

**For Immediate Release**

**#68-18**

**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT’S LATEST ‘PREP TALK’ PODCAST  
FOCUSES ON LEADERS IN THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FIELD**

*Special guests say coordination amongst emergency managers pivotal to the field’s progression*

*#PrepTalkNYC*

**October 16, 2018** — Coordination is the heartbeat of emergency management. That is the message emergency management leaders emphasized on the latest episode of “Prep Talk”. Hosts sat down with Barb Graff, director of the Seattle Office of Emergency Management, Thomas Sivak, deputy director for the City of Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications, and Joseph Esposito, commissioner of NYC Emergency Management, to discuss the importance of information sharing on the heels of the Big City Emergency Managers’ fall conference here in New York City.

“The goal of Big City Emergency Managers is to bring emergency managers from the nation’s largest municipalities together to share information and resources and to discuss areas of mutual concern,” **Commissioner Esposito** said. “From Seattle to Chicago, Houston to New York City, it is a great way for emergency managers to share best practices and lessons learned so that we can make our own cities better prepared and resilient.”

“When you put all of us in a room together, we represent nearly a quarter of the nation’s population, and we attract gravity by asking cabinet member officials or the FEMA Administrator to be present to talk policy with us. It is even more effective that way,” **Graff** said. “We’re creating the relationship with the federal government that at some point we’re all going to count on.”

“One of the greatest things that we have is that we can always pick up the phone, and there’s always someone across this country that’s going to answer your call, especially when you have a complex issue or problem,” **Sivak** said. “When we’re able to get together and work through these kind of problems it really gives us another set of skills that we are able to leverage when we have incidents.”

The episode’s special guests discussed the role emergency management plays in emergency preparedness education, in addition to disaster response and recovery, and emerging threats emergency managers may face. Find out what keeps these emergency managers up at night, and learn why emergency management is becoming a growing field. To hear more, click to listen to episode 18 on [SoundCloud](#) and [iTunes](#). Big City Emergency Managers’ fall conference will be held October 16 – October 19.

-more-

## **Profiles**

**Joseph J. Esposito** was appointed commissioner of the New York City Emergency Management Department in 2014. He is responsible for oversight of the City's efforts to plan and prepare for emergencies, educate the public about preparedness, coordinate emergency response and recovery, and disseminate emergency information. With close to 50 years in public service, Esposito has dedicated his career to public safety and preparedness.

**Barb Graff** has been the Director of the Seattle Office of Emergency Management since 2005 and is responsible for the team that manages the all-hazard community-wide emergency management program. The program is responsible for all phases of integrated emergency management including preparedness, mitigation, prevention, response, and recovery. Since 2005, the Seattle Emergency Operations Center has coordinated a citywide response to 16 major exercises and 45 incidents, six of which resulted in a Presidential Declaration. The Seattle Office of Emergency Management has won several national awards for public outreach and planning and facilitated a 6-year \$7million 8-county Regional Catastrophic Planning Grant. In April 2016, the national Emergency Management Accreditation Program accredited Seattle's emergency management program. In 2002 as the Bellevue, WA Emergency Preparedness Manager, Ms. Graff led Bellevue's emergency management program through the first national pilot of local government accreditation. Since 2004, she has chaired the national Emergency Management Accreditation Program Review Committee and serves on the Emergency Management Accreditation Commission.

**Thomas Sivak** - An expert in emergency planning, Sivak is a Deputy Director for the City of Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications. In this role, he is responsible for emergency and disaster planning for the city, EOC Activations, a 24 / 7 coordination center, and special event contingency planning. During his tenure Sivak has led EOC activations for the Chicago Marathon, Pride Parade, and the 2015 Chicago Blackhawks Stanley Cup clinch game and victory parade. Most recently he served as the EOC Manager for the 2016 World Series and victory parade. Sivak previously served as the Executive Director for the Hamilton County Emergency Management Division in Indiana. A native of East Cleveland, Ohio, Sivak is a Certified Emergency Manager with the International Association of Emergency Managers and holds a Master's degree of Science in Public Service Management from DePaul University in Chicago.

## **About Big City Emergency Managers (BCEM)**

The Council for Excellence in Government founded BCEM in 2005 with the support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Since then, BCEM has become an independent, non-profit organization. BCEMs' mission is to foster the development and growth of robust and nimble emergency management operations in the nation's largest, most at-risk metropolitan jurisdictions to better position the country to prevent, protect against, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from major incidents and catastrophic emergencies. BCEM represents nearly one quarter of the nation's population.

-more-



## NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

Nyc.gov/emergencymanagement

Press Office: 718-422-4888

---

### NYC Emergency Management 'Prep Talk' Podcast Series:

Get ready for your emergency prep talk! NYC Emergency Management has launched "Prep Talk," a new podcast series that engages listeners about emergency management topics. Listen as NYC Emergency Management hosts Omar Bourne and Allison Pennisi talk with guests who keep our city safe and prepared before, during and after emergencies. You can listen to "Prep Talk" on [SoundCloud](#) and [iTunes](#), and [subscribe now](#) to stay up-to-date on the latest episodes.

-30-

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Omar Bourne (718) 422-4888

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