



**Andrew M. Cuomo** - Governor

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## **Governor Cuomo Activates Emergency Operations Center as Winter Storm Hits New York State**

Albany, NY (December 26, 2012)

Governor Cuomo today announced that he will activate the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at 6:00 PM today to monitor the storm and any emergency needs. Representatives from state agencies are present to coordinate storm response efforts, including the State Police, Department of Transportation, Thruway Authority, Office of Fire Prevention and Control, Division of Military and Naval Affairs, Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Department of Health.

Beginning Wednesday afternoon and lasting through Thursday afternoon, a winter storm will bring moderate to heavy snow and some ice to parts of the state. New Yorkers should monitor weather conditions, stay tuned to local radio and television stations or to NOAA weather radio for the latest information, plan their activities accordingly, and be particularly cautious while driving.

"Winter weather has arrived for many parts of the state, so as a precaution we have opened the emergency operation center to coordinate response efforts using all state and local resources," Governor Cuomo said. "I also urge New Yorkers to closely watch local news reports for weather updates and adjust their travel plans accordingly. All non-essential travel should be avoided during and directly after the storm since roads will be icy with blizzard conditions in some places."

Secretary to the Governor Larry Schwartz this morning sent a letter to the CEOs of the utilities that operate in New York State saying that they will be held accountable for their performance during and after this storm if they do not meet their obligations to New Yorkers.

Mr. Schwartz's letter to the utilities is below:

December 26, 2012

Mr. Kevin Burke, Chief Executive Officer  
Consolidated Edison Co. of New York, Inc.  
4 Irving Place  
New York, NY 10003-3598

Mr. William Longhi, President & Chief Executive Officer  
Orange and Rockland Utilities, Inc.  
One Blue Hill Plaza  
Pearl River, NY 10965

Mr. James Laurito, President & Chief Executive Officer  
Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp.  
284 South Avenue  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Mr. Mark S. Lynch, President  
Rochester Gas & Electric Corp. & New York State Electric & Gas Corp.  
89 East Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14649

Mr. Ken Daly, Chief Operating Officer  
National Grid - NY  
One Metro Tech Center  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Mr. Thomas B. King, President  
National Grid, USA

201 Jones Road - 5th Fl.  
Waltham, MA 02451-1120

Mr. Michael Taunton, Acting Chief Executive Officer  
CC: Larry Waldman, Chairman  
Long Island Power Authority  
333 Earle Ovington Blvd., Suite 403  
Uniondale, NY 11553

Dear Gentlemen:

The National Weather Service is forecasting heavy snow, freezing rain, and/or high winds throughout much of the New York State region, beginning today and continuing into Thursday.

Utilities that are licensed to operate in New York have a responsibility to ratepayers and to the public to be prepared for predictable weather events. The State of New York will hold your company accountable for its performance.

I want to make sure you are taking every action necessary to reduce the likelihood of power outages that could result from this storm, and to be prepared for any outages that do occur with a sound communications and restoration plan.

To that end, please respond to this letter via email by close of business today identifying the vulnerabilities in your service territory, and detailing steps you have taken to prepare for the pending storm, including but not limited to crewing levels, mutual aid staging logistics, and communications with critical infrastructure and vulnerable customers. In addition, please send me the contact information for your lead operations personnel for this event.

Sincerely,

Larry Schwartz  
Secretary to the Governor

This storm is expected to last 24 to 36 hours, perhaps longer in certain areas of the state.

The State has taken the following steps to ensure readiness:

#### **Power**

##### **Public Service Commission**

- PSC Chairman Garry Brown has contacted the CEOs of all the major utilities to confirm storm preparation efforts.
  - The electric, gas, steam, and telecommunications utilities are:
- Implementing their emergency plans
- The electric utilities are participating in mutual aid calls to secure external crews
- Staging areas are being stocked to support restoration efforts
- LIPA and National Grid have 110 linemen and 135 tree trimmers ready for deployment and are coordinating efforts with state, New York City, county and local emergency management organizations

##### **New York Power Authority**

- All resources required (personnel, equipment, vehicles, etc.) for safe, efficient operations, have been put in place, or are available.
- NYPA will coordinate with State and Local Emergency Management Agencies as necessary.
- **Northern New York Region:**
  - Fleet has snow equipment in-service & ready.
- **Central New York Region:**
  - Snowplow vehicles and snow blowers fueled up and pre-staged on Wednesday..
  - If needed, the line crew will be prepared for dispatch.
  - Emergency generators are fueled and ready.
- **Southeast New York Region:**
  - Storm preparation was the topic of a conference call this morning with all Small Clean Power Plant sites.
  - Snow shovels and rock-salt have be delivered and staged.
- **Western New York Region:**
  - Snow removal equipment is in-service and ready.
  - Snow removal staffing, plowing and shoveling, has been planned on the basis of forecasted weather as is standard operating practice.

##### **Public Safety**

## **Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services**

- Activating state EOC tonight at 6 PM and continuing around the clock till storm ends and impacts are responded to.
- EOC in Albany will have New York State Police, OFPC, DOT, Thruway Authority, PSC tonight and adding human services branch, DOH, DOCCS, DEC, and other agencies tomorrow at 6 AM.
- DHSES staff will be in Nassau, Suffolk and NYC EOCs, including Breezy Point.
- Setting up a regional coordination center in Mid-Hudson Valley at our DHSES regional office
- Four high axle vehicles have been deployed w DOT crews at DHSES disposal, including LI and NYC.
- DHSES staff will be staffed in LIPA and ConEd centers as well.

## **New York State Police:**

- Full complement of Troopers and Supervisors on the 1(7 AM-7 PM) and 2 (7 PM-7 AM) shift on both Wednesday and Thursday.
- Approximately 80 - 4 wheel drive vehicles available throughout the State.
- Emergency Management Non-Commissioned Officers's (NCOs) and Zone Commissioned Officers will be coordinating with the local County Emergency Operations centers as needed.
- 5 snowmobiles and 8 ATVS will be deployed as needed
- Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit (CVEU) and Traffic Incident Management (TIM) team members will be used to supplement normal patrol coverage.

## **DEC**

- The Dept. of Environmental Conservation will be ready to deploy forest rangers and law enforcement personnel as needed within their respective service territories. Together, these units maintain approximately 70 snowmobiles and 40 All Terrain Vehicles that can be utilized to assist in winter-time emergencies. The equipment is fueled and ready to go.
- DEC Forest Rangers and Environmental Conservation officers are on duty and ready to assist as needed.
- Forest Rangers and Environmental Conservation Officers are equipped with 4 wheel drive pick up trucks with mobile radio communications that can be mobilized as necessary.
- 100 ECOs working tomorrow, along with 22 Supervisors.
- 42 Forest Rangers working tomorrow and additional personnel are available as needed.

## **Transportation**

### **MTA**

All units of the MTA have been monitoring the developing storm since last week and activating weather contingency plans as the storm develops.

All units have confirmed that necessary personnel will be available throughout the anticipated storm period for maintenance and response to damage or developing conditions. In addition:

- **NYC Transit**
  - in anticipating of high tides, has staged its three pump trains and one work train with portable pumps to respond to possible flooding in vulnerable locations.
  - No. 3 train service will therefore terminate at 137th Street and Broadway to allow for water walls to be erected to prevent flooding at adjacent locations.
  - MTA is taking usual steps to advise all customers of developing conditions and service changes. Riders should consult "service status" at [www.mta.info](http://www.mta.info).
  - Transit's Department of Subways has fleet of snow fighting and de icing equipment prepped to keep tracks, switches and third rails clear of snow and ice. Fleet includes super powered snow throwers, snow blowers and de-icing cars for immediate deployment.
  - The Subway system has 220 miles of outdoor track, and snow moving equipment is dispatched to those areas particularly vulnerable to snow and freezing precipitation, as well as falling trees and limbs, so crews with power saws will be deployed and available.
- **Bridges and Tunnels**
  - has a fleet of nearly 100 snow and ice fighting vehicles on stand-by
  - prepared to moderate traffic or close bridges depending on wind or precipitation conditions and the need to clear snow and ice.
  - The Bridges may be closed to some or all traffic when sustained winds exceed 40 mph or high wind gusts prevail.
  - Bridge and Tunnel equipment includes regular maintenance trucks that can be converted to snow plows and conveyers and vehicles that can sense ground temperature and the danger of roadway freezing, as well as imbedded roadway sensors and other technology to track wind, precipitation and temperature conditions.
- **Long Island Railroad and Metro North Railroad**

- are prepared with thousands of employees on alert for emergency duty from pre storm operations through digging out, dealing with storm damage and restoring service.
- LIRR will roll out newest addition to snow equipment, the Nordco Snow Fighter, a rail-bound plow with two 16-foot wings to plow snow, along with smaller snow removal equipment.
- LIRR is prepared to keep station waiting rooms open around the clock if necessary to provide shelter for customers.
- Additional crews will be positioned to clear platforms and stairways of snow and ice with conventional hand-held equipment.
- Metro North and LIRR have been prepping fleets of rail cars, clearing air brake lines to prevent freezing, de-icing door panels, and fitting signals, third rail shoes and other equipment to prevent snow accumulation
- Metro North has also recently acquired additional snow fighting equipment including cold air blowers to clear yard switches and third rails.
- Snow fighting equipment has also been dispatched to all MNR stations and crews are also positioned to clear and maintain stations.
- With predictions of the heaviest snow accumulations in its service area, MNR also has crews dispatched with chain saws to quickly clear tracks of fallen trees and limbs.

#### **Department of Transportation**

- The New York State Department of Transportation has fully mobilized its crews and equipment and is prepared for the approaching storm.
- In addition, NYSDOT's Statewide Transportation Information Coordination Center is operational and ready to manage the storm response. NYSDOT's Transportation Management Centers are staffed to monitor conditions and will coordinate with first responders on clearing accidents and other incidents.
- NYSDOT has 1,346 plows, 300 loaders and 35 snowblowers to clear snow and ice from roadways, and will be deployed throughout the storm.
- NYSDOT has a total of 3,815 crew members ready to clear roads statewide; 1,746 operators will work on each 12-hour shift. NYSDOT will also have 100 mechanics available per shift.
- NYSDOT's salt barns are full and there is an abundance of supply to deal with the anticipated conditions. NYSDOT has a total of 433,886 tons of salt on hand statewide.
- NYSDOT has also moved extra crews to the Hudson Valley from Long Island to assist with the storm.

#### **Thruway Authority**

- The roadway is being pretreated from north of Interchange 15 through Canajoharie. South of Interchange 15 the forecast is to begin as rain so pretreatment is ineffective. West of Canajoharie sufficient salt residue remains on the pavement from light snow the past several days so additional pretreatment is not required.
- All equipment has been prepared for the storm including 96 7-ton snowplows, 52 front end loaders, 3 large truck mounted snow blowers and 1 large front end loader mounted blower.
- 117, 792 tons of salt on hand
- Approximately 600 maintenance staff dedicated to snow and ice operations
- All 21 Highway Maintenance Sections will be fully staffed around the clock for the duration of the storm.
- Thruway will be providing staff to support the activation of the State Office of Emergency Management
- Thruway's Emergency Operations Center will be activated at 4PM on 12/26/12
- Thruway's Statewide Operations Center will have additional staff to handle increased call volume typical of significant weather events.

#### **Port Authority of New York and New Jersey**

- Deploy extra personnel at all of its facilities and agency staff work around-the-clock in 12-hour shifts
- Employ extensive sandbagging at PATH entrances including Hoboken, throughout the WTC site and at our airports to protect against possible storm surges
- Additional pumps have been added at PATH stations, the World Trade Center site and at our airports
- Pumps and generators are in place and operational at the Holland and Lincoln Tunnels
- The Port Authority is prepared to deploy floodgates at Hoboken and Exchange Place PATH stations and bring rail cars to higher ground
- The airports, bridges, tunnels and PATH have winter weather desks where key personnel analyze weather reports and deploy staff and equipment
- As the storm approaches, the Port Authority strongly advises airline passengers to check with their carriers on the status of their flight. In the past, airlines have cancelled flights in advance of forecast storms. The agency strongly urges customers not to go to the airports unless they are certain that their flight will be departing
- Customer Care Representatives at Port Authority airports are preparing for irregular operations through vigorous training and experience dealing with previous storms. They are able to provide assistance with basic items (water, diapers and baby formula) for any passengers who may be stranded. Under the terms of the agency's concession contracts, at least one food vendor in every open passenger terminal must remain open 24 hours so that food is available any time of the day or night.

In the event of a snow/ice storm, the Port Authority has at its disposal:

- more than 200 pieces of snow and ice equipment at its airports, including melters that can liquefy up to 500 tons of snow an hour, and plows that can clear snow at 40 mph;
- approximately 60 pieces of snow equipment at the bridges and tunnels, including 28 trucks equipped with plows and spreaders at the George Washington Bridge, the world's busiest;
- more than 2,000 tons of salt and more than 1,500 tons of sand for airport roads and parking lots, plus more than 2,000 tons of salt for the bridges and tunnels;
- approximately 300,000 gallons of liquid anti-icer chemicals at the airports, which prevents snow and ice from bonding to runways and taxiways, plus approximately 1,700 tons of solid deicers, which break up ice and snow already on the ground;
- plow-equipped trains, liquid snow-melting agent trains and a "jet engine" plow to remove snow from tracks, and snow blowers, plows and spreaders to clear station entrances, roads that serve PATH's 13 stations, and various support facilities; and
- approximately 1,000 staff members and contractors with years of specialized training and professional experience in handling severe winter weather at transportation facilities.

For more information on winter storm safety and preparedness, visit [www.dhSES.ny.gov/oem](http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/oem).

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