we're in a position to respond to directly and we are monitoring all the NYCHA sites as we speak right now with roving teams and with the response as quickly we can get to them.

Mayor: So, just give the update on where you are in the other buildings.

General Manager Kelly: Right as we speak, there is one development that is out. It's at Woodside in Queens. It's affecting about 13,000 apartments. It's a gas issue and we are working with our partners at National Grid to respond as we speak, we have staff on the ground. And there are two buildings that are out as we speak. One, the Lower East Side Rehab, that is about 22 units and one at Jefferson, 108 units. Both of those staff is on site working as well.

Mayor: Thank you very much.

Question: Is there a sense, I mean, does it take a long time to get like these buildings hot again? I know they are big buildings. You know, is there any concern about how long people will be waiting or anything that's being done to –

General Manager Kelly: Our normal response time is about two hours through this crisis, we're about a five hour period here. We are finding though, because the nature of the NYCHA buildings, it takes a while for them to cool down in the apartments themselves. So this will leeway it that way and so we are – but that's what we're responding to now. And everything is different, sometimes we can get these back online very quickly and some requires parts and other things will take longer.

Mayor: Yeah?

Question: Regarding the NYCHA question Mr. Kelly, as the day goes on and over the next several days with issues around heating, how can we get real time information about what NYCHA buildings and developments are having heating problems?

General Manager Kelly: Under the Mayor's directive we've established an incident command situation desk at NYCHA in coordination with the Mayor's Office of Emergency – we actually have folks as we speak right now getting information all around the City from individual resident complaints as well as larger issues. And we have real time access, real time ability to respond to questions right now.

Mayor: We can, I'll answer it for you. We'll put that online. That's easy enough to do. Let's just put it online in real time. We are going to have to sort that out right now. We'll put it online, I assume the NYCHA website.

Question: Mr. Mayor, do all jail, all nine jails on Rikers have adequate heat? Where are cars being towed? And for the gentleman from the MTA –

Mayor: Can we just separate them? It will just be easier.

So the mandate I've given to Commissioner Brann is to make sure we that we are doing everything we can to make sure all the jails have the heat they need. If there is a specific effort we need to take augment what they have, we will do it, but that's the mandate. I can get you an update later in the day on what the status is. What is the second?

Question: The second question, where are cars that are towed getting taken? Where can someone whose car is towed pick it up?

Mayor: I'm not an expert on where cars are taken, anyone know the answer on that one right away? Go ahead.

Commissioner Esposito: Generally speaking they tow right up the highway – if they are on a highway, we tow them right off the highway to a safe spot. We don't have – we are not taking them to a pound or anything. We just get them off the road to a spot that's not blocking traffic, especially on the highways.

Question: How do you find out where, like, my car is towed and where do I go to get it?

Commissioner Esposito: You call the precinct, they will tell you – they will tell you where they put it.

Question: For the gentleman from the MTA are there are any particular lines, bus, or subway that's down or slow?

Irick: Across the system there are sporadic delays, there is not specific outages or cancellations of any bus or service – train service, at this time.

Question: A couple questions, Mr. Mayor, have there been any storm associated deaths, yet, that we are aware of? Shaking your head no?

Mayor: Best of my knowledge no, Terri, no, no.

Question: And how many homeless people have been brought in from the cold? You have an estimate on that?

Mayor: Steve, you want to talk about that?

Commissioner Steve Banks, Department of Social Services: Our outreach, Not-for-Profit outreach teams brought in about 14 people last night and together with the police department additional numbers were brought in, including several involuntarily because we made the determination that they were a danger to themselves and under the Mental Hygiene Law we brought them in.

Question: And finally are there any changes because of more and more people staying home, is this something that's, people are working from home increasingly, in general, and of course like a day like today there is more incentive to do that, so I don't know if the MTA has an estimate of its ridership for example or if that's something we need to get separately, but also just, Mr. Mayor is there anything that you do differently or the City does differently because you anticipate that fewer people will be out and about?

Mayor: Well there are is a couple different parts to that question, I mean I would argue, yes of course more people are working at home and have more flexibility to work at home. In a situation like this though I think we are still dealing with a fundamental reality that on any given normal day there is just a huge number of people out and about in New York City, 8.5 million people to begin with and then we pick up another 3 million plus commuters coming in and that doesn't even account from the huge volume of tourists and everything else. So I would argue that the fact that people can work at home is not fundamentally changing our reality of streets that would be impossible to plow if anything like the number, the normal number of people, came out.

In terms of what we do, look we tried to alert people as soon as we have firm information so that people can change their approach personally. So obviously parents know if they are not bringing their kids to school and they can make adjustments. As you know, City employees are expected to come to work depending on the level of emergency they may be assigned a certain task. Each one of these situations is individual and we have to kind of tailor approach to each one. Yeah? Oh, I'm sorry go ahead?

Question: For the MTA, do you have any ridership?

Irick: So we don't have any hard numbers at this point but our observation both, on both modes and in our private transit operations there has been a moderate delta reduction in ridership this morning. It has been lighter than normal.

Question: What does delta mean?

Irick: Change –

Mayor: Distance between one and the other.

Question: While we're talking blacktop – when we may see it again – how long, about, can people start to expect to see some blacktop for most roads. Obviously all roads – the super small ones have a lot of problems. But, for most roads, what are we thinking?

Mayor: I'll bring up Commissioner Garcia, but here's my caution. Again, since salt is more effective as temperatures go up, and we're hearing from National Weather Service – they expect through Saturday into Sunday very cold temperatures to begin with, and then the wind chill on top of it – really puts Sanitation at a disadvantage because the salt is not going to be able to do what it normally does. So, my first point to people is – do not expect immediate improvement.

Commissioner Garcia: If we don't see blacktop by the time the temperature starts to fall this evening, you're not going to see it until probably close to Monday. We will have been by, it will be passable, it will be slick, but we do not anticipate that the salt will work very effectively, particularly not at zero degrees.

Mayor: Any other questions? Yes?

Question: Mayor, what's your message to residents, especially in the outer boroughs and smaller streets – areas that in the past have felt neglected and felt that they were left out as, you know, Sixth Avenue got plowed and they were still waiting. What's different this year? How can you reassure them that they will get the attention?

Mayor: Well, they definitely will get the attention, and I really appreciate that question because – look, I've said from the beginning of the administration, we want all five boroughs to be treated equally. And there's a lot of parts to the outer boroughs that legitimately feel they didn't get the attention they deserved in snow storms, and part of that was that honestly the Sanitation Department, turns out, did not have the right equipment. It's not a problem with the people who do the work at Sanitation – I think they do a heroic job of dealing with snow storms. And I would urge all New Yorkers to thank them for their efforts today. I was out talking to some of the Sanitation workers earlier in Corona, and they're doing an amazing job. But they didn't have the right equipment. I got to see in Corona how different it was to have these smaller vehicles that can go down even the smallest streets, plow and spread the salt. This is new in our arsenal. It's something that we realized through experience we needed. And, as the Commissioner said, we're going to reach every single street in the short term, and we're going to keep coming back. So, you're going to see the attention for sure. You may not see the blacktop for the very reason the Commissioner laid out, but the difference in a lot of outer borough neighborhoods,

particularly with smaller streets, is now we have the vehicles that can reach them. Commissioner, how many again citywide?

Commissioner Garcia: 168.

Mayor: 168 of these smaller plows that can get down any side street. Yes?

Question: Mr. Mayor, when you first took office, in your first term, you did some plowing in front of your house in Park Slope. I'm wondering –

Mayor: I didn't do plowing, I did shoveling.

Question: Shoveling, yes – I'm sorry.

Mayor: I didn't have a plow.

[Laughter]

Question: Who's doing that now in front of your homes? And do you miss being able to shovel?

Mayor: I kind of miss snow shoveling – I guess there's something wrong with me, but I kind of miss snow shoveling. So, the tenants who are renting out that house, as part of the agreement, are responsible for making sure the shoveling happens. And it's really important, and it's a point we made earlier – everyone's got to be really smart about doing that as quickly as possible today. And I know some people have gone to work and, you know, that could be a challenge to do it before getting back from work. But the sooner you can shovel out, the better, because it's going to help avoid everything icing over.

Yes?

Question: What advice do you have for parents and kids? You know, if the snow does stop in the afternoon, the kids are all pent up – cabin-fever – want to get outside. Is it – you give them the okay to go out to the parks and play? Or are the temperatures [inaudible]?

Mayor: It's a great question, and I will speak now as a parent, also. Yes, of course kids want to get outside, and it's great for them to be outside with the right supervision and for the right amount of time. So, the parks are open, it's a great chance for kids to go and play in the snow, and sled, and whatever else they can do, but, you know – limited amount of time, watch carefully for kids getting too cold, and adult supervision. Except for the older kids who can handle it on their own, any younger kids – parents need to be out there with them, or someone they trust be out there with them to make sure that they don't overdo it, because in these conditions you just don't want to be out too long.

Question: [Inaudible] heat issues in public housing. What have you seen in terms of 3-1-1 calls, complaints from people in private housing who are without heat. And how many complaints have you gotten? How many actions has the City taken?

Mayor: Is HPD here? Or, Joe, can you speak to it?

Commissioner Esposito: There's been no significant increase in – you know, we have normal numbers during this type of weather, but no big increase in calls. And citywide right now, we have about less than 200 customers out with power outages. So, right now, it's under control.

Mayor: But I want to make the point – I always – you know, I have all my town hall meetings and other situations where I talk to people, and there's still a lack of understanding that the City will intervene directly if there is not heat and hot water. We have to keep telling people that. So, I just ask you to add to your coverage, please, everyone – if someone's having a problem in their building, call 3-1-1, report it. If it persists, the City will come in and fix the problem directly.

Last call – let's see if there's any other questions. Yes?

Question: You have a lot of Commissioners here. Are they stationed here during the day because it's the OEM headquarters? Are they here just for the news conference? [Inaudible] I don't see HPD and DOB – why is that?

Mayor: It depends on the lineup in any given situation. Joe can speak to how we staff during the emergency.

Commissioner Esposito: As I said earlier, our Emergency Operation Center is open. We call – it's not a full activation – we have a dozen or so agencies, both city, State. I mean, the State troopers are upstairs – MTA, a lot of agencies here. We'll do Commissioner calls if we have to. The Mayor will direct a Commissioner's call – he'll order us to come in here and have a sit-down, as we're doing right now. But, like I said, OEC is fully operational. It'll stay open until the emergency is over.

Question: [Inaudible] that doesn't answer the question – the question is, are these Commissioners here because they're stationed here today [inaudible]

Mayor: No, typically the Commissioners themselves are not here the whole day. They'll be here if there needs to be specific decisions made, or something that has to be ironed out at a high level. Otherwise, their designees are here throughout the situation.

Go ahead.

Question: Can we just ask the Heath Commissioner, Dr. Bassett, a quick question [inaudible] the cold. I know you answered it, but I just wanted to hear from the doctor –

Mayor: The doctors is in.

[Laughter]

Question: [Inaudible] is there something that, especially with kids, that you should take extra precaution?

Commissioner Mary Bassett, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: The Mayor has been to enough of these press conference to give you really good answers. And worrying about small children is important, not only because they need supervision at all times, but because little children have less surface-area-to-body ratio, and they cool down faster. So, kids can get colder in cold weather than bigger people do. And it's important that they be bundled up and that you keep an eye on them and don't let them be out too long. In general, the two main things that we worry about as health effects of extreme cold are – hypothermia, when your core body temperature falls below normal. Every year, that results in about a dozen deaths. And frost bite – at the temperatures that we're going to be hitting this weekend – minus-20 with the wind chill – you can get frost bite in just 30 minutes. So, people should really be bundled up appropriately and take care not to stay out there any longer than you have to.

Mayor: Thank you, Doctor. I can attest from – I had my gloves off for 15 minutes about between the swearing in and the speech the other day, and I started to understand what frost bite meant. So, yes, wear gloves, use hand warmers, do everything. The most important thing is, limited amounts of time outside.

Last call – yes?

Question: Mr. Mayor, how does this snow storm rank to others that you have overseen? And how does it rank to snow storms in Massachusetts in your youth?

Mayor: In my day, those were real snow storms.

[Laughter]

Apparently, I was smaller at the time because the snow piles looked a lot bigger. This one is a very intense concentrated storm. I think the difference between this one and some of the other ones we saw in the last four years is, this is not going to have some gaudy number of inches like the one we had, which literally turned out to be the largest blizzard in the history of New York City. Again – I can't remember, it was 27, 28, 29 inches – somewhere in there. But this one – it's the fact that it moved very quickly, exactly at the time when kids would have been going to school and people were commuting. Intense accumulation during those crucial hours, plus very strong winds, plus very low temperatures – that's what gave me a lot of pause and my team. That's why we made the decision on schools. It's not going to rank as one of our biggest storms by any stretch of the imagination, but it is one that comes with a combination of features that are really sobering and that's why we wanted people to take so many precautions.

Last call – going once, twice. Thanks, everyone. We'll give you updates later on.

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