



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT FOR THE
AGING INTRODUCE NEW INTERACTIVE EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS GUIDE FOR SENIORS AND PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES**

Ready New York: My Emergency Plan Spearheaded by ReServist Frank Lowe

Nearly 50,000 New Yorkers Have Already Ordered a Copy of New Guide

New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno today joined Department for the Aging (DFTA) Commissioner Lilliam Barrios-Paoli and Mayor Ed Koch at the Lenox Hill Senior Center in Manhattan to introduce a new interactive preparedness guide designed to help seniors and people with disabilities create an emergency plan. The new *Ready New York: My Emergency Plan* guide is a joint effort between OEM, DFTA, and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD). The project was spearheaded by Frank Lowe, 84, who joined OEM in 2008 through DFTA's ReServe Program. ReServe matches retirees—or ReServists—with short term City agency projects that use their expertise and experience. Commissioner Bruno was also joined by Councilmember Jessica Lappin, who chairs the City Council Aging Committee, and Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Executive Director Warren Scharf.

"My Emergency Plan offers more than tips and information – it is an activity to help people learn how to prepare, and once completed it is a tool that can help individuals and first responders," said OEM Commissioner Bruno. "Completing the *My Emergency Plan* workbook will empower people with the knowledge they need to effectively respond to emergencies."

"Being prepared for an emergency can make the difference between life and death," DFTA Commissioner Barrios-Paoli said. "This new, updated *Ready New York* guide is an important resource that we encourage New Yorkers – especially the frail, disabled and elderly – to read and complete. If the unexpected happens, critical, possibly even life-saving information will be at their fingertips and those of the emergency responders."

"Seniors and people with disabilities can be particularly at risk during an emergency, but the *My Emergency Plan* guide outlines the steps they should take to be prepared," said Mayor Ed Koch. "I want to commend the Office of Emergency Management, the Department for the Aging, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, and everyone else who was instrumental in creating such an informative and user-friendly guide. I am once again pleased to be able to team up with the City and help spread the preparedness message."

“Hurricane Irene and the earthquake this summer remind us that we need to be prepared for emergencies,” said Councilwoman Lappin. “This workbook should be filled out by all New Yorkers, not just seniors, so they have a plan of action in case disaster strikes.”

Ready New York: My Emergency Plan is an interactive workbook that teaches users preparedness lessons while they create an emergency plan. The guide can also be used by first responders or caregivers to assist seniors and people with special needs during an emergency. The guide has three sections designed to help people make a plan, gather emergency supplies, and get information.

Make a Plan

Ready New York: My Emergency Plan begins by asking readers to write an emergency plan that includes:

- The names and contact information for important people in their support network.
- An out-of-state contact (out-of-state telephone exchanges can usually be reached even when emergencies overwhelm local phone lines.)
- Important health information such as allergies, special medical conditions, medications, blood type, doctors names and phone numbers and health insurance information.
- Emergency transportation and communication plans.
- Evacuation and sheltering plans and emergency meeting places.

Gather Supplies

The *Gather Supplies* section of the guide helps readers gather emergency supplies for their homes and put together a Go Bag with a personalized collection of things they would need if they were forced to leave their home in a hurry. Examples of suggested supplies include:

- A first aid kit
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Water and food
- Battery operated AM/FM radio
- List of medications
- Extra set of keys
- Cash
- Copies of important documents such as passports, drivers licenses and credit cards

Get Informed

The *Get Informed* section of the guide lists contact information for a number of government, private, and not-for-profit service providers who can assist during emergencies. Readers are also asked to list contact information for their own resource providers. Resources listed include:

- The Office of Emergency Management
- Department for the Aging
- Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities
- Hurricane Zone Finder

- Notify NYC
- American Red Cross
- Con Edison/Long Island Power Authority/ National Grid
- LifeNet
- National Organization on Disabilities Emergency Preparedness Initiative

Ready New York: My Emergency Plan was spearheaded by Frank Lowe, who joined OEM in 2008 through DFTA’s ReServe program. After the six-month program ended, Frank was asked to stay on at OEM and help the agency improve the *Ready New York* guide for seniors and people with disabilities. The improved guide is interactive and includes expanded content for people with disabilities. Once completed the workbook is a useful tool for the user and for first responders, caregivers, and support network members.

OEM’s Special Needs Advisory Group – a planning group made up of government agencies, advocacy groups, and special needs service providers – contributed heavily to the development of the new guide and ensured the content was accurate and user-friendly.

OEM launched its first guide for seniors and people with disabilities in 2005. Over the past six years, OEM and its partners in preparedness have distributed more than 370,000 copies of the guide and given more than 200 presentations to over 9,100 individuals and caregivers. OEM has already received nearly 50,000 requests for the new and improved *Ready New York: My Emergency Plan* guide.

Launched in July 2003, OEM’s *Ready New York* preparedness campaign is designed to help New Yorkers be prepared for all types of emergencies. The program now includes 11 multi-language publications, public service announcements, a video, an advertising campaign, expanded web content, a speakers’ bureau, a reprinting program, corporate partnerships, and extensive community outreach. *Ready New York* guides are available in up to 23 languages and on audio tape.

For more information about the *Ready New York* program visit www.nyc.gov/oem or call 311.

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