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NEW YORK CITY **OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

July 22, 2006 – Update #3

Contact: Andrew Troisi, 347-386-1315

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

The City's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has been coordinating inter-agency response to the blackout situation affecting the northwest sections of Queens. On Tuesday, July 18<sup>th</sup> OEM activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC). For residents in the affected areas, a Special Services Center was opened at 45-22 32<sup>nd</sup> Place in Long Island City. This Center can assist area residents with questions about food spoilage claims and other blackout-related issues.

City agencies have dispatched additional personnel and equipment to the affected areas to respond to any 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.

As of this afternoon, the following is the latest update of City agency resources deployed to the affected areas in Queens:

*Police Department*

The NYPD continues to deploy additional personnel in the affected areas. The NYPD has deployed more than 550 additional police officers, 50 traffic agents, eight mobile response vehicles, and 12 command posts throughout areas in the 114<sup>th</sup> and 108<sup>th</sup> Precincts. Each command post is staffed with a Community Affairs Police Officer. Sixty-seven light towers are also operating in the area and all intersections without functioning traffic signals are being staffed by NYPD personnel. Department vehicles also continue to patrol with turret lights to increase NYPD visibility in the area. In addition, the NYPD Aviation Unit continues to survey the area. The NYPD is also working with OEM to identify customers with life sustaining equipment to ensure they have the resources they need.

*Fire Department*

Response times for both fire and EMS have remained stable. The Fire Department has ordered its 16 local fire companies in the affected areas to be mobile. There have been no increases in fire activity in the affected area. One structural fire was reported last night.

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

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There were no reported injuries as a result. The firehouses of Engine 325/Ladder 163 and Engine 263/Ladder 117 continue to run on back-up generators. EMS has not reported any unusual increase in medical emergencies. EMS Station 49 continues to be mobile. The EMS Mobile Emergency Response Vehicle (MERV) is stationed at Steinway Street and Ditmars Boulevard with a BLS Ambulance. The Fire Safety Education Unit has also been deployed to the area to hand out fire prevention and safety information.

*Department of Transportation*

DOT continues to enhance its services throughout the affected area. Crews of electrical inspectors continue to survey traffic signal equipment and inspectors and electricians are in the field trying to get signals working at locations where it is feasible. DOT staff continues to work with private electrical contractors to resolve power issues. DOT has assigned an additional crew to help install STOP signs at locations that need them and remove those signs at signals that are functioning normally again. To date, DOT has installed and removed temporary STOP signs at more than 80 locations. Currently, there are five traffic signals malfunctioning at steady, 38 at flashing and 61 are completely out in the area. DOT is also working closely with the NYPD to provide additional traffic control personnel as needed.

*Department of Sanitation*

Sanitation has enhanced service throughout the affected areas. On Sunday, a mechanical street sweeper will also be deployed to collect any additional waste from street gutters and near food, water and ice distribution centers. As of this morning, Sanitation trucks have serviced 1,200 homes and collected more than 30 tons of waste. Last night, in addition to service normally assigned to the area, five additional collection trucks were dispatched. Nine additional trucks will be added to trash routes throughout the day. Sanitation trucks will continue to respond to 311 calls and will be driving neighborhood routes to collect any additional refuse including spoiled foods.

*Human Resources Administration*

HRA opened the Special Services Center at its office in Long Island City at 45-22 32<sup>nd</sup> Place (off Queens Boulevard) at 8:00 a.m. this morning where personnel from numerous city agencies are providing information and referrals to residents in the affected areas. Participating agencies include 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. HRA has more than 1,000 cases of water onsite and in-stock and more than 500 heater meals. These

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

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meals are also being shared with senior centers run by the Department for the Aging. There are three vans and seven cars available to transport residents to the Center and deliver supplies and services to homes and locations within the community. Crisis workers and volunteers are available during hours of operation and are on-call 24 hours. These services will remain in place until power is restored.

*Department for the Aging*

Department for the Aging continues to operate its senior centers and has extended hours through the weekend to provide additional services to seniors. The following senior centers will also have ice distribution today: RAICES Astoria Senior Center (21-21 30<sup>th</sup> Road), Woodside Senior Center (50-37 Newtown Road), Sunnyside Community Center (43-31 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue), Queensbridge/Riis Senior Center (10-25 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue), Hellenic American Neighborhood Action Committee (HANAC) Lindsay Senior Center (29-19 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue), HANAC Archbishop Iakovos Senior Center (32-06 21<sup>st</sup> Street), and HANAC Ravenswood Senior Center (34-35 12<sup>th</sup> Street). All senior centers are running on full power and will provide food and water to seniors. Aging has also deployed two wheelchair accessible 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 completed Friday.

*NYC Small Business Services*

SBS continues to reach out to local small businesses and to date; staff has visited nearly 400 businesses in the affected area. Of these businesses, nearly 100 had perishable items. These businesses were provided with ConEd claim forms for reimbursement for up to \$7,000. Today, SBS will continue its outreach in the neighborhood and will continue to staff the Special Services Center through the weekend. In addition, in conjunction with the EDC, SBS is working to provide information to businesses on emergency loan applications and availability.

*Department of Environmental Protection*

DEP, in conjunction with DOHMH, will conduct additional water testing at the Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant. The plant remains on the grid for power and is functioning normally. No increased odors have been detected in the community. Scheduled emergency fuel deliveries to Bowery Bay have been cancelled and the facility's fuel reserves are full.

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

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*Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*

DOHMH has dispatched 25 food inspectors over the past three days to address food safety issues in area restaurants and ensure that restaurants discard spoiled food. DOHMH staff has also conducted beach water inspections. Other than standard rain-associated advisories, water quality at Orchard Beach is acceptable and the beach remains open. In addition, two mental health professionals have provided assistance via phone to residents seeking help at the Special Assistance Center. DOHMH has also intensified analysis of syndromic surveillance trends so that the city can quickly detect any heat- or diarrhea-related increases in the affected areas and citywide. To date, there have been no such increases. DOHMH is also prepared to intensify rodent control activities in the area if needed.

*Taxi and Limousine Commission*

At the request of the 114<sup>th</sup> Precinct, the TLC is continuing to deploy a 10-officer squad to assist with traffic control in the area. TLC also continues to provide personnel to staff the OEM Emergency Operations Center.

*Health and Hospitals Corporation*

HHC has deployed a mobile medical unit at the intersection of Ditmars Boulevard and Steinway Street. The unit is staffed with medical personnel ready to address health issues that may arise for affected residents including providing emergency medications such as insulin and blood pressure medication. HHC will also deploy three commuter vans to transport area residents to the mobile medical unit, the Special Services Center, or local hospitals if needed. HHC has also put on alert its home health care agency to monitor patients in the affected community and will be ready to provide additional assistance to any other homebound individuals.

*Department of Consumer Affairs*

In addition to DCA staff at the Special Assistance Center, DCA Inspectors are on-call to monitor any reports of short supply and price gouging in the area. 311 will route to DCA 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.



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

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(more)

*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.

*Department of Citywide Administrative Services*

DCAS continues to provide staff to the OEM Emergency Operations Center. This morning, the DCAS Central Storehouse was open for a pick-up by the American Red Cross of seven pallets of water to be distributed in the affected communities. The seven pallets contained 378 cases with 13,230 bottles water. In addition, three DCAS vans are participating in shuttle service between Special Services Center in Long Island City and Astoria.

*Economic Development Corporation*

Together with SBS, EDC is looking into developing an emergency loan program for businesses affected by the blackout. During the power outage, EDC has also 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 100 local civic leaders and elected officials and provided them with information on where additional City resources are being dispatched and how the community can access assistance. CAU also has teams going to all of the American Red Cross distribution facilities to ensure that as many people as possible get accurate information on how to receive help. CAU staff is also coordinating with HHC commuter vans on which neighborhood routes have the most people requiring transportation to City facilities such as the Special Assistance Center and the HHC mobile medical unit.

*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



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