

# READY NEW YORK



Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

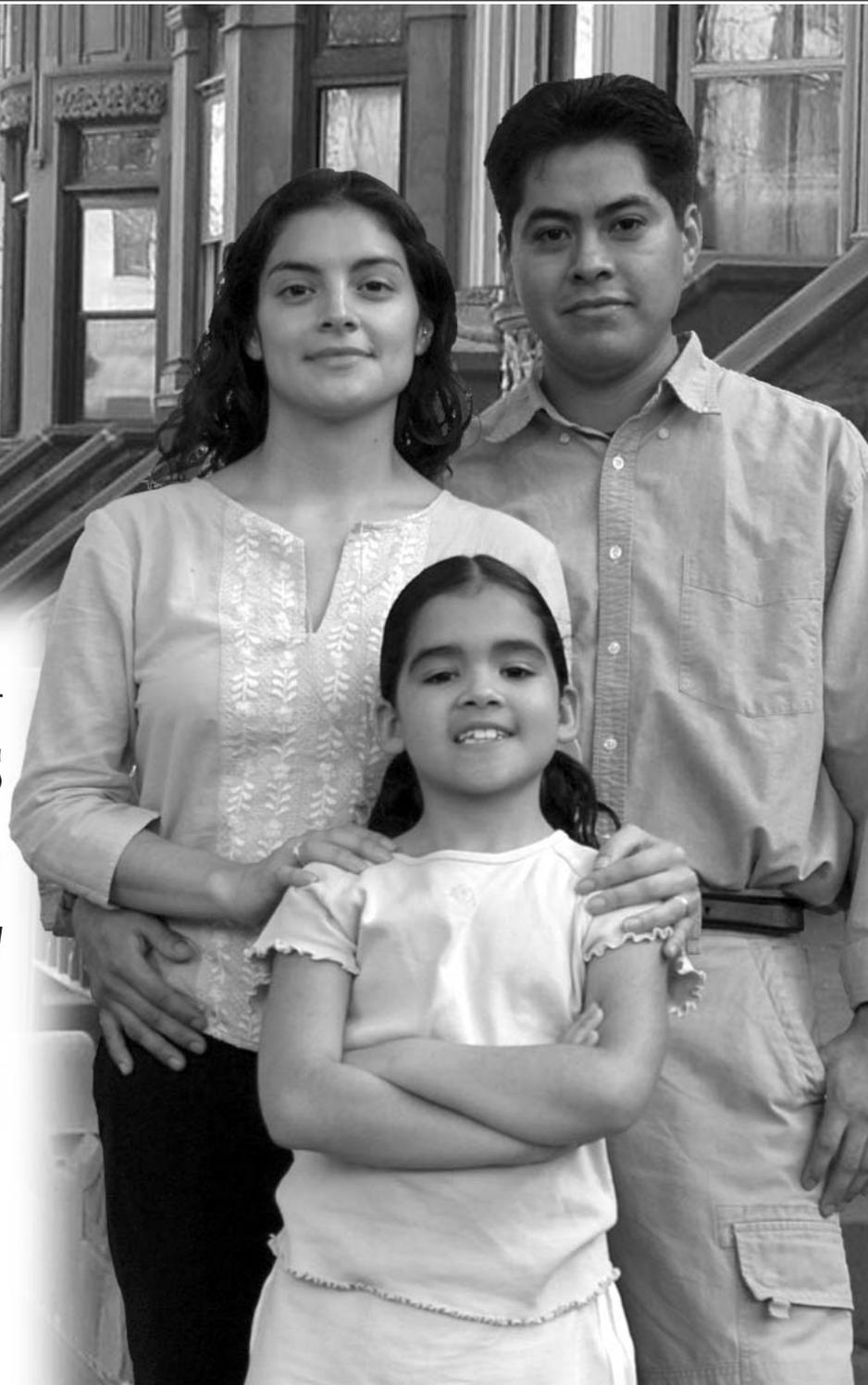
Joseph F. Bruno, Commissioner

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

## 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 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



**I**n 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



**W**hen 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



**S**ome 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](https://www.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 aftershocks, 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).

## RADIATION EXPOSURE

**S**mall amounts of radiation — such as from X-rays — are considered safe. In the unlikely event that the City is exposed to unsafe levels of radiation, there are ways to minimize exposure.

### THESE 3 GENERAL GUIDELINES WILL MINIMIZE YOUR EXPOSURE TO RADIATION:

- 1) Time:** Radioactive materials become less radioactive over time. Stay inside until authorities alert you the threat has passed.
- 2) Distance:** The greater the distance between you and the source of the radiation the better. Authorities may call for an evacuation of people from areas close to the release.
- 3) Shielding:** Put as much heavy, dense material between you and the source of the radiation as possible. Authorities may advise you to stay indoors or underground for this reason. Close and seal your windows and turn off any ventilation.

### ADDITIONAL STEPS TO REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE INCLUDE:

- If you are outside, get inside. Remove all clothing and wash thoroughly.
- Cover your nose and mouth to avoid ingesting dust.
- If there's an event indoors, try to get out of the building without passing through the contaminated area. If you cannot escape, it may be better to shelter in place. See SHELTER IN PLACE on page 4.
- Potassium Iodide (known as KI) is a kind of salt that can prevent damage to your thyroid gland **ONLY** if you are exposed to radioactive iodine. It will not help you in other radioactive environments, and must be administered within a few hours of exposure to be effective. KI is generally only recommended for children, adolescents, pregnant women and others with growing thyroids. In the unlikely event of radiation exposure, the City may distribute KI.

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

## BUILDING COLLAPSES OR EXPLOSIONS



**B**uilding collapses or explosions can be the result of structural damage or sabotage. Either way, the set of rules below apply.

### IF YOU ARE IN A BUILDING COLLAPSE OR EXPLOSION:

- Get out as quickly and calmly as possible.
- If you can't get out of the building, get under a sturdy table or desk.

### IF YOU CLEAN UP DEBRIS:

- Wear gloves and sturdy shoes.
- Sort debris by type (wood, appliances, etc.).
- Do not touch debris that contains utility wires.
- Do not move large or heavy debris. Ask for help from neighbors, friends and recovery workers.

### IF THERE IS A FIRE:

- Fires often occur after a building explosion. See the FIRE section on page 9.

### IF YOU ARE TRAPPED BY DEBRIS:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a cloth or clothing.
- Move around as little as possible to avoid kicking up dust, which is harmful to inhale.
- If possible, use a flashlight so that you can see your surroundings.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can hear where you are. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort as shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

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

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS OR CHEMICAL SPILLS



**W**e use hazardous materials in our homes and businesses every day. Small spills occasionally occur, but these incidents generally cause the public little difficulty other than traffic delays. In the event of a major spill authorities will instruct you on the best course of action, however you should heed the precautions listed below.

For domestic incidents you can consult the Poison Control hotline at 1-212-POISONS (1-212-764-7667), [NYC.gov](http://nyc.gov) or call 311.

### GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- Stay upwind of the material if possible.
- Seek medical attention as soon as possible if needed.
- If there's an event indoors, try to get out of the building without passing through the contaminated area. Otherwise, it may be better to move as far away from the event as possible and shelter in place. See SHELTER IN PLACE on page 4.
- If exposed, remove outer layer of clothes, separate yourself from them, and wash yourself.
- In some circumstances, after being exposed to hazardous materials, it may be necessary to be "decontaminated." Specially trained emergency personnel will perform decontamination procedures, which may include the removal of personal items and cleansing of exposed areas of the body. They will provide for medical attention if necessary.

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

## THOUGHTS ON TERRORISM



**A** terrorist's primary objective is to create fear. With accurate information and basic emergency preparedness, you can fight back. Keep in mind that accidents can sometimes appear to be terrorist events and vice versa. Your response should be similar in either case.

### KNOW THE FACTS AND BE RESPONSIBLE:

- Know the facts of a situation and think critically. Confirm reports using a variety of reliable sources of information, such as the government or media.
- Do not spread rumors.
- Do not accept packages from strangers and do not leave luggage or bags unattended in public areas such as the subway.

### EXPLOSIONS:

- See BUILDING COLLAPSES or EXPLOSIONS section on page 10.

### BIOLOGICAL ATTACKS:

- A biological attack occurs when a terrorist intentionally causes a disease epidemic.
- See DISEASE OUTBREAKS & BIOLOGICAL EVENTS section on page 9 for specific information on this type of emergency.

### CHEMICAL ATTACKS:

- The intentional release of hazardous materials constitutes an act of terrorism, however accidents involving hazardous materials may also occur. Your course of action should be the same in either case.
- See HAZARDOUS MATERIALS or CHEMICAL SPILLS section on page 10 for specific information on this type of emergency.

### RADIOLOGICAL ATTACKS:

- Radiological attacks occur when radioactive material is intentionally released.
- **Radiological Dispersion Device (RDD):** An RDD is designed to scatter amounts of radioactive material over a wide area. The further the material disperses, the less harmful it is. In most cases, the amount of material is unlikely to be lethal.
- **"Dirty Bomb":** A Dirty Bomb is a kind of RDD that combines conventional explosives and radioactive material. The explosive is intended to scatter the radioactive material. More damage and casualties may result from the explosion than from the radiation itself.
- See the RADIATION EXPOSURE section on page 10 for more information.

### A PARCEL OR LETTER MAY BE CONSIDERED SUSPICIOUS WHEN IT HAS MORE THAN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

- Handwritten or poorly typed address, incorrect titles or titles with no name, or misspellings of common words.
- Addressed to someone no longer with your organization or not addressed to a specific person.
- Strange return address or no return address.
- Marked with restrictions, such as "Personal," "Confidential" or "Do not X-ray."
- Excessive postage.
- Powdery substance on the outside.
- Unusual weight given its size, lopsided, or oddly shaped.
- Unusual amount of tape on it.
- Odors, discolorations or oily stains.

### IF YOU RECEIVE A SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE OR ENVELOPE:

- PUT IT DOWN – preferably on a stable surface.
- Cover it with an airtight container like a trash can or plastic bag.
- Call 911 and alert your building's security officials.
- Alert others to the presence of the package and evacuate the area.
- Wash your hands with soap and water if you have handled the package.
- Make a list of the people who were in the room or area where the suspicious package was recognized, and give it to authorities.
- Do not stray far from the area if you believe you have been exposed.

### IF YOU RECEIVE A BOMB THREAT:

- Ask the caller as many of the following questions as possible:
  - 1) When is the bomb going to explode?
  - 2) Where is the bomb right now?
  - 3) What does the bomb look like?
  - 4) What kind of bomb is it?
  - 5) Where are you calling from?
  - 6) Why did you place the bomb?
- Keep the caller on the line for as long as possible and try to write down or record the conversation.
- Write down the exact time and length of call.
- Listen carefully to the caller's voice and background noise.
- After you hang up, call 911 IMMEDIATELY.

**IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL TERRORISM, call 1-888-NYC-SAFE.**

# INFORMATION FOR YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES

## SENIORS & PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



**S**eniors and people with disabilities may need to take additional steps to prepare for emergencies. If you or someone in your household has special needs, consider the following tips when preparing your disaster plans.

For more planning assistance, you may contact the NYC Department for the Aging or the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities via 311 or TTY: 212-504-4115.

- Keep a 7-14 day supply of necessary medications on hand at all times.
- Develop a personal emergency plan for each place where you spend time – at home, work, school and in the community.
- Evaluate your capabilities, limitations, needs and surroundings to determine what type of support you may need in an emergency.
- Include your home care attendant and other people in your network in your planning process. For specific planning, see the Office of Emergency Management's brochure, "New York City's Guide to Preparedness for Seniors and People with Disabilities," on OEM's website at [NYC.gov](http://NYC.gov) or call 311.
- If you are dependent on electricity for your wheelchair, breathing machine or any other life-sustaining device, plan for a loss of power. Consult your power provider.
- The hearing impaired may need to make special arrangements to make sure they receive emergency warnings.
- Mobility impaired people may need assistance to get to a shelter or to evacuate from buildings. Keep in mind elevators will not work in a power outage. Technologically dependent people should check in with 911 or their doctors.
- People with special dietary needs should have an adequate emergency food supply.
- It is a good idea to write down your support needs and numbers. Medical conditions, medications and dosages, allergies, special equipment, medical insurance, Medicare insurance cards as well as personal and medical contact details are important to have available. Keep this list with you in emergencies and supply a friend with a copy.
- If you have a service animal, make sure that it is registered for a service tag.

## What Else You Can Do to Prepare Your Household For Emergencies

- Use the websites and phone numbers listed in MORE RESOURCES on page 14 to learn about more ways to protect yourself and your household in an emergency.
- Take a first-aid or Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) class to learn how to help family and neighbors if they are injured.
- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in all areas of your home and check them regularly to make sure they are working.
- Install fire extinguishers in your home and make sure all household members know where they are and how to use them.
- Change batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and check on emergency supplies twice a year during daylight-saving times.

## MENTAL HEALTH



**D**isaster victims are likely to experience at least one of several emotional responses: anger, fatigue, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, nightmares, depression, inability to concentrate, hyperactivity, or increased alcohol or drug use.

### MENTAL HEALTH EXPERTS SUGGEST A NUMBER OF WAYS TO RELIEVE THE SYMPTOMS OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS:

- Talk about your feelings with family, friends and neighbors. These people are good medicine, and sharing common experiences helps people overcome anxiety and feelings of helplessness.
- Get back into daily routines as soon as you can, and try to maintain a healthy diet and get plenty of sleep.
- Get some physical exercise every day.
- If you continue to have the symptoms described above for an extended period of time, think about consulting a mental health professional.

For more information, a referral, or if you need someone to talk to, call New York City's "LifeNet" 24-hour Mental Health Hotline via 311.

## PARENTS & FAMILIES



**I**nclude your children in planning for an emergency. Teach them how to get help and what to do in different situations. Practice your family emergency plan with your children and quiz them about preparedness information.

### EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW:

- Family contact information for use in an emergency.
- Never to touch wires lying on the ground or hanging from poles.
- How to identify the smell of gas. Tell them that if they smell it, they should tell a grown-up or leave the building.
- How and when to call 911.

### INFORMATION TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL OR DAY CARE FACILITY:

- Find out what your child's school does in the event of an emergency and know the school's emergency plans.
- Find out where can you pick up your child during an evacuation.
- Ensure that the school has up-to-date contact information for you and at least one other relative or friend.
- Find out if you can authorize a friend or relative to pick up your children in an emergency if you cannot.

### GO BAG:

- Pack child care supplies as well as games and small toys in your family's Go Bag.

### REASSURANCE:

- Children are particularly vulnerable to emotional stress after a disaster and may exhibit excessive fear of the dark, crying, fear of being alone and constant worry. Reassure children that they are safe. Encourage them to talk about their fears, emphasize that they are not responsible for what happened, and comfort them.

For more information, see **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ADVICE** on page 3 and refer to **MORE RESOURCES** on page 14.

## NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Non-English speakers should consider their special needs in an emergency.

- **Make special preparations to get the information and special assistance you may need in advance.**
- **Call 311 for more information.**

## TIPS FOR PET OWNERS



**P**et owners should include provisions for their pet in a household disaster plan. Please note that pets are not allowed in shelters (only service animals are allowed in shelters). Therefore, it is important that you have a plan for your pet in the case of an evacuation.

### PET EMERGENCY PLANNING TIPS:

- Contact friends or relatives outside your area to see if they would be willing to accommodate you and your pets in an emergency. Also, ask a neighbor, friend or family member if they will look after your pet if you cannot return home due to a disaster.
- See if your veterinarian or groomer provides shelter for animals during an emergency.
- Transport your pets in a carrier for the duration of the disaster. This makes pets feel safer and more secure.
- Know your pets' hiding places so that you can easily find them in times of stress.
- Make sure each pet has a license and ID tag.
- See the Office of Emergency Management's brochure, "Disaster Preparedness for Animals in New York City" on OEM's website at [NYC.gov](http://NYC.gov) or call 311.

### ASSEMBLE A "PET SURVIVAL KIT" THAT CAN BE READY TO GO IF YOU ARE EVACUATING YOUR PET TO A KENNEL OR TO FRIENDS OR FAMILY. YOU SHOULD INCLUDE:

- **Water, food and containers.**
- **A leash/muzzle/harness.**
- **A copy of all current vaccination and health records, license numbers and microchip numbers.**
- **Medication for your pet (if needed).**
- **A pet carrier or cage (a luggage carrier can be used to wheel the carrier around).**
- **Plastic bags for pick-up.**
- **Photo of your pet.**

## SUBWAY PREPAREDNESS



**D**isaster can happen anywhere. If you are caught on the subway during any kind of emergency, follow the guidelines below.

- Stay as calm and quiet as possible so that you can hear any instructions.
- Do not leave the subway unless you are instructed to do so. The safest place is usually in the subway car.
- Subway tracks are dangerous. Never exit a subway train onto the tracks unless directed to do so by the train crew or emergency response personnel. While being escorted by emergency response personnel, be careful to avoid the larger third rail, which carries a dangerous electrical current.
- The Subways Control Center is in constant communication with train crews. In the event that there is a problem in the system and if the PA system is not operating, the train crew will walk through the train to instruct passengers on emergency evacuation procedures.
- Think before you pull the emergency cord. Only pull the cord when the train is in motion if someone gets caught between closing subway car doors and is being dragged. If your train is between stations and you pull the cord, the train will stop, preventing medical or any other kind of assistance from reaching the train. Help will be much more accessible if the train reaches the nearest station without interruption, where police and medical services will be waiting or can be quickly summoned.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP THE CITY

**M**any of the tips in this guide are designed to help you and your household. Here's what you can do to help the City recover from all kinds of emergencies.

### BECOME A VOLUNTEER:

- It is best to affiliate with a recognized disaster volunteer organization such as the Red Cross or the Salvation Army before a disaster happens.
- Before going directly to volunteer at a relief organization, hospital or disaster site after a disaster, wait for instructions from local officials, or check with specific organizations.
- Be patient. In the wake of a disaster, there are often many people waiting to volunteer. However, there may be a greater need for volunteers in the weeks and months after a disaster.

## More Resources

### LEARN MORE ABOUT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:

**New York City Office of Emergency Management:**  
[NYC.gov/oem](http://NYC.gov/oem) or 311

**New York State Emergency Management Office:**  
1-518-457-2200 or  
[www.nysemo.state.ny.us](http://www.nysemo.state.ny.us)

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):**  
FEMA published a longer, more detailed guide to emergency preparedness called "Are You Ready? A Guide to Citizen Preparedness." To order this publication, call FEMA's distribution center at 1-800-480-2520 or visit [www.fema.gov/library](http://www.fema.gov/library). The FEMA website, [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) also contains a great deal of information about preparing for and responding to emergencies.

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security:** 1-800-BE-READY (1-800-237-3239) or  
[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

**U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention:** 1-800-311-3435 or  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

**U.S. Department of Energy:**  
1-800-DIAL DOE (1-800-342-5363) or  
[www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:** 1-800-424-8802 or  
[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

**National Weather Service:**  
[www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)

**NOAA All Hazards Radio:**  
[www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr)

**American Red Cross:**  
1-877-733-2767 or  
[www.nyredcross.org](http://www.nyredcross.org)

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES IN NEW YORK CITY:

There are many volunteer opportunities for New Yorkers interested in donating their skills and time to help people during a disaster.

**New York Cares:** 1-212-228-5000 or  
[www.nycares.org](http://www.nycares.org)

**American Red Cross:**  
1-877-733-2767 or  
[www.nyredcross.org](http://www.nyredcross.org)

**Citizen Corps:**  
[NYC.gov/citizencorps](http://NYC.gov/citizencorps)

**Salvation Army:**  
[www.salvationarmy-newyork.org](http://www.salvationarmy-newyork.org)

### FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES:

**FEMA:**  
[www.fema.gov/kids/](http://www.fema.gov/kids/)

**American Red Cross:**  
[www.prepare.org/children/bereadybook.pdf](http://www.prepare.org/children/bereadybook.pdf)

**The Sesame Workshop's safety page:**  
[www.sesameworkshop.org/parents/solutions/safety](http://www.sesameworkshop.org/parents/solutions/safety)

**American Academy of Pediatrics:**  
[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

- Following a disaster, New York Cares will post disaster volunteer opportunities on its website [www.nycares.org](http://www.nycares.org).
- To learn about additional disaster preparedness volunteer opportunities, visit the City's Citizen Corps website at [NYC.gov/citizencorps](http://NYC.gov/citizencorps), or see Volunteer Opportunities in "More Resources."

### MAKE A DONATION:

- Making a financial contribution to a volunteer agency involved in disaster relief is often the most sensible and efficient way of helping people in need after a disaster.
- Before donating any goods, including food or clothing, wait for instructions from local officials or check with a specific organization. Unneeded items overwhelm the recovery effort and may go to waste.
- For more information on donating goods and services during disasters read "When Disaster Strikes" available at [www.NVOAD.org](http://www.NVOAD.org).

# EMERGENCY REFERENCE CARD

## Household Emergency Information

Contact information for household members. Please complete this form and keep it up to date.

Name: _____	Name: _____
Date of Birth: _____ Social Security Number: _____	_____
Business or School Evacuation Location: _____	_____
Medical Information: _____	_____
Work, School or Other Address _____	_____
& Telephone Numbers: _____	_____
_____	_____

Name: _____	Name: _____
Date of Birth: _____ Social Security Number: _____	_____
Business or School Evacuation Location: _____	_____
Medical Information: _____	_____
Work, School or Other Address _____	_____
& Telephone Numbers: _____	_____
_____	_____



Medical Information	Name:	Telephone #	Policy #
Doctor(s):			
Other:			
Pharmacist:			
Medical Insurance:			
Home Owners/Rental Insurance			

Fire House #: _____	Fire House Phone #: _____
Police Precinct #: _____	Police Precinct Phone #: _____

**Household Disaster Plan**

Home Meeting Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Meeting Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Neighborhood Meeting Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Neighborhood Meeting Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

more on back

**Household Disaster Plan**

Home Meeting Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Meeting Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Neighborhood Meeting Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Neighborhood Meeting Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

more on back

# CONTACTING THE CITY IN EMERGENCIES

## Call 911:

- When you are in immediate danger or witness a crime in progress.
- For a serious injury or medical condition.
- Any other situation needing urgent attention.

**Do NOT call 911** for non-emergencies or to report a power outage (to allow telephone capacity for emergency calls).

## Call 311:

- When you need access to non-emergency services or information about City government programs.
- **TTY: 212-504-4115**

311

**Do NOT call 311 for emergencies.**

## Emergency Telephone Tips:

If you call 911, specify the type of emergency (fire, medical, police) and be prepared to answer questions. During a medical emergency, turn a light on so that emergency responders can find your home.

- During emergencies, please use the telephone only when absolutely necessary to keep the lines free for emergency calls. If you have broadband Internet access, use [NYC.gov](http://NYC.gov).

**NYC.gov** provides New Yorkers access to a number of City resources, as well as up-to-date information about emergencies affecting New York City. The New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) maintains the Emergency Management Online Locator System (EMOLS) – an Internet application that conveys important emergency information to the user through an easy-to-use mapping interface. In a hurricane, for example, EMOLS can tell you if you are located in a danger zone, identify your closest shelter and how to get there by public transportation or car. Find EMOLS on OEM’s website at [NYC.gov](http://NYC.gov).

## NEW YORK CITY AND EMERGENCIES: THE CITY IS PREPARED

New York City has plans for emergencies and dedicates important resources to emergency preparedness. Plans include information on sheltering, evacuation, public safety, public information, transportation and other issues, which ensure the City recovers from disasters quickly and safely.

During an emergency, the City activates the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC is an emergency facility staffed by representatives from City, State and Federal agencies as well as private and non-profit organizations. These representatives coordinate the most effective response to emergencies.

### Who is involved in local emergencies?

**The Mayor:** The Mayor oversees all aspects of the City’s response to emergencies.

**Office of Emergency Management (OEM):** OEM secures resources and facilitates communication between all participating agencies before, during and after emergencies. OEM creates contingency plans to respond quickly and efficiently to

a variety of situations. In response to emergency situations, OEM will activate the City’s Emergency Operations Center to facilitate coordination between agencies during large incidents. Additionally, OEM sends Citywide Interagency Coordinators to serve as field liaisons at the scene of myriad localized emergencies each year, such as water main breaks, fires and building collapses.

**City Agencies, Businesses and Non-Profits:** These entities assess the emergency situation and make decisions to ensure continuity of government and provide services for those affected. They also send representatives to the EOC to foster coordination.

**City Council, Community Boards and Borough Presidents:** Elected officials provide leadership and valuable information on possible damage in their districts and feasible solutions to problems. They can also pass emergency legislation to deal with the situation at hand.

**YOU:** You have a responsibility – disasters can affect everyone. It is important that you are prepared and understand your responsibilities during a disaster. When you are prepared, you become part of the solution.

Out of State Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Out of State Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

