



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

## **Updates on Hurricane Status from Mayor's Office Wednesday at 4:30pm**

Martin J. Golden

October 31, 2012

Dear Elected Official:

Today Mayor Bloomberg updated New Yorkers on the efforts to get our city up and running after Hurricane Sandy.

Our two biggest challenges remain getting the power grid and transportation systems fully operational again. However we are making progress and are working around the clock.

FDNY is still conducting search and recovery operations in the areas hardest hit by the storm, particularly in the Rockaways. The number of confirmed deaths from the storm is now at 26.

Here are the latest details on the response and recovery:

#### Schools:

- Schools will be closed tomorrow (Thursday) and Friday.

#### Roadways:

- There is very heavy traffic on the roads today.
- To reduce the number of cars coming into lower Manhattan, the City has ordered that the four East River bridges be restricted to High Occupancy Vehicles only – meaning 3 or more people per vehicle. This restriction will be in effect for Thursday and Friday, 6AM to midnight each day. Exceptions to the HOV rules include commercial, emergency, and para-transit vehicles, as well as buses. These restrictions will also be in effect on the RFK Triborough Bridge, the Henry Hudson Bridge, and the Lincoln Tunnel.
- The Hugh Carey Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel and the Holland Tunnel are both closed. The Lincoln Tunnel is open.
- We are establishing bus lanes on key corridors – including 3rd Avenue, Lexington Avenue, and Flatbush Avenue.
- People should be extremely cautious when driving, particularly at intersections where traffic lights have no power.
- We encourage people to stay off the roads if at all possible. If they have any other option to get to work, they should use it.

## Mass Transit:

- The MTA has announced that:
  - o Parts of the subway system will be operational tomorrow. Manhattan below 34th Street where there is no power will not have any service, however. There are still substantial amounts of water in a number of the tunnels and stations.
  - o LIRR and Metro North are restoring limited service as of this afternoon.
  - o Bus service has been in effect since yesterday and continues to increase.
  - o Further detail can be found at [mta.info](http://mta.info). The Staten Island Ferry and the East River Ferry are both still suspended:
  - o We are still assessing and fixing damage at the landings on both lines.
  - o We are coordinating with the Coast Guard about conditions in the water to ensure safe passage for the boats once they are reactivated.

## Power:

- As of this afternoon, approximately 643,000 customers in the city do not have power. This includes 230,000 in Manhattan.
- Con Ed continues has been working around the clock to restore power. They have enlisted 1,400 external contractors from around the country to assist in this effort.
- The NYPD set up 80 light towers last night in areas without power. Our goal is to set up 100 more for tonight.

## Phone Service:

- AT&T and Verizon both sustained damage to critical infrastructure. This has resulted in service disruptions for both landline and cell service. We are assisting with pumping operations to help get these facilities up and running quickly.

## Building Inspections:

- The Department of Buildings has begun inspecting buildings in hard-hit Zone A areas to assess their structural integrity. There are three areas where these inspections are happening: Staten Island, the Rockaways, and Lower Manhattan.
- Buildings will be tagged with one of three color placards to indicate their safety:
  - o Green: the building is safe to enter
  - o Red: the building is not safe and may not be entered
  - o Yellow: it can be occupied conditionally (i.e. one floor may be safe while another is not.) These conditions would be explained on the placard.
- Inspections of these Staten Island Zone A buildings will be complete by the end of the weekend.
- Rockaways and Lower Manhattan inspections began today.
- Building owners can also self-certify with the Department of Buildings.

## Support to Businesses:

- We have put together a package of support for NYC businesses impacted by the storm:
  - o Emergency loans of up to \$10,000 for small and mid-sized businesses that have been interrupted as a result of the storm.
  - o For larger businesses that were damaged, temporary City and State sales tax deferment on materials needed for rebuilding.
  - o For businesses displaced from their locations, we're offering temporary office space free of charge at the Brooklyn Army Terminal for the next 30 days.
  - o EDC has about 40,000 square feet of space at the Terminal that is now available for this use.
  - o Loans up to \$2 million are also available for business property losses not fully covered by insurance – and for businesses that have had cash flow problems caused by the storm and need funds to get back on their feet.
- § That applies to small businesses, agricultural co-ops, and most nonprofits, regardless of size. · To get information contact NYC Business Solutions by calling 311 or going to [nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov).

#### Federal Disaster Assistance:

- Anyone affected by Sandy – homeowners, renters, and businesses – can apply for federal disaster assistance.
- They can register at [DisasterAssistance.gov](http://DisasterAssistance.gov) or by calling the Federal Emergency Management agency at 1-800-621-3362.

## Volunteers and Donations:

- Many New Yorkers have expressed their desire to help by volunteering or donating. More information can be found at: [nyc.gov/service](https://nyc.gov/service)

## Healthcare Facilities:

- 17 chronic care facilities in Zone A have been evacuated, with 4 of those evacuations still under way. Most of these patients were moved to other chronic care facilities, and some were moved to the 7 city shelters for those with special medical needs. These shelters are short-term facilities, and so we are arranging for these patients to be transferred to long-term facilities by this Saturday. All the patients from the 17 evacuated facilities are safe and being cared for. There were no deaths from any of the evacuated facilities.
- Bellevue Hospital is currently being evacuated.
- Previously New York Downtown, Manhattan VA, NYU Langone, and Coney Island Hospital were evacuated.

## Shelters:

- We currently have approximately 6,300 people in our 76 evacuation shelters.
- In the days ahead we will begin consolidating the number of shelters.
- Our shelter system will remain open until evacuees can return to their homes or find short-term housing.

#### Parks:

- All parks and playgrounds are closed today for safety reasons. There is still a serious threat from falling branches.
- We expect a majority will be open by this weekend.
- Details on park closures can be found here: [nyc.gov/parks](https://nyc.gov/parks)

#### Sanitation:

- The Department of Sanitation is collecting garbage
- They are not collecting recycling.
- In addition from their normal pickups they are also removing thousands of tons of debris left by the storm.

#### Senior Centers:

- 66 of the 253 senior centers in the city are open today.
- We expect that 125 of the 253 will be open tomorrow (Thursday).

## 57th Street Crane:

- Engineers have been in the building since yesterday and have determined that the ties from the building to the crane are secure.
- This will allow them to begin determining next steps and to begin shrinking the frozen zone around the crane.
- However the street will not be fully reopened until sometime this weekend at the earliest.

## Airports:

- JFK and Newark are open.
- LaGuardia is closed.

## Reporting and Handling Conditions:

- 911 should only be used in case of emergencies.
- To report other conditions such as fallen trees and sewer backups, please use 311 Online, text 311 at 311-692, or call 311.
  - o Fallen trees are incredibly dangerous. Anyone who sees one should report it immediately. No one should try to cut down or move damaged trees themselves.
- Power outages and live wires should be directly reported to Con Ed (1-800-75-CON-



ED) or LIPA (1-800-490-0075).

o Live wires are also extremely dangerous. No one should touch them or be near them.

#### Advice to Share with Your Constituents:

- Any food – including packaged food – that was touched by flood water should be thrown away. The flood water may contain sewage or other contamination.
- Other items that have been touched by flood water should be cleaned and disinfected. This should be done as soon as possible to prevent mold growth.
- Tap water is safe to drink.
- Do not use generators or grills indoors. Carbon monoxide poisoning is a serious threat when these devices are used indoors. They should only be used outside and kept away from windows and vents.
- Everyone should have and use battery-operated carbon monoxide alarms. They should test the batteries if possible.
- If someone experiences sleepiness, dizziness, headaches, confusion, weakness or the carbon monoxide alarm sounds, they should immediately seek fresh air and call the poison control center at 212-POISONS (212-764-7667.) They can also call 911, since poisoning is life threatening.
- Important guides on carbon monoxide poisoning and food safety can be found at [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health).

#### Status of Major Public Events:

- The Greenwich Village Halloween Parade has been postponed to a later date, to be determined.
- Tonight's Nets-Knicks game has been postponed by the NBA.
- The NYC Marathon on Sunday will go ahead as scheduled.

## Staying Informed

- For the latest updates, New Yorkers can:
  - o Visit [NYC.gov](https://www.nyc.gov)
  - o Follow @nycmayorsoffice Twitter
  - o Sign up for notifications from Notify NYC

We are on the road to recovery together, and we will continue to keep you informed throughout this process.