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

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

July 24, 2006 – Update #5

Contact: Andrew Troisi, 347-386-1315

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

The City's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) continues to coordinate the inter-agency response to the blackout situation affecting the northwest sections of Queens. A number of City agencies continue to provide enhanced services throughout the affected areas. The Special Services Center, located at 45-22 32<sup>nd</sup> Place in Long Island City, will remain open again today to provide information about food spoilage claims and other blackout-related issues to area residents. OEM Emergency Operations Center (EOC) continues to be activated. Residents and business owners without power should continue to 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. The following is the Monday, July 24 update of City agency resources deployed to the affected areas in Queens:

*Police Department*

The NYPD continues to provide additional personnel in the affected areas. The NYPD has deployed hundreds of additional police officers and traffic agents in the areas that remain without power in areas within the 114<sup>th</sup> and 108<sup>th</sup> Precincts. NYPD Command Posts in the area are staffed with a Community Affairs Police Officer. As power is restored, resources such as light towers used to help illuminate the area at night, will be concentrated in those sections still without electricity. All intersections without functioning traffic signals are being staffed by NYPD personnel. Department vehicles continue to patrol with turret lights to increase NYPD visibility in the area. In addition, the NYPD Aviation Unit continues to survey the area.

*Fire Department*

Response times in the affected areas for both fire and EMS continue to remain stable. The Fire Department's 16 local fire companies continue to be mobile. Fire Battalions 45 and 49 reported no increase in structural fire activity overnight. 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) remains 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. Lastly, on Sunday evening, members of Engine Company 312 in Astoria volunteered to serve dinner for residents without power.

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*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. To assist in the repair of these traffic signals, DOT asks the public to call 311 with locations where signals are not functioning properly. As signal operation returns to normal, traffic device maintainers will be removing the temporary STOP signs. To date, DOT has installed and removed temporary STOP signs at more than 120 locations. Over the weekend, DOT electricians were able to return eight locations on Queens Boulevard to service through overhead wiring from adjacent working signals and re-energize the Grand Central Parkway Service Rd at 49<sup>th</sup> Street through the use of temporary overhead wires. Currently, there is one traffic signals malfunctioning at steady, six at flashing and 30 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*

The Department of Sanitation continues to enhance its services throughout the affected areas. DSNY has had 22 additional collection trucks working in the area. These trucks have made 5,215 stops throughout the neighborhoods collecting a total of 92.6 tons of waste. Today, an additional eight trucks will be added to neighborhood routes. In addition, a mechanical street sweeper continues to be deployed in the area alongside two motorized litter patrol unit and a basket collection truck to pick up any debris that may have fallen into the street and street gutters. Additional equipment will be dispatched as needed. 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) again today at 8:00 a.m. Personnel from numerous city agencies continue to staff the Center to provide information and referrals to residents in the affected areas. Over the weekend, HRA distributed water and meals to residents. These meals were also shared with senior centers run by the Department for the Aging. HRA continues to provide vans and cars 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.

*NYC Small Business Services*

SBS staff has reached out to 751 small businesses in the affected areas. Of these businesses, more than 100 had perishable items.

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These businesses were provided with ConEd claim forms for reimbursement for up to \$7,000. Today and on Monday, SBS staff will continue its outreach in the neighborhood. In conjunction with the EDC and nonprofit partners, SBS is working to launch an emergency loan program to assist small businesses in need.

*Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*

DOHMH dispatched 25 food inspectors over the weekend to address food safety issues in area restaurants and ensure that restaurants discard spoiled food. In addition, two mental health professionals have provided assistance to residents seeking help at the Special Assistance Center. DOHMH also intensified its 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.

*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. Over the weekend, 25 area residents utilized these services. No one required hospitalization. HHC will also continue to 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 for the Aging*

Department for the Aging will continue to operate its senior centers today. All senior centers are running on full power and will continue to provide food and water to seniors. DFTA has also deployed two wheelchair accessible vans to transport area seniors to these centers. To date, nearly 950 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.

*Department of Consumer Affairs*

In addition to DCA staff at the Special Assistance Center, DCA Inspectors have been in the field to monitor any reports of short supply and price gouging in the area. To date, there have been no calls to DCA reporting short supply and/or price increases on milk, water by the gallon and ice. There has been limited supply of milk found at the stores that are open, but when available, prices remain normal and there are no reports of customers having difficulty getting milk. 311 will continue to route to DCA any inquiries related to blackout specific reports of price increases or shortages.

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*Department of Citywide Administrative Services*

DCAS continues to provide staff to the OEM Emergency Operations Center. Over the weekend, DCAS opened its Central Storehouse at the request of OEM and 1,000 garbage bags, one dozen flashlights and three dozen batteries were picked up for use in the affected areas. DCAS also provided an additional 20 pallets of bottled water totaling more than 37,000 bottles. DCAS has also arranged for the 114<sup>th</sup> and 115<sup>th</sup> Police Precincts to receive fuel deliveries every morning and every evening for the duration of the power outage in order to prevent any disruption in service. Three DCAS vans will continue to provide 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.

*Department of Environmental Protection*

The Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment 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.

*Mayor's Community Assistance Unit*

CAU has reached out to more than 250 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 has also provided staff at each NYPD Command Post. CAU is also operating five commuter vans in the Sunnyside and Woodside neighborhoods handing out bottled water and food reimbursement forms. On Sunday, CAU distributed more than 2,000 bottles of waters from these vans. CAU is also organizing a volunteer effort in the area to staff vans and hand out food and water with the American Red Cross on MTA bus routes. CAU staff is also coordinating other agency commuter vans and advising 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.