

For Immediate Release
#82-18

NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ISSUES TRAVEL ADVISORY FOR FRIDAY

Flood Watch in effect for NYC from 1 a.m. Friday through 1 a.m. Saturday

Widespread minor to moderate coastal flooding possible in vulnerable areas

December 20, 2018 — The New York City Emergency Management Department today issued a travel advisory for Friday, December 21. The National Weather Service (NWS) has issued a Flood Watch for New York City in effect from 1 a.m. Friday through 1 a.m. Saturday, December 22. A Flood Watch means there is the potential for flooding based on current forecasts. Heavy rain could result in the potential for flooding of urban, low lying, and poor drainage areas.

According to the latest NWS forecast, light scattered showers will move into the region Thursday afternoon, becoming steadier into the evening. The heaviest period of rainfall is forecast between late Thursday night and mid-morning Friday. Rain will continue Friday before tapering off Friday night. A lingering shower is possible Saturday morning. NWS predicts a total of two to three inches of rain, with isolated higher amounts possible with heavy downpours. A slight chance of thunderstorms cannot be ruled out for Friday. Strong winds are also in the forecast, with sustained winds 20 mph to 35 mph and gusts up to 45 mph possible Friday.

New Yorkers should prepare for slippery road conditions, and should exercise caution when driving, walking, or biking. The Department of Transportation has designated Thursday and Friday Gridlock Alert Days. Whether traveling for work, errands or recreation, please consider taking public transportation whenever possible. For more information on Gridlock Alert Days, click [here](#).

“We are expecting heavy rainfall that may cause widespread flooding on Friday, and we advise you to exercise caution and allow for extra travel time,” said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. “Friday is also a Gridlock Alert Day; please take mass transit where possible.”

NYC Emergency Management will continue to work closely with NWS to monitor the weather, and will activate the City’s situation room beginning at 8 p.m. Thursday. Key agencies and partners will staff the situation room to coordinate any response to potential impacts associated with the forecast. The City’s Flash Flood Emergency Plan has been activated to ensure a quick, effective, and coordinated preparation and response to any flash flood events. Flash flooding can occur with little or no warning due to the large number of paved surfaces across the city. These surfaces do not allow rainwater to be absorbed into the ground and can result in storm drains often being overwhelmed, causing localized flooding. NYC Emergency Management works closely with NYPD, FDNY, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Sanitation, Department of Transportation, Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to mitigate the impact of flash floods. These actions include pre-inspecting and clearing catch basins in vulnerable locations throughout the city. New Yorkers are encouraged to report clogged catch basins and areas of standing water to 3-1-1.

The National Weather Service has also issued a Wind Advisory for New York City in effect from 1 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday. Strong winds are in the forecast, with gusts up to 45 mph or higher possible. These conditions may blow down tree limbs, trees, and power lines. Scattered power outages are possible. A Wind Advisory is issued when sustained winds of 31 mph to 39 mph, or gusts of 46 mph to 57 mph are expected or occurring. Winds this strong can make driving in open areas and on elevated roads and bridges difficult for large vehicles like trucks, vans, and SUVs. Those driving are asked to use extra caution.

The National Weather Service has also issued a Coastal Flood Warning from 5 a.m. through 10 a.m. Friday for vulnerable areas near the waterfront and shorelines along Brooklyn, Staten Island, and southern Queens. A Coastal Flood Warning means that flooding is expected or occurring. Widespread flooding of low-lying property including parking lots, parks, lawns, and homes or businesses with basements near the waterfront and shoreline is possible. Vehicles parked in vulnerable areas near the waterfront will likely become flooded. Flooding will also extend inland from the waterfront along tidal rivers and bays. Coastal residents in the warned areas should be alert for rising water and take appropriate action to protect life and property.

A Coastal Flood Advisory is also in effect from 5 a.m. through 8 a.m. Friday for vulnerable areas near the waterfront and shorelines along Staten Island and Manhattan, and from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. for vulnerable areas near the waterfront and shorelines along northern Queens, The Bronx and Manhattan.

A Coastal Flood Advisory indicates that onshore winds and tides will combine to generate flooding of low areas along the shore. Some roads and low-lying property including parking lots, parks, lawns, and homes or businesses near the waterfront will experience shallow flooding. Widespread minor to moderate coastal flooding is possible during the Friday morning high tide cycle.

NYC residents living in coastal areas expected to experience minor or moderate coastal flooding should take the following preparedness steps:

- Prepare a [Go Bag](#) — a collection of things you would want if you have to leave in a hurry — for every member of your household, including pets.
- Learn the safest route from your home or workplace to safe, high ground in case you have to evacuate. This should be part of your [household emergency plan](#).
- If you live in a flood-prone area, keep materials such as sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, and lumber on hand to help protect your home.
- Stay informed. Before and during an emergency, the City will send emergency alerts and updates to New Yorkers through various channels, including Notify NYC. New Yorkers are encouraged to sign up for Notify NYC, the City's free emergency communications program. To sign up for Notify NYC, download the [free mobile application](#), visit [NYC.gov/NotifyNYC](https://www.nyc.gov/NotifyNYC), call 311, or follow @NotifyNYC on Twitter.
- When outside, avoid walking and driving through flooded areas. As few as six inches of moving water can knock a person over. Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars, causing loss of control and possible stalling. One or two feet of water can carry away a vehicle.
- Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters.

- If you see downed electrical wires, do not go near them. Never attempt to move or touch them with any object. Be mindful that tree limbs, leaves, or water can cover downed wires from view. Always stay away from downed power lines because they could be live.
- Report downed wires immediately. If a power line falls on your car while you are in it, stay inside the vehicle and wait for emergency personnel.

Safety Tips

- DOT has designated Thursday and Friday Gridlock Alert Days. Whether traveling for work, errands or recreation, please consider taking public transportation whenever possible.
- Avoid driving, walking, or biking through flooded areas. As few as six inches of moving water can knock a person over. Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars, causing loss of control and possible stalling. One or two feet of water can carry away a vehicle.
- Drive slowly.
- Use major streets or highways for travel whenever possible.
- If you are driving and begin to skid, ease your foot off the gas and steer in the direction you want the front of the car to go. Straighten the wheel when the car moves in the desired direction. If you have an anti-lock braking system (ABS), apply steady pressure to the brake pedal. Never pump the brakes on an ABS equipped vehicle.
- Try to keep your vehicle's gas tank as full as possible.
- Seniors should take extra care outdoors to avoid slips and falls.
- Have heightened awareness of cars, particularly when approaching or crossing intersections.

The Department of Buildings (DOB) has issued a weather advisory to remind property owners, contractors, and crane operators to take precautionary measures and secure their construction sites, buildings, and equipment during high winds, with forecast wind gusts up to 45 miles per hour Friday. The department will perform random spot-check inspections of construction sites around the city. If sites are not secured, the department will take immediate enforcement action — issuing violations and Stop Work Orders, where necessary. To safeguard construction sites, builders, contractors, and developers should take all precautionary measures including but not limited to the following:

- Tie down and secure material and loose debris at construction sites.
- Cover electrical equipment from exposure to the weather.
- Store loose tools, oil cans, and extra fuses in a toolbox.
- Secure netting, scaffolding, and sidewalk sheds.
- Suspend crane operations and secure crane equipment when wind speeds reach 30 mph or greater.
- Suspend hoist operations and secure exterior hoists when wind speeds reach 35 mph or greater, unless manufacturer specifications state otherwise.
- Brace and secure construction fences.
- Call 911 if there is an emergency on a construction site.

Buildings Bulletin 2015-029 outlines the requirements for vertical netting, debris netting and material-fall protection devices at buildings and construction sites. To view this bulletin, click [here](#).

To secure a building, property owners should take all precautionary measures including but not limited to the following:

- Bring inside loose, lightweight objects such as lawn furniture, potted plants, garbage cans, garden tools, and toys.
- Anchor objects that would be unsafe outside, such as gas grills or propane tanks.
- Close up and secure patio umbrellas.
- Secure retractable awnings.
- Remove aerial antennas and satellite television dishes.
- Pay attention to local weather forecasts and bulletins issued by the National Weather Service on local radio stations.
- Beware of falling branches if you are near trees.

Power Outages

- To prepare for a possible power outage, charge cell phone batteries, gather supplies, and turn your refrigerator and freezer to a colder setting. If you lose power, items that need refrigeration will stay cooler for longer.
- If your power goes out, disconnect or turn off appliances that would otherwise turn on automatically when service is restored. If several appliances start up at once, the electric circuits may overload.
- Make sure your flashlights and any battery-operated radios or televisions are working. Keep extra batteries.
- If you lose power & have a disability, access and functional needs or use Life Sustaining Equipment (LSE) & need immediate assistance, dial 911.
- Do not use generators indoors.

For more safety tips, visit NYC.gov/EmergencyManagement. New Yorkers are also encouraged to download the Notify NYC mobile application, which is available for free download from iTunes or Google Play. Notify NYC is the City's free emergency notification system. Through Notify NYC, New Yorkers can also receive phone calls, text messages, and/or email alerts about weather conditions and other emergencies. To learn more about the Notify NYC program or to sign up, visit NYC.gov/NotifyNYC or call 311. You can also follow @NotifyNYC on Twitter.