



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

11-18

Thursday, August 25, 2011

**MAYOR BLOOMBERG, DEPUTY MAYOR HOLLOWAY, AND
COMMISSIONER BRUNO UPDATE NEW YORKERS ABOUT
HURRICANE IRENE**

Hospitals Must Decide Whether to Evacuate by 8 PM Tonight

Residents in Zone A are Advised to Leave Before the Storm Arrives

City to Activate Joint Information Center

Mayor Bloomberg joined Deputy Mayor for Operations Cas Holloway and Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno to update New Yorkers about Hurricane Irene. According to the most recent forecast, Hurricane Irene is currently a Category 3 hurricane with sustained winds of 115 MPH off of the North Coast of the Bahamas.

Current forecast models for New York City show Hurricane Irene beginning to affect the area Saturday afternoon with heavy rain and high winds.

Evacuation:

Hospitals, nursing homes, senior residential facilities must decide by 8 PM tonight whether they will evacuate or shelter in place. The City recommends they begin evacuating by Friday at 8 AM. Facilities wishing to ride out the storm must seek approval from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). If approval is ***not*** granted, they will be forced to evacuate.

The City strongly recommends residents in Zone A evacuate before the storm arrives. Based on the current forecast, Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) expects to suspend train service Saturday evening. The MTA must stop running trains eight hours before the onset of tropical storm force winds.

Help friends, relatives, and neighbors prepare – especially those with disabilities or special needs. If you have a disability that may prevent you from evacuating your home on your own, seek assistance from friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Shelters:

Over 2000 employees have signed up already to help staff shelters.

There are currently 91 emergency shelters in hurricane evacuation Zone A ready to be activated, including eight special needs shelters.

The City opened the Healthcare Facility Evacuation Center to coordinate potential hospital and critical care facility evacuation. This center is staffed by OEM, NYC Health Department (DOHMH), Fire Department, New York State Health Department, Health and Hospitals Corporation, Greater New York Hospital Association, Greater New York Healthcare Facility Association, and Regional Emergency Medical Services Council, and the Continuing Care Leadership Coalition.

The City mobilized its emergency stockpile for shelters in hurricane evacuation zone A. This stockpile includes cots, blankets, and medical, personal, baby and pet care items.

The Unified Operations and Resource Center (UORC) was activated this afternoon to help assist and set up the shelter system. This center is staffed by OEM, American Red Cross in Greater New York, City University of New York, Department of Citywide Administrative Services, Department of Homeless Services, Department of Education, DOHMH, Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, and Human Resources Administration.

Emergency Operations Center

The City's Emergency Operations Center remains open with more than 40 City, State and federal agencies, utilities, working on the City's response to the hurricane. While the forecast remains uncertain, the City is putting plans in place to evacuate and shelter people who could be affected by storm surge, particularly vulnerable populations and people in critical care facilities, if it becomes necessary.

Joint Information Center

The City will also activate a Joint Information Center at the City's Emergency Operations Center at 165 Cadman Plaza Friday at 6 AM. All media requests related to the storm should be directed to 718-422-4888.

Public Advice

The City strongly recommends people stay out of parks on Sunday.

No street activity permits will be granted on Saturday in hurricane evacuation zone A.

The City urges residents to find out if they live in a hurricane evacuation zone by using the **Hurricane Evacuation Zone Finder** at www.NYC.gov, calling **311 (TTY: 212-504-4115)**, or using this map:

http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/downloads/pdf/hurricane_map_english.pdf. Areas of the city subject to storm surge flooding are divided into three zones based on how storms of

various strengths will affect them. Residents in some or all of these zones may need to evacuate depending on the size of the approaching storm.

OEM also encourages New Yorkers to take the following actions to ensure they are prepared:

- Make sure your **Emergency Supply Kit** – three days of supplies, including gallons of water, non-perishable food, a first-aid kit, and a flashlight – is stocked. Have a **Go Bag** with items you may need if you have to evacuate your home – including copies of important documents, bottled water, non-perishable food like granola bars, flashlight, and extra batteries – ready to go.
- Clear debris from catch basins to prevent street flooding.
- Stay tuned to local radio and TV broadcasts for the latest information about Hurricane Irene. Make sure you have a battery-operated radio with extra batteries handy in case you lose power during the storm.
- Make use of OEM's **Ready New York: Hurricanes and New York City** brochure, which offers general tips on how to prepare for hurricanes and a map of New York City hurricane evacuation zones. Access the brochure online at www.NYC.gov.
- Sign up for Notify NYC at www.NYC.gov/notifynyc to receive the latest emergency information, including updates on Hurricane Irene.
- **If you do not live in an evacuation zone**, plan to stay indoors and be prepared to live without power for several days.
- If you have space in your freezer or refrigerator, consider filling plastic containers with water. This chilled or frozen water can help keep food cold for several hours if you lose power.
- If you may need to evacuate, review your evacuation route and determine your mode of transportation. If you will drive, blue coastal evacuation signs direct traffic to evacuation centers throughout the city.
- Bring inside loose objects, such as patio furniture and garbage cans, and secure objects such as scaffolding, swings sets, gas grills and propane tanks to reduce hazards in the event of high winds.
- If you have a car, consider filling the gas tank, as gas stations may lose the ability to pump gas after a severe storm.

The City continues to monitor Hurricane Irene and will issue further guidance for New Yorkers as forecasts change.