

New York City Government Response

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While many City agencies will respond, the City agency charged with planning and coordinating the response is the New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM). The following information is taken from their website. (<http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/home/home.shtml>)

Their planning brochures and links are included as part of this manual.

Description

Established in 1996, the New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) works to mitigate, plan and prepare for emergencies; educate the public about preparedness; coordinate emergency response and recovery efforts; collect and disseminate critical information; and seek funding opportunities to support the overall preparedness of the City of New York.

To accomplish this mission, OEM maintains a disciplined unit of emergency management personnel, including responders, planners, watch commanders, and administrative and support staff, to identify and respond to various hazards.

Areas of Responsibility

Informing the Public

Ensuring New Yorkers are prepared for emergencies is OEM's top priority. Its educational campaigns aim to help residents prepare for all types of emergencies.

During an emergency, OEM works to ensure agencies involved in an emergency response provide a unified, accurate, and timely message to the public. OEM delivers emergency warnings through the broadcast media using the City's Emergency Alert System, and provides email alerts about current emergencies to subscribers. During large-scale emergencies, OEM opens a Joint Information Center (JIC)

to coordinate outreach to the media.

Planning for Emergencies

OEM develops contingency plans that guide New York City's response to natural and man-made emergencies, from extreme weather to labor disputes. Each plan focuses on three components of a disaster: preparedness, initial response, and recovery. The purpose of these plans is to keep New York City safe and, following a disaster, to return residents to their daily routines as quickly as possible.

When a plan is activated, OEM coordinates the skills of City, state, federal, and non-governmental agencies, to ensure the plan is effectively carried out. Large-scale citywide emergencies, like a transit strike or a coastal storm, can require the collaboration of dozens of agencies and thousands of emergency responders. Smaller incidents, such as localized power outages or water main breaks, may only require a handful of agencies to complete restoration.

OEM reviews, tests, and revises these plans as intelligence and resources change. The agency enlists subject matter experts from all City agencies, including the Police and Fire Departments, and other non-city groups to advise on aspects of each plan.

A large part of planning is what's done in addition to coordinating emergency responses. OEM works to inform the public of the potential hazards (<http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/hazards/hazards.shtml>) in an effort to make sure New Yorkers know how to avoid disasters or act in the event of a disaster. OEM encourages New Yorkers to educate themselves and others about emergency preparedness.

The following links highlight the City's guidelines to handle some possible emergencies:

- Coastal Storm Plan - http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/about/planning_coastal_storm.shtml
- A New York City Population Analysis - http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/about/pop_analysis.shtml
- Utilities Disruptions Guide - http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/about/planning_utilities.shtml

Emergency Response

Emergencies in a city as large and complex as New York require a coordinated response. OEM works to ensure information gathering, decision making, and resource allocations are carried out efficiently. There are many components that make up all of OEM's Emergency Response. Below are a few of the ways the agency handles emergencies:

Incident monitoring: OEM tracks incidents affecting New York City 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Through its Watch Command, OEM monitors radio frequencies used by the City's emergency responders, local and national news, weather conditions, and 911 calls, among other communications channels. It also maintains the City's communication link with local, state, and federal agencies, and notifies City officials when incidents or issues of concern arise.

Field response: OEM sends field responders to larger incidents to facilitate interagency communication and resource requests. OEM's on-scene coordinators also help ensure responding agencies follow incident command protocols.

Emergency Operations Center: During major emergencies and special events, OEM activates the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC). With space for more than 100 representatives from local, state, and federal agencies and private and non-profit entities, the EOC functions as a central clearinghouse for information coordination, resource requests, and decision making.

Recovery and Relief: Following an emergency, OEM works with government agencies and nonprofit organizations to provide assistance to disaster victims and manage relief efforts, donations, and spontaneous volunteers.

Learn about OEM's Emergency Response Resources and Capabilities:

- Citywide Asset and Logistics Management System: CALMS - http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/about/about_calms.shtml
- Citywide Incident Management System: CIMS - http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/about/about_cims.shtml
- Emergency Operations Center: EOC - http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/about/about_eoc.shtml
- Emergency Response Vehicles - http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/about/about_mdc_icv_icc.shtml
- Geographic Information Systems: GIS - http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/about/about_gis.shtml
- Private Asset and Logistics Management System: PALMS - http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/about/about_emergency_palms.shtml
- Urban Search and Rescue: USAR - http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/about/about_usar.shtml
- Watch Command & Field Operations - http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/about/about_operations.shtml

OEM Programs

Preparedness: Ready New York

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is committed to educating New Yorkers about the hazards they face and ways they can better prepare themselves. Understanding your responsibilities before, during, and after an emergency is the best way to ensure you and your family are ready for any situation.

To further this process, OEM has created “Ready New York: A Household Preparedness Guide” — the centerpiece of a broad household preparedness campaign — to distribute to the City’s more than eight million residents. Created in collaboration with more than 20 government, private and non-profit entities, “Ready New York” is built on three guiding principles — packing a **Go Bag**, assembling an **Emergency Supply Kit**, and creating a **Household Disaster Plan**.

“Ready New York” was introduced in 2003. The preparedness campaign outlines tips and information designed to help New Yorkers better prepare for all types of emergencies. Centered around a downloadable household preparedness guide, “Ready New York” spans a number of publications, televised public service announcements, outdoor ads, a speakers bureau, corporate partnerships, and training programs including Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). For specific “Ready New York” publications, information, and downloads, please visit the OEM website at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/home/home.shtml>.

CERT

NYC CERT teams are groups of neighborhood and community-based volunteers that undergo an intensive, 11-week training program in disaster preparedness and basic response skills. Several of the topics include Fire Safety, Search and Rescue, and Disaster Medical Operations. After completing training, these teams act to support their local communities by assisting the various emergency agencies that prepare for and respond to disasters.

As a rule, emergency services personnel are the best equipped to respond to emergencies. However, following a catastrophic disaster, CERT teams can handle initial emergency recovery while they wait for professional First Responders.

During non-emergency situations, CERT teams educate their communities on emergency preparedness.

CERT Mission Statement

The New York City Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program trains neighborhood and community-based volunteer teams to:

- Inform, educate, and train their neighbors about disaster preparedness
- Assist public safety agencies and local community boards with public events
- Respond to local disasters in accordance with CERT protocols and support emergency personnel upon their arrival and request
- Assist agencies in managing spontaneous volunteers at a disaster site

CERT History

The CERT concept was developed and implemented by the City of Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) in 1985. It was first employed during the Whittier Narrows earthquake in 1987, when roads became impassable and communities were temporarily stranded.

LAFD then saw the need to train community members in basic rescue and survival skills. FEMA implemented the training program on their Web site, making it available to communities nationwide.

In 2003, the President created the concept of **Citizen Corps** to train and coordinate community volunteer teams. These teams make communities safer and better prepared to respond to any emergency, and CERT was designated as the initiative’s key program.

In November 2003, NYC OEM received federal funding to provide Community Emergency Response Team training to New Yorkers.

Goal

One of the primary goals of NYC OEM is to establish one CERT team in each of the 59 Community Boards around NYC by the end of 2006. There are currently 31 teams recognized by NYC OEM as established and trained. For a full list of OEM-recognized and trained teams in NYC, please go to the OEM website at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/home/home.shtml>.

CERT Program Partners

- **Citizens for NYC (CNYC)** –
<http://ccnyc.neighborhoodlink.com/ccnyc/index.html>
CNYC assists with recruitment of CERT teams throughout NYC. CNYC also offers team-building modules and resource information during and after training. CNYC provides teams with technical tools to build communication strategies for CERT members and their respective neighborhoods.
- **Fire Department (FDNY)** –
<http://nyc.gov/html/fdny/html/home2.shtml>
The FDNY facilitates the 11-week training program by offering seasoned FDNY and EMS personnel. They also provide experienced topic instructors for FDNY and EMS classroom-based and hands-on modules. In addition, the FDNY are also major contributors to the NYC CERT curriculum.
- **Police Department (NYPD)** –
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/>
The NYPD provide experienced police personnel from NYPD and the Auxiliary Police Unit to train police-related modules, such as Terrorism Awareness and Police Science. In addition, the NYPD are also contributors to the NYC CERT curriculum.
- **American Red Cross in Greater New York (ARC/GNY)** –
<http://www.nyredcross.org/>
ARC/GNY provides certified disaster mental health professionals to train participants of the program. ARC/GNY are also major contributors to the disaster mental health curriculum.

Resources:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/>

Ready New York: Downloadable Ready New York Preparedness Guides

OEM's Ready New York preparedness campaign is designed to help New Yorkers better prepare for all types of emergencies. The following Ready New York preparedness guides and brochures are available online, most in multiple languages:

- Household Preparedness Guide
www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/ready/household_guide.shtml
- Beat The Heat Guide
www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/ready/heat_guide.shtml
- Ready New York for Seniors and People with Disabilities
www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/ready/seniors_guide.shtml
- Hurricanes and NYC
www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/ready/hurricane_guide.shtml
- Ready New York for Business
www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/ready/biz_guide.shtml
- Ready New York for Pets
www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/ready/pets_guide.shtml
- Pocket Guide
www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/ready/pocket_guide.shtml