

Emergency Planning and Evacuations for Residential Building Owners/Managers

Building Emergencies and Evacuations

Building owners and managers are encouraged to consider and address emergency preparedness issues with building residents, as well as building staff. This includes the following key elements:

- **The New York City Fire Code requires that all owners of apartment buildings prepare and distribute a fire and non-fire emergency preparedness guide and post certain notices.** The guides provide detailed information to residents and reference websites that contain additional information and can be found at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/fdny/downloads/pdf/business/plan-review-fire-safety-guide-fire-safety-notice.pdf>
- **Residents with disabilities or with access and functional needs should advise building owners about any policy consideration they may need in an emergency situation;** for example, if they need to be informed if elevators are to be taken out of service. Owners/managers should be prepared to address these requests. Building residents with disabilities or with access or functional needs are also encouraged to develop their own plan and support network in the event of a building evacuation. In a fire (the most likely circumstance in which immediate evacuation may be required), building staff (will also be required to evacuate) and may not be in close proximity and(or) able to provide assistance to all building residents. Evacuation plans should consider not only disruption to elevator service, but also the impact of prolonged power and water outages. Building residents should also inform the building management if they have a particular need—especially if they use a wheelchair or other mobility device in a high-rise building or are unable to hear alarms. Evacuation devices are an option, especially for prolonged outages although individualized planning is required. Points to consider regarding these devices can be found on the Emergency Preparedness Resources page of the Mayor’s Office for Persons with Disabilities website at [www.nyc.gov\MOPD](http://www.nyc.gov/MOPD).
- **Clear communication between owners and occupants will enhance the safety of all building residents and staff during an emergency.** Owners/managers should evaluate their capability to communicate critical information to all building occupants through the use of building systems (such as intercoms and fire alarm systems), email or text messaging. Building staff (if any) and building owner/managers need to be able to reliably communicate with each other as well. Consideration should be given to establishing alternative means of communication in the event of a power outage or other disruption of regular telephone communications. Owners should also include an accurate 24-hour confidential phone number when registering their building with HPD so they can reach you with important information during an emergency. Owners are required to post a temporary notice with emergency information in the common area of the building prior to an expected weather emergency, after a natural disaster, and after being informed that a utility outage will last for more than 24 hours. Owners should also consider posting the notices on each floor or messaging residents directly. You can obtain a sample of the notice on HPD’s website at www.nyc.gov/hpd
- **Building owner/managers and/or building staff should monitor emergency notification systems** operated by the New York City Department of Emergency Management, the New York City Police Department, and/or private notification systems to stay informed about emergencies that may affect their building(s). This will allow building owners an opportunity to take whatever

actions may be appropriate to protect their residents and safeguard their property.

- **Elevator Notifications:** Owners and managers should communicate their building's elevator policy to residents, particularly those reliant on elevators in advance of an emergency. Owners are encouraged to keep elevators in use as long as possible and not take them out of service until just prior to landfall of a storm or an evacuation.
- **Building owners/managers should review the Fire Department's NYC Apartment Building Emergency Preparedness Guide (and other public and private resources) and consider how their building staff should respond to each type of emergency addressed in the guide.** Written protocols can assist to remind on-premises staff of what actions or notifications to take in the event of an emergency, including appropriate communications to 911, owners/managers and building residents. Building staff should be trained to facilitate the response of EMS and other first responders to a medical emergency in the building, (such as recalling or holding an elevator, advising first responders and escorting the first responders to a building residents needing assistance). Building owners/managers are encouraged to check on building residents who have identified themselves in advance as requiring assistance, before and after an emergency event to see they are in need of assistance.
- Building owners/managers should provide emergency preparedness information on the same schedule as the fire and emergency preparedness guide required by the Fire Department including at the time of lease signing. Periodically conducting emergency preparedness training in the building(s) is also recommended. Planning materials are available at <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/em/ready/guides-resources.page> and hard copies are available free of charge.