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Press Release

January 26, 2016

[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

### Governor Declares State of Emergency for New York City, Long Island and Lower Hudson Valley as Winter Storm Hits Region

#### *MTA Bus Service in New York City Suspended at Noon; 1,800 Personnel Working to Maintain Subway Operability*

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today declared a state of emergency for New York City as well as Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Rockland, Orange and Putnam Counties as a major Nor'easter storm continues to move up the east coast and impact the region. In addition to the State of Emergency, MTA bus service will suspend operation in New York City at noon today, and remain suspended until further notice.

According to latest forecasts the storm is predicted to bring 18 to 24 inches of snow by Sunday. Heavy winds with speeds between 30 and 40 mph are expected, with gusts as high as 55 mph, contributing to whiteout conditions and power outages. Coastal flooding remains a concern along parts of Long Island.

The Governor's state of emergency declaration can be viewed [here](#).

"This is a major storm, and travel conditions throughout downstate New York are dangerous," said Governor Cuomo. "We are doing everything possible to keep the roads and mass transit operational, but unless there is an emergency people should not be traveling. We are responding aggressively as the storm develops and working hand-in-hand with our local partners to keep communities safe. I urge all New Yorkers to stay home, stay warm, and allow our emergency personnel to do their jobs."

#### SERVICE & CONDITION UPDATES

##### MTA

- Subways: Running normal weekend service currently, but curtailed service is a possibility as the storm develops, especially on outdoor lines.
- Buses: All local and express service suspending at noon today.
- LIRR: Running with 20-25 minute delays.
- Metro-North: Running close to schedule on the Harlem, Hudson and New Haven lines. The Pascack Valley and Port Jervis lines operated by NJ Transit are suspended.
- Bridges & Tunnels: Walkways are closed on the Robert F. Kennedy, Henry Hudson, Cross Bay and Marine Parkway bridges. The lower level of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge is closed.

Subway, bus and railroad customers should check the status of MTA services at [www.mta.info](http://www.mta.info) before starting their journeys to stay advised of changing conditions. Be extremely careful on station stairs and platforms and at bus stops, where snow and ice are accumulating.

##### Port Authority

- Airports: Virtually all flights have been cancelled at both LaGuardia and JFK Airports. Travelers should check with their carriers before heading to the airports.
- PATH: The PATH is currently running weekend service with delays.
- Bridges & Tunnels: All bridges and tunnels remain open. A 35 mph speed limit has been imposed on the Port Authority's bridges, with the exception of the three Staten Island bridges, which are 25 mph.
- Buses: Substantially all bus service today to and from the Port Authority Bus Terminal has been cancelled, except for Greyhound service northbound. Passengers should contact their carriers before traveling to the Terminal.

**Power:** The New York State Public Service Commission will extend Call Center Helpline hours. The Helpline will be available from 7:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Sunday and Monday to assist consumers in their storm preparation and restoration efforts. The Department of Public Service Call Center Helpline can be reached by calling 1-800-342-3377.

PSEG-Long Island has nearly 1,000 personnel on standby, 400 of whom have been deployed from out of the region to help out. Con-Ed also has nearly 650 personnel on standby. Public Service Commission staff will continue to monitor the utilities efforts throughout the storm and during the restoration period.

#### STATE RESOURCES DEPLOYED

Yesterday Governor Cuomo activated the state Emergency Operations Center in Albany, as well as Regional Operations Centers in both New York City

and Hauppauge to monitor the storm and coordinate resource deployment. The following agencies are represented:

- Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services,
- Office of Emergency Management,
- Office of Fire Prevention and Control,
- Department of Transportation,
- Department of Environmental Conservation,
- New York State Thruway Authority,
- State Police,
- Public Service Commission,
- Metropolitan Transportation Authority,
- Port Authority of NY and NJ and
- Division of Military and Naval Affairs

Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services: DHSES is coordinating resources allocations with state agencies and local governments, and has staged 195,000 sandbags at the Brentwood stockpile on Long Island and 5,000 sandbags at the JFK Airport stockpile in Queens.

**National Guard:** At the Governor's direction, the New York National Guard is prepared to deploy 600 personnel throughout the downstate region to provide emergency support. Approximately 300 are Joint Task Force Empire Shield Soldiers on duty in New York City this weekend.

**Metropolitan Transportation Authority:** Approximately 1,000 track workers are being deployed in addition to 800 station workers to keep stairs and platforms clear of snow. Third rail heaters and snow melting equipment have been deployed at critical points throughout the system to keep trains moving. In addition, 79 trains are placed into service with scraper shoes, which help reduce icing on the third rail, and 262,500 pounds of calcium chloride and 200,000 pounds of sand have been distributed to various locations within the subway system.

MTA Bridges and Tunnels has 9,180 tons of roadway deicer on hand and 100 pieces of snow fighting equipment in service and available for storm fighting operations at its seven bridges and two tunnels. Bridges also are equipped with embedded roadway sensors for temperature and above-ground atmospheric sensors that deliver real-time information on wind velocity, wind direction, humidity and precipitation via wireless communication.

MTA Long Island Rail Road has nine jet snow blowers, three cold air blowers and two large broom cars available to clear snow from tracks and third rails on active routes and in yards. The railroad may modify or suspend service in heavy snowfall, during ice storms and blizzards, or if sustained winds over 39 mph occur, especially if there are frozen switches or there is a loss of third rail power. Long Island Rail Road has four modified schedules for storm recovery.

MTA Metro-North Railroad has three jet snow blowers, six cold air blowers and two tractor blower-spreaders to clear snow from tracks and third rails, in addition to 70 pickup truck plows, five backhoes and other large equipment to clear snow from stations and other areas. Service could be curtailed or temporarily suspended depending on the impact of a storm. Storm recovery operations will include scrutinizing catenary wires for any impacts from high winds or fallen tree branches. Service options include reductions of service and temporary suspensions of service.

**Port Authority:** The Port Authority has more than 60 pieces of snow equipment at its bridges and tunnels, including nearly two dozen plows and spreaders at the George Washington Bridge, thousands of tons of salt for the bridges and tunnels; and plow-equipped trains, liquid snow-melting agent trains and a "jet engine" plow to remove snow from PATH tracks, and snow blowers, plows and spreaders to clear station entrances, roads that serve PATH's 13 stations, and various support facilities.

**Thruway Authority & Department of Transportation:** At the Governor's direction, personnel and equipment from Upstate facilities have been redeployed to impacted communities downstate. Between the Thruway Authority and state Department of Transportation, there are more than 1,300 personnel operating and supporting nearly 500 large plows and dump trucks, nearly 100 medium plows and dump trucks, and more than 150,000 tons of road salt.

**State Police & Department of Environmental Conservation:** The New York State Police has 38 4x4/ATV vehicles operational on Long Island and additional assets are available if needed. Ten boats will be provided and staffed by DEC and the State Police to support coastal communities in the event of severe flooding. State Police regional troop commanders in the affected region are actively identifying resources and staffing patterns are in place to best respond to the storm. All State Police emergency power and communications equipment in the region has been tested. Additionally, troop emergency management personnel have been pre-designated to staff county emergency operations centers.

A number of important safety tips are included below.

#### Act Now To Be Prepared for Coastal Flooding

- Develop and practice a 'family escape' plan and identify a meeting place if family members become separated.
- Make an itemized list of all valuables including furnishings, clothing and other personal property. Keep the list in a safe place.
- Stockpile emergency supplies of canned food, medicine and first aid supplies and drinking water. Store drinking water in clean, closed containers.
- Plan what to do with your pets.
- Have a portable radio, flashlights, extra batteries and emergency cooking equipment available.
- Keep your automobile fueled. If electric power is cut off, gasoline stations may not be able to pump fuel for several days. Have a small disaster supply kit in the trunk of your car.
- Find out how many feet your property is above and below possible flood levels. When predicted flood levels are broadcast, you can determine if you may be flooded.
- Keep materials like sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting and lumber handy for emergency water-proofing.

#### Safe Travel

It is important for motorists on all roads to note that snowplows travel at speeds up to 35 miles per hour, which in many cases is lower than the posted speed limit, to ensure that salt being dispersed stays in the driving lanes and does not scatter off the roadways. Oftentimes on interstate highways, snowplows will operate side by side, as this is the most efficient and safe way to clear several lanes at one time.

Motorists and pedestrians should also keep in mind that snowplow drivers have limited lines of sight, and the size and weight of snowplows can make it very difficult to maneuver and stop quickly. Snow blowing from behind the plow can severely reduce visibility or cause whiteout conditions. Motorists should not attempt to pass snowplows or follow too closely. The safest place for motorists to drive is well behind the snowplows where the roadway is clear and salted.

**Some of the most important tips for safe winter driving include:**

- When winter storms strike, do not drive unless necessary.
- If you must travel, make sure your car is stocked with survival gear like blankets, a shovel, flashlight and extra batteries, extra warm clothing, set of tire chains, battery booster cables, quick energy foods and brightly-colored cloth to use as a distress flag.
- Keep your gas tank full to prevent gasoline freeze-up.
- If you have a cell phone or two-way radio available for your use, keep the battery charged and keep it with you whenever traveling. If you should become stranded, you will be able to call for help, advising rescuers of your location.
- Make sure someone knows your travel plans.

**Winterize Your Vehicle**

Preparing your vehicle for the winter season now will help ensure your vehicle is in good working order when you need it most

- Have a mechanic check the following items on your vehicle:

o Battery

o Wipers and windshield washer fluid

o Antifreeze

o Ignition system

o Thermostat

o Lights

o Exhaust system

o Flashing hazard lights

o Heater

o Brakes

o Defroster

o Oil level

- Install good winter tires. Make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions. You may also want to carry a set of tire chains in your vehicle for heavy snow conditions.
- Keep a windshield scraper and small broom for ice and snow removal and maintain at least a half tank of gas throughout the winter season.
- Finally, plan long trips carefully. Listen to the local media report or call law enforcement agencies for the latest road conditions.

**Drive Safely**

The leading cause of death and injuries during winter storms is transportation accidents. Before getting behind the wheel this winter season, every driver could learn a lesson from our school bus drivers. It is elementary, but we have to keep our vehicles clear of ice and snow. Good vision is a key to good driving. Plan your stops and keep more distance between cars. Be extra alert. Remember, snowdrifts can hide smaller children. Moreover, always match your speed to the road and weather conditions.

**If trapped in a Car**

If a blizzard traps you on the road in your car:

- Stay in your car and wait for help to find you.
- Run your engine for short periods of time to stay warm. Keep your down-wind window open and make sure your exhaust pipe is clear of snow.
- Turn on the dome light at night when you are running the engine to signal rescuers.

- Hang a brightly colored piece of cloth or piece of clothing from your car. Exercise from time to time by vigorously moving arms, legs, fingers and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.