

CITY OF PLAINFIELD

OFFICE
OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



NEW JERSEY

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HURRICANE IRENE STATUS REPORT

August 29, 2011

The Plainfield Office of Emergency Management would like to provide you with our actions and on-going efforts to respond to the needs of our community and the recovery process of this event. The following outlines steps taken by our agency to prepare, mitigate, respond and recover due to Hurricane Irene.

- 1000 hours on 8/25/11, OEM held a planning meeting with pertinent city agencies in preparation of the pending storm.
- 1730 hours on 8/27/11, Plainfield Emergency Operations Center was activated with representatives from OEM, Fire, Police, EMS, & DPW. The EOC was de-activated at 1800 hours on 8/28/11. PMUA representatives were present on 8/28/11.
- Reception Centers opened to the public at 2000 hours on 8/27/11 at three locations; Emerson and Washington Schools and the Senior Center. The centers provided temporary shelter for a total of 97 residents during the event = 67 adults and 30 children. Centers were closed at 1630 hours on 8/28/11.
- Fire and Police units responded to several hundred calls over the course of the incident. Over 100 trapped victims were safely removed from harm's way due to flooding, building collapse, wires down on vehicles or other hazardous condition. Many of these victims were then transported to our Reception Centers. Plainfield Fire assisted North Plainfield with 2 water rescues during the height of the event and covered their town while they operated at an electrical fire in a nursing home. Plainfield Fire also handled a structure fire at an Orange Pl. apartment building just prior to the storms arrival. Police units dealt with numerous traffic incidents as well as downed traffic signals do to power outages. Police also assisted Fire with victim removals utilizing their 2 ½ ton military surplus vehicle.
- DPW worked in conjunction with Police and Fire personnel to effectively rescue trapped victims utilizing their front-end loader. They also worked to keep roads passable for emergency vehicles. This effort was hampered by

power lines entangled in the fallen trees which left them at the mercy of PSE&G crews. All street drains were cleared prior to the storm as a preemptive measure to improve water drainage however the amount of rainfall overwhelmed the system. Flooded areas are subsiding and the reports from our weather bureaus stated that Area Rivers and streams would crest today. DPW continues to clear roadways and fallen City trees in an expeditious manner.

- Information Technology continues to provide updates to community stakeholders through several versions of media and plans to maintain the phone messaging updates during future events as needed. They also made phone bridging available to key emergency responders and city officials and established a multi-agency communications system to utilize during the storm. They also took video and photography footage of the event which will be posted for public viewing in the future.
- EMS staffed and operated 3 BLS units from our 3 fire stations and responded as directed from our EOC. Several residents were transported during the height of the event, with some being taken as far as Rahway Hospital. All medical calls were prioritized and addressed in a timely manner and coordinated through Plainfield's EOC.
- Our Plainfield School District made staff available at their reception centers and provided school buses and drivers for evacuation transports. These buses were utilized in the evacuation of endangered residents of an apartment complex on Randolph Road and several other incidents around within the community. The District also assisted with light refreshments and water for our evacuees.
- Division of Inspections are currently conducting Damage Assessments of city property and documenting areas of flooding. They are also charting downed trees in an effort to assist DPW's efforts. This documentation will be utilized to provide data for future filings with FEMA for federal funding. **It must be noted that FEMA has not yet approved any federal funds for Hurricane Irene.** If and when a federal declaration has been signed, the media will release the necessary information on how to apply for the funding along with state, county and local OEM representatives. The President's declaration was for the movement of resources into New Jersey, not funding.
- PMUA continues to work closely with our DPW to remove vegetative debris and has promised to respond to resident requests for bulk pick-ups within 24 hours of contacting their offices. They have further promised to work with all residents including those who have had 2 bulk waste removals this year. PMUA provided oversized dumpsters to our DPW in order to expedite our tree removal operations. It should be noted that several regional dump sites utilized by the PMUA are currently closed due to the storm's flood waters.
- Central Dispatchers remained calm and operated with the greatest of efficiency in some of the most trying conditions imaginable. They were instrumental in the translation of a trapped flood victims cry for help from

an overturned vehicle in Springfield, NJ. We received the call via the 9-1-1 system after Springfield's system failed. They handled nearly a thousand calls during the event with calm demeanors and professionalism.

Residents should be advised that, the County of Union officially rescinded its "State of Emergency" proclamation and in effect lifted its ban on all non-emergency travel effective August 28, 2011 at 8pm.

Residents should be cognoscente of our continuing cleanup efforts of downed trees and power lines. We are working with PSE&G to restore power as promptly and safely as possible. Several apartment complexes along our East Front Street corridor have had power restored. Our conversations with PSE&G representatives also lead us to believe areas in and around the Randolph Road and Park Avenue sections will be online very shortly.

Residents with flooded basements that include major appliances should have their utilities terminated until such time as these items have been inspected by trained professional.

The Plainfield Office of Emergency Management will continue to work diligently until the conclusion of our recovery period. We hope that this information provides some insight into the depth and intricacies of this operation. As always comments and suggestions for improvement are welcome.

Respectfully Submitted,

Broderick J. Fleming, Deputy Fire Chief
Deputy Coordinator of Emergency Management