

TORNADOES IN THE BRONX: YES AND WE MUST BE PREPARED

Last week Bronx and Queens residents received a tornado warning from the National Weather Service. Minutes later a Category EF1 hit Queens with winds close to 90 miles per hour, destroying some 50 trees and some damage to property.

While it might seem unlikely and uncommon, the rise in severe weather all over our planet has been causing tornadoes to impact New York City.

According to data compiled in a report on severe weather by the New York State Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force, 10 of the 13 tornadoes ever recorded in New York City have occurred in the past 15 years. AND New York City has seen more than a 300% increase in tornadoes since 2002.

The Bronx has been hit by two tornadoes in recent memory. One in 1974 and one in 2010.

The Task Force's report shows an increasing frequency with closer proximity to population centers that should raise a warning signal of this growing danger. Most concerning is the fact that the vast majority of New Yorkers are NOT prepared to deal with such a situation.

The urgency to address this problem is highlighted by a Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) study which has found that on average only 14% of individuals had participated in school-based shelter-in-place drills and 10% in home-based shelter-in-place drills, while only 14% have participated in a home evacuation drill.

The FEMA study found that the virtually all low-income homes were completely unprepared to deal with a major natural disaster and did not have emergency food, water, medication or cash on hand when ATMs go offline due to power loss.

The American Red Cross has provided some very useful tools and advice on how to be prepared for an emergency or major disaster. Here are some useful information in English and in Spanish to help you and your family be better prepared for the dangerous and imminent severe weather our State will face.

English: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html>

Spanish: <https://www.redcross.org/cruz-roja/obtener-ayuda/tipos-de-emergencias.html>

The danger we all face is very real. The data clearly shows 69% of over 410 tornadoes impacting New York State being reported since 1986. **Over the past 15 years alone**, 150 tornadoes have hit our State, accounting for over 35% of the more than 410 tornadoes impacting our State since 1950.

Being prepared for a natural disaster or man-made one is very important. Preparing your family for the unexpected is more necessary now than ever before. The information I provided above is the first step in protecting yourself and your family.