



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

## Sandy's Aftermath Resource Page: What to Expect

DANIEL L. SQUADRON November 3, 2012

*Please note that information on this page will be continually updated.*

I hope that you and your family are safe in the aftermath of the storm.

It's going to be days and weeks until things are back to normal in parts of our city. In the meantime, it's important to stay safe and make sure you're prepared for the possibility of extended power outages, vastly reduced transit services, and overtaxed city services.

If you or someone you know -- especially the elderly or medically-vulnerable -- is in the 25th Senate District without power or heat and stuck in a building in need of assistance -- and it's not an emergency -- please contact my office (squadron@nysenate.gov). If you are without water in your building, please also let me know. For emergencies, call 911.

### **If your home or business sustained damage, or you require legal assistance:**

- We've organized Post-Sandy Disaster Assistance Pop Up Sites that include FEMA and U.S. Small Business Administration representatives throughout the district. [Please click here](#) to view the locations and hours; additional sites will be continually added.
- The State has set up an Emergency Assistance Hotline: 1-855-NYS-SANDY (1-855-697-7263).
- FEMA Disaster Assistance:
  - Please register with FEMA [here](#), via phone at 1-800-621-FEMA(3362) (with language assistance), or via mobile website at [m.fema.gov](http://m.fema.gov).
  - FEMA has recorded audio messages in a variety of languages explaining the application process. Click play on the video screen to listen: [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Chinese](#), [Hebrew](#), [Arabic](#), [Haitian](#), [Korean](#), [Russian](#), [Tagalog](#).
  - FEMA has posted a useful FAQ on what disaster assistance can and cannot cover [here](#).

- Home owners and renters, as well as businesses and non-profits, can apply for a disaster loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration [here](#) or in person at any Disaster Recovery Center. Call 1-800-659-2955 or email [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov) to find your nearest location. The deadline to apply is December 31, 2012.
  
- Additional info for businesses and non-profits:
  - As a first steps:
    - Register with FEMA (info above).
    - The U.S. Small Business Administration has opened a Business Recovery Center, open weekdays from 9AM to 5PM and Saturdays from 10AM to 2PM: 79 John Street, 2nd Floor, Lower Manhattan. A complete list of centers in NY is available [here](#).
    - NYC Small Business Services is providing on-site assistance for local businesses. Submit a request [here](#) or call 311 and ask for NYC Business Solutions.
  
  - Loans:
    - The NY Business Development Corporation and NYC Small Business Services have teamed up with Goldman Sachs to provide NYC businesses with loans of up to \$25,000. Loans are interest-free for the first six months and 1% interest for the following 24 months. An application is available [here](#).
    - The U.S. Small Business Administration is offering loans of up to \$2 million for businesses and private non-profits. The interest rate is 4% and the deadline to apply is December 31, 2012. More information [here](#).
    - A side-by-side comparison of these two loan programs is available [here](#).
  
  - Tax Exemption:
    - The NYC Industrial Development Agency's Hurricane Emergency Sales Tax Exemption Program (HESTEP) will provide exemptions of up to \$100,000 for each affected business on purchases of building, construction and renovation materials, machinery and equipment, and other items and services needed to rebuild. Fill out the [application](#) and mail it to [HESTEP@nycedc.com](mailto:HESTEP@nycedc.com).
  
  - Connecting Needs & Resources:
    - The NYC Economic Development Corporation has set up a program that allows businesses to donate their space, power, internet, and professional services to businesses in need. A list of free temporary workspaces is

available [here](#).

- If you're able to donate resources to businesses in need, [please fill out this form](#).

- Work Interruptions:

- The NY State Dept. of Labor's Shared Work Program provides an alternative to laying off full-time employees. You can reduce the number of hours all employees or a group of employees work, and they can receive Shared Work Benefits. Apply by calling 518-457-2635 or by visiting a [One-Stop Career Center](#).
- See below for addition info on Disaster Unemployment Assistance.

- More information on these programs and more at [www.nyc.gov/businessservices](http://www.nyc.gov/businessservices) or <http://www.nycedc.com/backtobusiness>

- The New York Council for the Humanities is offering grants of up to \$1000 for tax-exempt cultural groups who serve the public and whose buildings or collections were damaged by the storm. More info [here](#).

- If you are unemployed as a result of Sandy:

- Submit a claim to the NY Dept. of Labor in order to apply for federal disaster unemployment assistance (DUA). The deadline is now February 4, 2013. Claimants now have up to 90 days to submit proof of employment or self-employment and will be provided an IRS link to expedite the retrieval of lost or destroyed documents. To apply call the NY State Dept. of Labor at 1-888-209-8124. More information is available [here](#).
- The U.S. Dept. of Labor awarded NY grant funds to hire workers to assist in storm cleanup. You must have been unemployed prior to or as a direct result of Hurricane Sandy to apply. The preliminary application is [here](#).

- Legal Assistance:

- Legal Services NYC offers pro bono assistance in FEMA applications, emergency benefits, employment, housing, foreclosure prevention, economic recovery, and other issues via its hotline at 347-592-2411 (open 10AM to 3PM).
- MFY Legal Services is offering free walk-in legal clinics Wednesday, November 14th through Friday, November 16th from 11AM to 1PM at 299 Broadway in Manhattan. More info [here](#).
- The New York City Bar has compiled important legal information for New Yorkers impacted by Sandy in a useful handbook, available [here](#).

- Hazardous Waste:
  - The EPA and the NYC Dept. of Sanitation are collecting and disposing of potentially hazardous waste from homes damaged by Sandy. More info [here](#).
- Make sure to photo-document damage to your home or business before beginning clean-up.

**If you are a NYCHA resident:**

- NYCHA will issue rent abatements for residents in developments that were severely impacted by Sandy and were without essential services (electricity, elevators, heat, water). A list of the developments that qualify is available [here](#). More information on the abatements is available [here](#).
- NYCHA has announced a moratorium on housing court actions and evictions from November 15th until February 1st for residents living in developments impacted by Sandy. More information on the moratorium is available [here](#).

**If you're without heat or power:**

- ConEd has restored power and steam to most of Manhattan. However, some buildings that experienced flooding or were damaged during the storm are still without power, heat, or hot water. I am working with the City and State to distribute blankets and push for heaters and other solutions ASAP. If things are dire, [there are warming centers and shelters around the city](#). In addition to daytime shelters, [the City has opened overnight warming shelters](#) -- if you need transportation or more information please let me know.
- Many residents of Knickerbocker Village on the Lower East Side are still without power, heat, and hot water. We worked with FEMA and the City to set up a 24-hour heated comfort center outside Knickerbocker Village at Tanahey Playground. We also secured a supplementary team of electrical engineers to support the repairs necessary for Knickerbocker to regain power.
- Report power outages on [ConEd's website](#) or by calling 1-800-752-6633, and check out [ConEd's outage map](#) for restoration updates.
- Keep in mind that even if power is back on in your area, building damage or flooding may prevent it from coming on in your building until repairs are made by your building's owner.
- If your building does not have running water, please contact my office immediately: [squadron@nysenate.gov](mailto:squadron@nysenate.gov).

- If you or someone you know -- especially the elderly or medically-vulnerable -- is in the 25th Senate District without power or heat and stuck in a building in need of assistance -- and it's not an emergency -- please contact my office ([squadron@nysenate.gov](mailto:squadron@nysenate.gov)).
- My Chinese language hotline - 917-254-3138 - is also open.

### **If you need to travel:**

- Almost all MTA bus routes have resumed service. The MTA has also resumed service on most subway lines, but a few remain suspended. Stay tuned to [mta.info](http://mta.info) for updates.
- The East River Ferry is running modified service: a northern loop between North Williamsburg, Long Island City, and East 34th Street (ferries at each stop every 15 minutes) and a southern loop between North Williamsburg, DUMBO/Brooklyn Bridge Park, and Wall Street/Pier 11 (ferries at each stop every 30 minutes).
- The Staten Island Ferry is running every 30 minutes as of 12PM Friday.
- Most bridges are now open.
- Check out [WNYC's Transit Tracker](#) for up-to-date info on all transportation, including ferries, bridges & tunnels, buses, and trains.

### **If your children attend NYC public schools:**

- Students will return to NYC public schools on Monday, November 5. [Click here to check on the status of specific schools.](#)
- Schools in Lower Manhattan and Governors Island that were damaged by flooding have now all reopened.

### **If you are wondering where to vote on Election Day (Tuesday, November 6):**

- Some poll sites have changed due to the storm. You can [input your address here to find your poll site and view a sample ballot](#), or text "NYCVOTES" to 877-877 (text "DONDE" for Spanish). [You can also view specific poll site changes here.](#)
- The Governor also just signed an executive order allowing affidavit voting: if you have been displaced as a result of the storm, you can go to any polling place, sign an affidavit, and vote. Keep in mind that if you vote by affidavit outside your district, you cannot vote in your district-specific races.

**If you have other needs:**

- Please reach out to 311. Phone wait times are long so [online](#) or text (311692) is your best bet.
- Unless it's a real emergency, please do not call 911, which has been overloaded.

**If you want to volunteer:**

- Email [squadronvolunteer@gmail.com](mailto:squadronvolunteer@gmail.com) if you want to be notified about in-district opportunities to volunteer.
- Email [nycservice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:nycservice@cityhall.nyc.gov) with your name, email address, and borough to volunteer, or visit [www.nycservice.org](http://www.nycservice.org).
- [Check out this page](#) for a full list of volunteer and donation opportunities around the city.

**Please keep these things in mind:**

- Downed and potentially-downed wires and trees remain dangerous.
- Please check in on elderly and other neighbors who might need a hand.
- The Department of Buildings is inspecting buildings in hard-hit Zone A areas to assess their structural integrity. There are three areas where these inspections are happening: Lower Manhattan, Staten Island, and the Rockaways. Buildings will be tagged with one of three color placards to indicate their safety: Green (the building is safe to enter), Red (the building is not safe and may not be entered), or Yellow (it can be occupied conditionally - i.e. one floor may be safe while another is not). These conditions will be explained on the placard. Building owners can also self-certify with the Department of Buildings.
- The Dept. of Sanitation resumed regularly-scheduled trash pick-up on Wednesday, October 31st. Regular recycling pick up resumed on Sunday, November 11.
- If you live near the Gowanus Canal, [click here](#) for information from the EPA on safely cleaning up in the storm's aftermath. The results of the EPA's post-storm sampling of the area's surrounding the Gowanus are available [here](#).

As always, you can follow me on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for more frequent updates. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if I can be helpful.