

## 2. Emergency Management Visit to the United States

During the period 4-15 July 2006, Councillor Battersby and the Manager: Emergency Management Services visited the United States as part of a fact finding tour of emergency management organisations arranged by the Auckland Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups. The Chairman of the Auckland Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups, Neil Morrison, Ms Jane Olsen from the Auckland Regional Council Emergency Management Office and Councillor Ivan Dunn from the North Shore City Council were other members of the visiting party. Councillor Wynn Hoadley from the Auckland Regional Council also joined the party for visit while in New York. The group also visited New Orleans and the San Francisco City Office of Emergency Management.

Visits in New York included the Regional Headquarters of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the New York City Emergency Management Emergency Operating Centre and Offices. The New Orleans visit centred on a comprehensive tour of the areas devastated by Cyclone Katrina in 2005.

A1-A12

At the time of writing this report there had been insufficient time to complete a full report of the visit, but a list of observations and comments is attached for consideration and discussion at pages A1 to A12. Unfortunately, for security reasons, photograph opportunities within the various Emergency Operating Centres visited were not permitted and only a range of photographs relating to the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina were recorded for emergency management purposes.

Primary aims of the visit were to learn from emergency management systems in US cities, and in particular specific Emergency Operating Centre operating procedures that may be incorporated within Waitakere City and the Auckland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group organisations.

Without exception, the basis for emergency planning at City, State and National levels in the United States is exactly the same as used in New Zealand, namely, Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery. Of particular interest was the sheer size of the various emergency management organisations that were visited, the number of full time staff employed at each and the level of public education material and programmes in use.

There are 35 full time staff at the New York Federal Emergency Management Agency office plus trained volunteers. The New York City Office has 25 full time employees, plus seconded personnel from other response agencies. In San Francisco there were 21 staff members plus dedicated support staff from the emergency services and lifeline agencies. In all cases, staff had specific roles based upon Operations, Planning and Intelligence, Logistics, Administration and Finance. Principles for operational activity were based on an incident management system akin to the Coordinated Incident Management System as used in New Zealand.

In all cases, staff worked from a dedicated Emergency Operating Centre complex that was immediately available for activation, and events happening at any given time were being monitored constantly. In the case of the New York City Offices, three staff members are on duty 24 x 7 in a control room complex which monitors all incidents and events being undertaken by the emergency services and other agencies at any given time. Additionally, they have a mobile Emergency Operating Centre vehicle, plus another similar vehicle that would be used by the Mayor for briefing purposes should their existing premises become unusable. During the events of 9/11 their previous Emergency Operating Centre in the Twin Towers building was destroyed.

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The current premises are a two storey warehouse and they were moving into a new \$US39 million purpose built Emergency Operating Centre at the end of July 2006. Add to these arrangements a 40,000 strong police force and huge fire service resources, which when combined form a most impressive emergency management response capability.

While not on the same scale, the San Francisco Emergency Management Organisation can be likened to that of the Auckland region in terms of population, general organisation and in some instances similar threats. The major difference again is the number of full time staff employed in the City Headquarters and support personnel available for response purposes at any time. In all cases, dedicated Emergency Operating Centre's are in place and are staffed accordingly. It will be a recommendation of the visit that the Auckland Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups should adopt a similar arrangement and that it be staffed by full time professionals accordingly. On a day to day basis, the staff would carry out much of the work required for Group readiness and have dedicated roles in response.

The possibility of having dedicated representatives from the emergency services working within the Group Emergency Operating Centre should also be considered. Either way, it is clear from the trip that in terms of Good Practice the Group Emergency Operating Centre has to be a stand alone complex and should be staffed appropriately to meet the needs of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups.

The New Orleans element of the visit centred primarily on the devastated areas of the City which are still in the same state as they were immediately following Hurricane Katrina. The area of devastation is immense and the recovery programme will take years to complete. The overriding problem faced is the lack of population currently living in New Orleans, plus a depressed economy. There are a number of recovery issues that New Zealand can learn from.

From a Waitakere City perspective, the visit was particularly helpful when looking at options for set up arrangements within the new Emergency Operating Centre complex. This has to be balanced with the need for the Emergency Operating Centre to be able to be used for other activities but must be readily available for response purposes as well. The idea of the new Emergency Operating Centre ultimately becoming the Group Emergency Operating Centre should not be discounted as a future option.

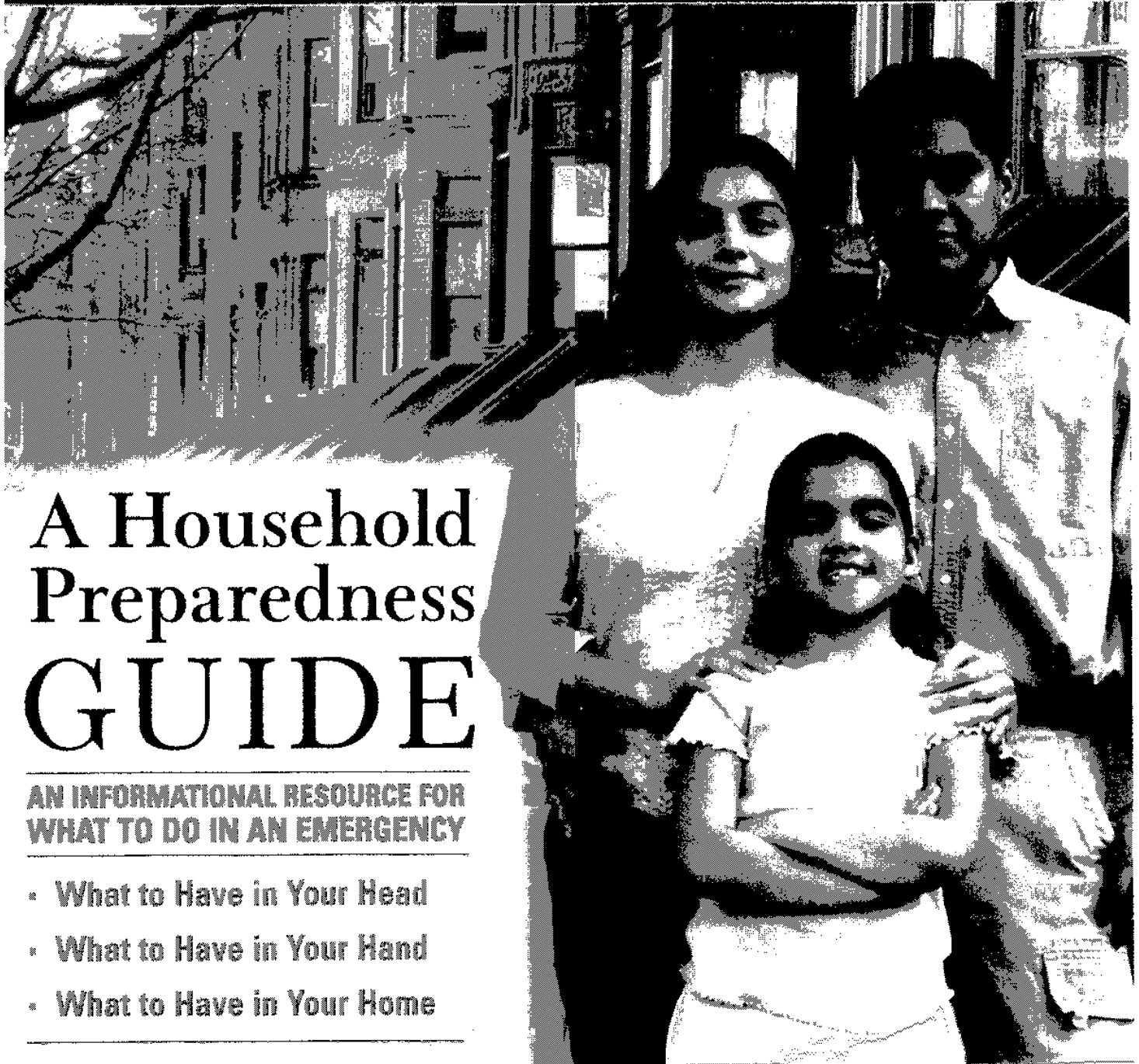
# READY NEW YORK



Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

Joseph F. Bruno, Commissioner

NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT - NYC.GOV



## A Household Preparedness GUIDE

AN INFORMATIONAL RESOURCE FOR  
WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

- What to Have in Your Head
- What to Have in Your Hand
- What to Have in Your Home

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# YOU CAN PREPARE FOR DISASTER

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**Dear New Yorker,**

New York City has worked hard to prepare for emergencies. Our City government plans and drills regularly. Schools, non-profit organizations and businesses are also preparing. Although the City can respond to disasters, only you can prepare yourself and your household for emergencies. As you read this guide, you'll see how easy it is to prepare.

Ready New York describes many of the emergencies we could face as New Yorkers and provides important information on how to respond and prepare. Following this advice will help you and your household take control of disasters. Please read this guide carefully and keep it close at hand. Share the information with your family, friends and neighbors. Be prepared!

Sincerely,

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ADVICE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

**E**mergency preparedness is as simple as planning ahead. It's easy and inexpensive for anyone. Go over the checklists below with your household to determine how you can take control of an emergency. Check and update your kits when you change your clocks during daylight-saving times. Make sure they are complete and ready to go.

## Household Disaster Plan Checklist

### What to Have in Your Head

Consider developing a disaster plan with your household members that outlines what to do, how to find each other, and how to communicate in an emergency. We've provided two wallet-sized cards for this purpose on the EMERGENCY REFERENCE CARD on page 15. Make photocopies if necessary. Also see EVACUATION on page 4.

- Decide where your household will reunite after a disaster. Identify two places to meet: one right outside your home and another outside your neighborhood, such as a library, community center, or place of worship.
- Make sure everyone knows the address and phone number of your second meeting place.
- Know and practice all possible exit routes from your home and neighborhood.
- Designate an out-of-state friend or relative that household members can call if separated during a disaster. If New York City phone circuits are busy, this out-of-state contact can be an important way of communicating between household members. When local phone circuits are busy, long-distance calls may be easier to make.
- Account for everybody's needs, especially seniors, people with disabilities, and non-English speakers.
- Practice your plan with all household members.
- Ensure that household members have a copy of your household disaster plan.
- Familiarize yourself with emergency plans for your workplace, school, child's school or daycare, and other relevant institutions.

## Go Bag Checklist

### What to Have in Your Hand

Every household should consider assembling a Go Bag – a collection of items you may need in the event of an evacuation. Each household member's Go Bag should be packed in a sturdy, easy-to-carry container such as a backpack or suitcase on wheels. A Go Bag should be easily accessible if you have to leave your home in a hurry. Make sure it is ready to go at all times of the year. Also see EVACUATION on page 4.

- Copies of your important documents in a waterproof and portable container (insurance cards, birth certificates, deeds, photo IDs, proof of address, etc.)
- Extra set of car and house keys
- Credit and ATM cards, and cash, especially in small denominations. We recommend you keep at least \$50-\$100 on hand.
- Bottled water and non-perishable food such as energy or granola bars
- Flashlight, battery-operated AM/FM radio, and extra batteries. You can also buy wind-up radios that do not require batteries at retail stores.
- Medication for at least one week and other essential personal items. Be sure to change medications before they expire. Keep a list of the medications each member of your household takes, their dosages or copies of all your prescription slips, and your doctor's name and phone number.
- First-aid kit
- Sturdy, comfortable shoes, lightweight raingear, and a mylar blanket
- Contact and meeting place information for your household, and a small regional map
- Child care supplies or other special care items

## Emergency Supply Kit Checklist

### What to Have in Your Home

Keep enough supplies in your home to survive on your own for at least three days. If possible, keep these materials in an easily accessible, separate container or special cupboard. You should indicate to your household members that these supplies are for emergencies only. Also see SHELTER IN PLACE on page 4.

- One gallon of drinking water per person per day
- Non-perishable, ready-to-eat canned foods, and a manual can opener
- First-aid kit, medications, and prescriptions
- Flashlight, battery-operated AM/FM radio, and extra batteries
- Whistle
- Iodine tablets or one quart of unscented bleach (for disinfecting water ONLY if directed to do so by health officials) and eyedropper (for adding bleach to water)
- Personal hygiene items: soap, feminine hygiene products, toothbrush, and toothpaste, etc.
- Sturdy shoes, heavy gloves, warm clothes, a mylar blanket, and lightweight raingear
- Extra fire extinguisher, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors
- Phone that does not rely on electricity
- Child care supplies or other special care items
- Other supplies and tools

# GENERAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Responding to an emergency can be easier if you plan ahead.

## EVACUATION



In some cases, it may be necessary to evacuate your home or neighborhood. City officials will tell you when to evacuate through the media and direct warnings. Evacuation is used as a last resort when a serious threat to public safety exists.

### EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY WHEN YOU:

- Are directed to do so by an emergency official.
- Are in immediate danger.

### BE PREPARED TO EVACUATE:

- If there is time, secure your home: close and lock windows and doors, and unplug appliances before you leave. Authorities will instruct you if it is necessary to turn off utilities.
- Wear sturdy shoes and comfortable, protective clothing such as long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- Bring your Go Bag with you.
- Know your workplace, school, and child's school evacuation plan.
- Remember, evacuation routes change based on the emergency so stay tuned to the local news, access [NYC.gov](http://NYC.gov) or call 311 for the latest information.

See **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ADVICE** on page 3.

## SHELTER IN PLACE



When evacuation to shelters is neither appropriate nor possible, you may be asked to stay where you are. Sheltering in place is an effective way to protect yourself in many emergencies involving contaminated air. However, you should only do so if directed by emergency officials.

### IF YOU ARE ASKED TO SHELTER IN PLACE:

- Go inside your home or the nearest appropriate facility (school, library, place of worship, etc.).
- Take shelter in a room that has few doors or windows. Ideally, a room to shelter in place should allow at least 10 square feet per person.
- Seal all doors and windows.
- Turn off all ventilation systems.
- Do not use the phone — keep the phone line available for emergency calls.
- Stay tuned to your radio or television for emergency information and updates.
- Make use of your Go Bag and Emergency Supply Kit.

See **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ADVICE** on page 3.

## DISASTER SHELTERING

Some emergencies may require that you leave your home and travel to an emergency shelter. The City has a list of shelter sites appropriate for various types of disasters. Local officials will inform you when sheltering is necessary.

### DISASTER SHELTERING GUIDELINES:

- If you can, try to seek shelter with friends or relatives outside the affected area.
- Evacuation shelters can be set up in schools, municipal buildings and places of worship. They provide basic food and water. If possible, bring clothing, bedding, bathing and sanitary supplies, special food and pre-filled prescriptions and other medications to shelters.
- Alcoholic beverages, firearms and illegal substances are not allowed in emergency shelters.
- You cannot bring pets to shelters. Only service animals are allowed. See **TIPS FOR PET OWNERS** on page 13 if you have pets.
- Take your Go Bag to the shelter with you.

# DISASTER SHELTERING (CONTINUED)

## DISASTER SHELTERING GUIDELINES:

- Cooperate with shelter managers and other people in order to make a difficult situation less stressful.
- Remember, shelter sites change based on the emergency so stay tuned to the local news, access [NYC.gov](http://NYC.gov) or call 311 for the latest information.

## UTILITIES DISRUPTIONS



**U**tilities disruptions are an occasional inconvenience of the modern age.

### IF YOU LOSE PHONE SERVICE:

- Use your cell phone, or borrow one from a friend or neighbor if possible, and call your provider to report the outage.
- If you have a cordless phone, keep in mind you may lose service during a power outage. It is a good idea to have a phone that does not rely on electricity.
- Fire alarm boxes will continue to work.

### IF YOU SMELL GAS:

- Do NOT smoke or light lighters or matches. If the odor is very strong, do not use your phone or operate any light switches or electrical devices – any spark could cause a fire.
- Open windows.
- Evacuate immediately and call 911.

## WATER AND SEWER-RELATED PROBLEMS:

It is always a good idea to have a supply of bottled water in the house.

- If you see water coming up from the ground or roadway, or suspect a water main break, call 311 to reach the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Be prepared to provide the following information on the phone: a description of the condition, what is being affected (street, cellar, basement, subways, etc.), the exact location of the problem, and your name, address and telephone number.
- If you have no water or very low water pressure, call DEP via 311.
- If authorities determine that there is a concern about drinking water quality, you will be advised of what actions to take. In some cases, you may be told not to use the water for cooking or drinking purposes unless it is boiled, treated with bleach or iodine, or disinfected by other means. In an extreme case, you may be told not to use the water for cooking, drinking, hand-washing or bathing purposes.
- If there is a drought, authorities will advise you to conserve water. Please restrict your water use as much as possible. If the drought worsens, mandatory drought restrictions can be imposed. Conservation measures can slow the depletion rate of the stored water and potentially postpone or eliminate the threat of serious water shortages.

### IF THERE IS A POWER OUTAGE:

- Call your power provider immediately to report the outage.  
ConEdison 24-hour hotline: 1-800-75-CONED (752-6633)  
KeySpan 24-hour hotline: 1-718-643-4050
- Disconnect or turn off all appliances that would otherwise go on automatically when service is restored. If several appliances start up at once, they may overload the electric circuits.
- In order to prevent food spoilage, keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Each time the door is opened, heat enters and speeds up the thawing process.
- Stay indoors if possible. Never touch or go near downed power lines, even if you think they are safe.
- Keep a battery-operated radio on for updates on the restoration process.
- If you lose power and/or heat in the winter, insulate your home as much as possible.
- Do not burn charcoal indoors and do not use your kitchen gas range to heat rooms as this can lead to fire or a hazardous smoke condition.
- Do not use generators indoors. Without proper ventilation they can create deadly carbon monoxide.

# HAZARD-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The following contains information about specific emergencies that may affect New York City.

## WEATHER DISASTERS

**W**eather is monitored closely by various government agencies. Severe weather should be taken seriously – it can be dangerous and harm both you and your property.

### Severe Weather: Thunderstorms, Flash Flooding & Tornadoes



#### IN A THUNDERSTORM:

- Avoid handling metal, electrical equipment, telephones, bathtubs, water faucets and sinks because lightning can follow the wires and pipes. Be especially careful with televisions.
- If there is a severe thunderstorm, take cover immediately in a stable facility, but avoid trees.

#### IN A FLASH FLOOD:

- Seek high ground. Never attempt to drive your vehicle through standing water.

#### IN A TORNADO:

- Go to your basement or the lowest point of your residence, or an interior room or hallway without windows. If you cannot find shelter, take cover in a ditch or other recessed area.

If you are asked to evacuate, do so immediately.

## SOME MEASURES TO HELP YOU WEATHER

### MAJOR STORMS:

- Shutter or board windows.
- Secure outdoor objects such as lawn furniture or garbage cans that could blow away and cause damage or injury.
- Never touch or go near downed power lines, even if you think they are safe.
- In extreme conditions, consider shutting off power and appliance gas switches to prevent damage to your appliances.

### National Weather Service Terms:

#### Severe Thunderstorm Watch:

There is potential for thunderstorms to form that can produce wind gusts greater than 58 mph and/or hail greater than 3/4 of an inch in diameter.

#### Severe Thunderstorm Warning:

A severe thunderstorm is occurring.

#### Tornado Watch:

A tornado could form in the next few hours.

#### Tornado Warning:

A tornado has been reported and/or the National Weather Service radar has detected a tornado or tornadic signature.

#### Flash Flood Watch:

Localized flooding due to heavy rainfall is possible.

#### Flash Flood Warning:

Localized flooding due to heavy rainfall is imminent.

#### Freezing Rain Advisory:

Minor accumulation of ice due to freezing rain is expected.

#### Winter Weather Advisory:

A minor accumulation of snow, sleet and freezing rain is expected.

#### Snow Advisory:

Accumulations of one to four inches expected within a 12-hour period.

#### Blizzard Warning:

Strong winds, blinding driven snow and dangerous wind chill are expected in the next several hours.

#### Winter Storm Watch:

Significant accumulation of snow and/or ice is possible within 36 hours.

#### Winter Storm Warning:

A storm with six or more inches of snow/sleet/freezing rain within a 24-hour period is expected.

See the National Weather Service website at [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov) for more information.

### DURING SEVERE WEATHER:

- Dress appropriately for weather conditions.
- Stay updated by watching TV or listening to the radio. The National Weather Service broadcasts forecasts, warnings and other information 24 hours a day. Special weather radios are available at local retail stores.

# WEATHER DISASTERS (CONT'D)

## Winter Weather



Dangerous winter weather includes winter storms and blizzards. These can involve a combination of heavy snow, ice accumulation and dangerous wind chills.

### DRESS WARMLY AND STAY DRY:

- Wear hats, scarves, layers and water-repellent coats. Wear mittens instead of gloves; they are warmer.
- Make sure small children – especially babies – stay warm, as infants can easily become hypothermic under conditions that would not necessarily be as dangerous for adults.

### COVER YOUR MOUTH:

Protect your lungs from extremely cold air by covering your mouth when outdoors.

### AVOID OVEREXERTION:

Take your time while shoveling snow or pushing a car. Stretch before you go out and drink plenty of non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated fluids.

### CAR SAFETY:

Be sure to clear snow from your tail pipe before you start your car to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Also see CARBON MONOXIDE section on page 9.

### SAFE HEATING:

Many fires and emergencies are caused every year in the City from unsafe heating. Call 311 for a fire inspection if you are unsure whether your heat source is safe.

- If you do not have heat, contact your building owner. If heat is not restored, contact the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development via 311.
- Fuel-burning items (such as furnaces, boilers, hot water heaters and clothes dryers) should be working, ventilated and inspected by a professional regularly in order to prevent unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Electric heaters should be used with extreme caution to prevent shock, fire and burns.
- Materials near heaters should be kept at least three feet from the heat source to prevent fire.
- Gas ovens and burners should never be used to heat your home.

## Coastal Storms



Coastal storms can cause severe damage and hazardous conditions in the City, especially in low-lying areas where flooding is more likely to occur. Keep in mind that if you live within 10 blocks of a coastal area, it is more likely that you will be directed to evacuate before a severe coastal storm or hurricane.

Pay attention to local weather forecasts and bulletins issued by the National Weather Service on local radio and television stations.

To find out if you live in a hurricane evacuation zone before a hurricane, stay tuned to the local news, access [NYC.gov](http://NYC.gov) or call 311 for the latest information.

There are three types of coastal storms that typically affect New York:

### Nor'easters

Nor'easters are extra tropical cyclones that can cause heavy rain/snow, strong winds and coastal flooding.

- Nor'easters may occur at any time of the year but are most common during fall and winter months (September through April).
- Evacuations are unlikely for nor'easters but the City may open shelters during severe storms to offer people relief.

### Tropical Storms

A tropical storm is a tropical cyclone with sustained winds between 39 and 73 mph.

- **Tropical Storm Watch:** Issued when there is a threat of tropical storm conditions in 24-36 hours.
- **Tropical Storm Warning:** Tropical storm expected within 24 hours.

### Hurricanes

A hurricane is a tropical cyclone with sustained winds of 74 mph or greater.

- Hurricane season is the time of year when hurricanes are expected to form in the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. It lasts from June through November.
- During hurricanes, residents in hurricane evacuation zones may be asked to evacuate. The City will communicate specific evacuation and sheltering information to the public through local media.
- **Hurricane Watch:** Issued when there is a threat of hurricane conditions in 24-36 hours.
- **Hurricane Warning:** Issued when dangerously high water and rough seas are expected in 24 hours or less.

## WEATHER DISASTERS (CONT'D)

### Extreme Heat



During the summer months, New Yorkers are especially vulnerable to the hazards created by hot weather. The asphalt, concrete and metal that make up the City absorb heat and make it difficult for the City to cool down. This is known as the "heat island effect." See **UTILITIES DISRUPTIONS** on page 5.

Heat waves are particularly dangerous for children and people with special needs. Please check on your neighbors and offer them assistance.

The terms listed below describe the illnesses that extreme heat can cause. Heat-related illnesses can become medical emergencies – call 911, especially in the case of heat stroke.

#### HEAT CRAMPS:

Heat cramps are muscular pains and spasms resulting from heavy exertion. Although heat cramps are the least severe heat-related illness, they are an early signal that the body is having trouble coping with heat and should be treated immediately with rest and fluids. Stretching or direct pressure can also reduce cramps. Unless very severe, heat cramps do not require emergency medical attention.

#### HEAT EXHAUSTION:

Heat exhaustion occurs when body fluids are lost through heavy sweating due to vigorous exercise or working in a hot, humid place. Symptoms include: sweating; pale, clammy skin; fatigue; headache; dizziness; shallow breaths; and a weak or rapid pulse. Victims of heat exhaustion are tired but not confused. The condition should be treated with rest in a cool area, drinking water or electrolyte solutions, elevating the feet 12 inches, and further medical treatment in severe cases. If not treated, the victim's condition may escalate to heat stroke. If the victim does not respond to basic treatment, seek medical attention.

#### HEAT STROKE:

Also called "sunstroke." The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweat to cool the body, stops working. The skin is flushed, hot and dry, and body temperature may be elevated. The victim may also be confused, develop seizures, breathe shallowly and have a weak or rapid pulse. This is the most serious heat-related illness and people exhibiting these symptoms should seek emergency medical attention.

#### Heat Terms:

**Heat Wave:** Prolonged period of excessive heat often combined with excessive humidity.

**Heat Index:** Number of degrees Fahrenheit that indicates how it feels when relative humidity is factored into air temperature.

**Heat Advisory:** When the heat index exceeds 100°F for less than three hours a day for two consecutive days.

**Excessive Heat Warning:** When the heat index is expected to exceed 115°F or when it exceeds 100°F for three or more hours for two consecutive days.

**Excessive Heat Watch:** A long-term alert for excessive heat.

**Ozone Advisory:** Issued when ozone levels are expected to exceed 0.08 parts per million of ozone over an eight-hour period. People should limit their outdoor activity and those with respiratory problems (such as asthma) should be especially careful and avoid strenuous activity.

#### FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO STAY COOL:

- \* Stay out of the sun. When in the sun, wear sunscreen (at least SPF 15).
- \* Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothes that cover as much skin as possible to prevent sunburn.
- \* Give your body a chance to adjust to extreme temperature changes.
- \* Drink plenty of non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated fluids.
- \* Use shades or awnings.
- \* Consider going to public pools and air-conditioned stores and malls.
- \* Never leave children, pets, or those who require special care in a parked car during periods of intense summer heat.
- \* Find a cooling center. When the heat index is predicted to be dangerously high, New York City opens cooling centers in air-conditioned public facilities to offer people relief from the heat. Call 311 during a heat emergency to find the location of a cooling center or pool. You can also access [NYC.gov](http://NYC.gov) to find your local cooling center.

## FIRE



If your smoke detector goes off or if you notice a fire, remain calm. Do not try to fight a major fire.

- If your clothes catch on fire, **Stop** where you are, **Drop** to the ground, and **Roll** over and over to smother the flames.
- If you live in a high-rise multiple dwelling, and the fire is not in your apartment, stay in your apartment rather than entering smoke-filled hallways.
- In high-rise office buildings, only evacuate if the fire is on your floor or the one above it, and descend to the second floor below the fire floor. Other occupants should remain on their floor and monitor the PA system for further instructions.
- If a fire breaks out in your house or non-fireproof apartment building, get out as quickly as possible.
- Feel doors with the back of your hand before you open them. If they are hot, find another way out. Stay as close to the floor as possible – smoke and heat rise and the air is clearer and cooler near the floor. **Close doors behind you.**
- If you are unable to get out for any reason, stay near a window and close to the floor. Close the door and stuff the bottom with a towel to avoid smoke. If possible, signal for help by waving a cloth or sheet outside the window.
- **Call 911** from a safe place such as a neighbor's house.
- **Do not stop to get anything.**
- **Do not use the elevator.**
- To prevent fires, keep an ABC fire extinguisher and working smoke detectors in the house. Check batteries twice a year at daylight-saving times.
- Consider renter's insurance if you rent an apartment.
- For more fire safety information, visit the FDNY website at [NYC.gov](http://NYC.gov) or call 311.

Also see **GENERAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE** on page 4.

## EARTHQUAKES



Although major earthquakes are uncommon in New York City, tremors occasionally occur and residents should be prepared. Note that after an earthquake your utilities may be disrupted.

### IN THE EVENT OF AN EARTHQUAKE:

- **Drop** to the floor.
- **Take cover** under a solid piece of furniture or next to an interior wall. Cover your head and neck with your arms.
- **Hold on** to a sturdy piece of furniture and be prepared to move with it. Stay where you are until the shaking stops.
- Be prepared for after-shocks, which often follow an earthquake.

See also **GENERAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE** on page 4.

## CARBON MONOXIDE



**D**angerous levels of carbon monoxide – a colorless and odorless gas – can be produced from improperly vented furnaces, plugged or cracked chimneys, water heaters, fireplaces, stoves and tail pipes.

### IF YOU SUSPECT CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING:

- Leave your home.
- Call 911.
- Get any victims to fresh air immediately.
- Open windows.
- Call your local utility.

### CARBON MONOXIDE SAFETY TIPS:

- Make sure all fuel-burning items – furnaces, boilers, hot water heaters, and clothes dryers – are properly ventilated.
- If you have a working fireplace, keep chimneys clean and clear of debris.
- Never turn on your oven to heat your kitchen, or operate gas or charcoal barbecue grills, kerosene- or oil-burning heaters in an enclosed space.
- Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide detector. Check and change batteries often.
- Recognize signs of carbon monoxide poisoning: the most common symptom is HEADACHE. Symptoms may also include dizziness, chest pain, nausea and vomiting.

Also see **FIRE** on this page and **GENERAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE** on page 4.

## DISEASE OUTBREAKS



**N**ew York City has plans for responding to potential situations involving disease outbreaks and biological events in cooperation with State and Federal agencies.

- The City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene uses a state-of-the-art, 24/7 "syndromic surveillance" system to monitor disease patterns. This involves routinely tracking emergency room visits, ambulance runs and pharmacy sales to provide an early warning signal of a possible outbreak.
- The City may distribute medicine or a vaccine to those who are at risk. This course of action will be decided based on the specific health hazard. To distribute treatment or vaccines, the City may open Points of Dispensing (POD) locations where treatment will be provided. In the event that PODs are activated, you may find the one closest to you by listening to local media, calling 311 or accessing [NYC.gov](http://NYC.gov).