

---

**For Immediate Release**  
**#54-22**

**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT'S LATEST 'PREP TALK' AND ¡PREPÁRATE!  
PODCASTS TALK WITH MEMBERS OF THE NEW YORK CITY MULTIAGENCY  
TEAM DEPLOYED TO PUERTO RICO AFTER HURRICANE FIONA**

*#PrepTalkNYC* {[Click here to listen to episode 86](#)}

*¡Prepárate!* {[Click to listen to episode 14](#)}

**November 17, 2022** — On September 19, 2022, Hurricane Fiona made landfall in Puerto Rico, five years to the day of Hurricane Maria. Four days after, Mayor Eric Adams sent a multiagency team of New York City employees to assess the island's needs after the hurricane. The team was comprised of employees from the New York City Emergency Management Department, New York City Department of Buildings, New York City Department of Design and Construction, New York City Police Department, and the New York City Parks Department. Over the two-week deployment, team members visited over 47 municipalities and gathered information on structural damage to public and private buildings, roads, parks, and other vulnerable facilities.

On the latest episode of *¡Prepárate!*, Ezequiel Urena, an emergency support program manager for New York City Emergency Management, and William Dominguez-Zarate, a project manager for Tree & Stump Removal Contract with the NYC Parks Department shared what their experiences were like during the deployment. Urena has deployed to Puerto Rico three times, while this was Dominguez's first time in a deployment. On 'Prep Talk' team member Jason Rolon, deputy director of construction safety and engineering with the Department of Buildings, discussed the differences in the inspections after the earthquakes in Puerto Rico in 2020 and the damages from Hurricane Fiona. Jose Torres, a climber, pruner and crew chief also with NYC Parks Department, shared the potential dangers from uprooted trees after the hurricane, in addition to their impact to overhead electrical cables, roadways and critical infrastructure.

"From the Parks perspective we were looking for anything that could impede access to first responders, ambulances and anything with tree related issues, trees on electrical conductors or cables" said **Jose Torres, climber, pruner and crew chief with NYC Parks Department**. "I said yes to the deployment because I have a connection to the island through my family, and I wanted to give back."

"This time around compared to the earthquakes in 2020, the impact was much more widespread. The earthquake damaged the western part of the island, but Hurricane Fiona impacted most of the island," said **Jason Rolon, deputy director Construction Safety Engineering with NYC Department of Buildings**. "This time we saw a lot of property damage caused by the floods and landslides from the soil saturation."

You can listen to the latest 'Prep Talk' episode on [SoundCloud](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), and [Spreaker](#).

You can listen to the latest *¡Prepárate!* episode on [SoundCloud](#).

### **Profile**

**Ezequiel Urena** is an emergency support program manager for New York City Emergency Management. Urena joined NYCEM in 2012, as an external affair unit logistic coordinator. After six years he transferred to the support services unit as an emergency support coordinator, which handles logistics and equipment requests for the agency. Prior to Joining NYCEM, Urena worked for Food Bank for New York City as a Tax Site Manager/ tax lead instructor and logistical support.

**William Dominguez-Zarate** began his career with NYC Parks Department as a natural resources intern in 2017. Dominguez-Zarate is currently a forester in Brooklyn Borough Forestry, and project manager for Tree & Stump Removal Contract. He holds a bachelor's degree in environmental science from City College of New York.

**Jose Torres** is a climber & pruner for the NYC Parks Department. Torres joined the agency in 2013, and in 2016 he became a crew chief and shop steward for the union. Since 2020 he is the vice president of the climbers' union. Prior joining the Parks Department, he worked for Davey tree experts on multiple Asian Longhorn beetle eradication projects.

**Jason Rolon** is deputy director, construction safety engineering unit for the NYC Department of Buildings. Prior to joining Department of Buildings in 2019, Rolon worked in the private sector as a demo/SOE engineer. He holds a master's degree in Civil Engineering from the Polytechnic Institute of New York University.

-30-

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Press Office (718) 422-4888

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