



# NEWS FROM NOAA

## NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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### NOAA RECOGNIZES NEW YORK CITY AS STORMREADY

Officials from NOAA's National Weather Service today praised New York City, America's cultural and financial capital and home to more than eight million people, for completing a set of rigorous warning criteria necessary to earn the distinction of being StormReady.

"The StormReady program is helping to create hazard resilient communities throughout America. The New York City Office of Emergency Management has worked long and hard with its partners to prepare New York City for all hazards, including severe weather, making this city one of the shining examples of a truly hazard resilient community," said Dean Gulezian, director of NOAA's National Weather Service eastern region.

StormReady is a nationwide community preparedness program that uses a grassroots approach to help communities develop plans to handle local severe weather and flooding threats. The program is voluntary and provides communities with clear-cut advice from a partnership between local National Weather Service forecast offices and state and local emergency managers. StormReady started in 1999 with seven communities in the Tulsa, Okla., area. There are now more than 1,100 StormReady communities across the country.

With its ongoing "Ready New York" campaign, the city has been educating millions of New Yorkers to all hazards, including weather, a key requirement of the StormReady program. During the past year, the Office of Emergency Management led a series of 82 presentations in the five boroughs of New York City. "Household Preparedness" guides, "Beat the Heat" and "Hurricanes and New York City" brochures were printed in nine different languages and distributed, and are now incorporated in their Web site. Working together with their partners at the National Weather Service and the American Red Cross, the city has made sure New Yorkers know what a "Go Bag" is (a collection of items you may need in the event of an evacuation) and understand the importance of evacuating their homes when requested by authorities.

"New York City is proud to be the recipient of the StormReady designation," said Office of Emergency Management commissioner Joseph F. Bruno. "We take natural hazards very seriously, and are committed to preparing city government and the public for all of the hazards that Mother Nature can bring."

"New York City has been ravaged by excessively snowy winters with more than 40 inches of snow in each of the last four years," said Michael Wyllie, meteorologist-in-charge at the National Weather Service forecast office in Upton, N.Y. "This is an unprecedented record. Last February, a blizzard deposited an all-time 24 hour record of 26.9 inches of snow at Central Park."

"New York City's Office of Emergency Management has already exhibited the essential elements of being StormReady," Wyllie added. "They implemented their Winter Weather Plan,

kept millions of people safe, cleared huge mounds of snow, and in the end allowed schools and businesses to open and operate less than 24 hours after the last flake fell. StormReady arms communities with improved communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property – before and during the event.”

At the New York City recognition ceremony today, Gulezian and Wyllie presented a recognition letter and special StormReady signs to the New York City Office of Emergency Management officials. The StormReady recognition will be in effect for three years when the city will go through a renewal process.

“Every year, around 500 Americans lose their lives to severe weather and floods,” said Brig. Gen. David L. Johnson, USAF (Ret.), director of NOAA’s National Weather Service. “More than 10,000 severe thunderstorms, 2,500 floods and 1,000 tornadoes impact the United States annually, and hurricanes are a threat to the Gulf and East coasts. Potentially deadly weather can affect every person in the country. That’s why NOAA’s National Weather Service developed the StormReady program.”

To be recognized as StormReady, a community must:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center;
- Have more than one way to receive severe weather forecasts and warnings and to alert the public;
- Create a system that monitors local weather conditions;
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars;
- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

“The United States is the most severe weather prone region of the world. The mission of the National Weather Service is to reduce the loss of life and property from these storms, and StormReady will help us create better prepared communities throughout the country,” said Johnson. “Just like communities, families need to be storm ready by having an action plan for severe weather. Through StormReady, the National Weather Service plans to educate every American about what to do when severe weather strikes because it is ultimately each individual’s responsibility to protect himself or herself.”

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation in 2007. Starting with the establishment of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson much of America’s scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

The agency is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation’s coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA’s National Weather Service: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov>

StormReady sign and program information: <http://www.stormready.noaa.gov>

National Weather Service in Upton NY: <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/okx>

NYC Office of Emergency Management “Ready New York”:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/ready/ready.shtml>