



Opportunity Knocks

Emergency Planning & Outreach in Residential Buildings

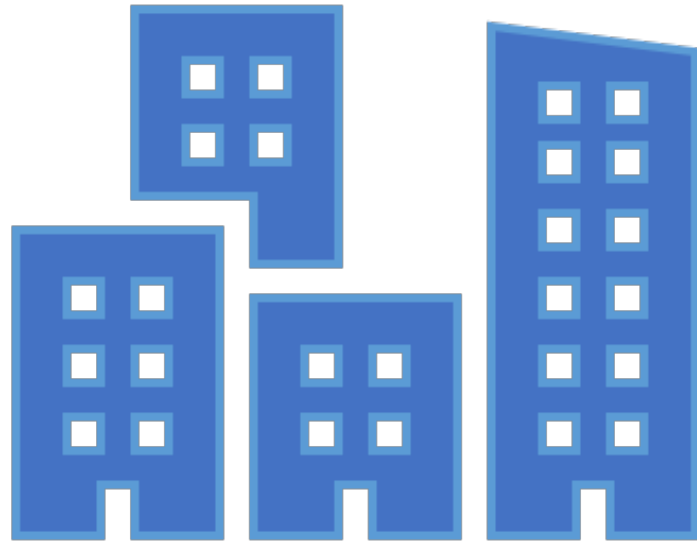
Presenters:

- Kathryn Dyjak, *Advisor NYC Emergency Management (NYCEM)*
- Julian Bazel, *Fire Code Counsel, NYC Fire Department (FDNY)*
- Jessica Bouchard, *Director of Emergency Preparedness, NYC Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)*
- David Starr, *Assistant Commissioner, Emergency Field Operations, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)*


August 11, 2021



WHY RESIDENTIAL EMERGENCY PLANNING IS SO IMPORTANT



- Generally, residential buildings have fewer staff on-site than commercial buildings and different emergency protocols
- Living in buildings with elevators requires additional planning so people aren't left stuck in their apartments for days
- Emergencies don't only happen during business hours
- Building planning goes beyond just fire safety to other emergencies
- Growing concern over isolated individuals.
 - Some 18 % of adults age 65 and older in the U.S. live alone and this is expected to double between 2012 and 2050
- Not everyone has ties to service providers or even their neighbors

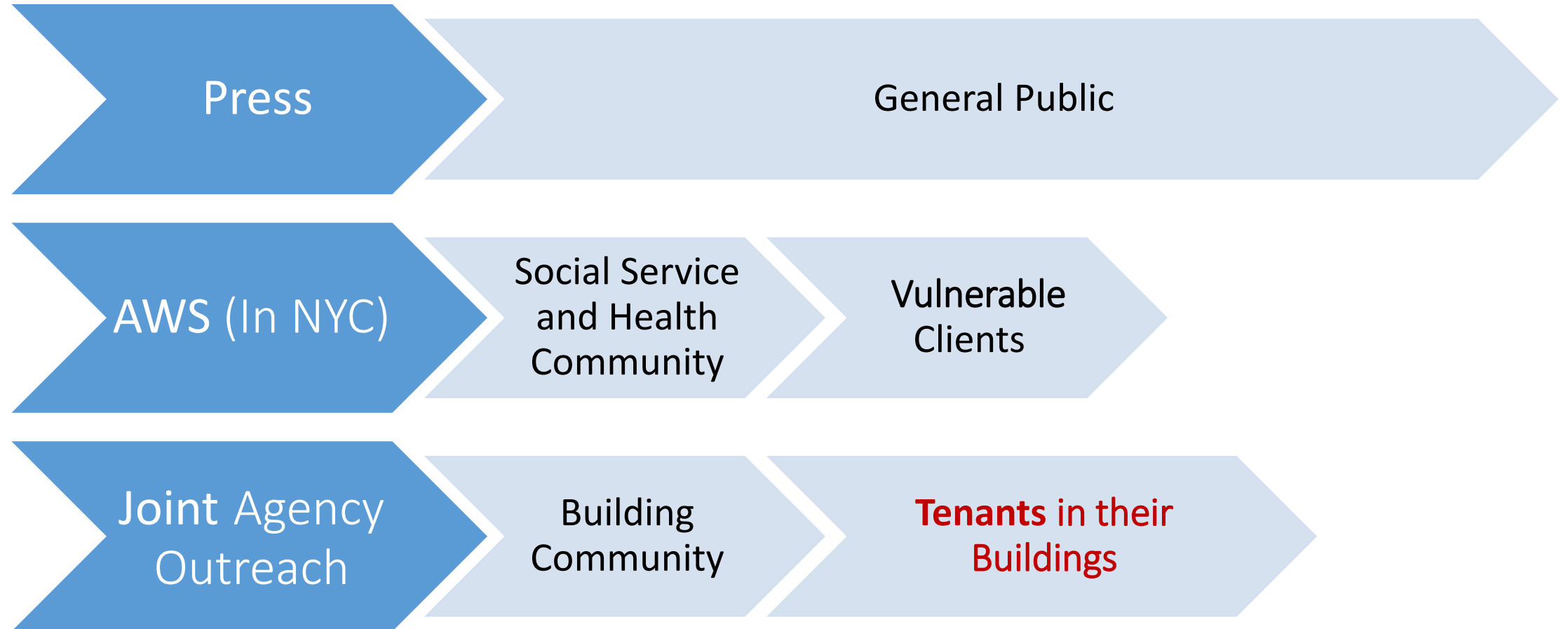


What we mean by residential building:

- Owned or managed privately or publicly with multiple units
- May also include a social service presence, usually during business hours
- All residential but with special attention on buildings where residents are predominately senior citizens, have a disability, or have a barrier that could make them particularly vulnerable during emergencies

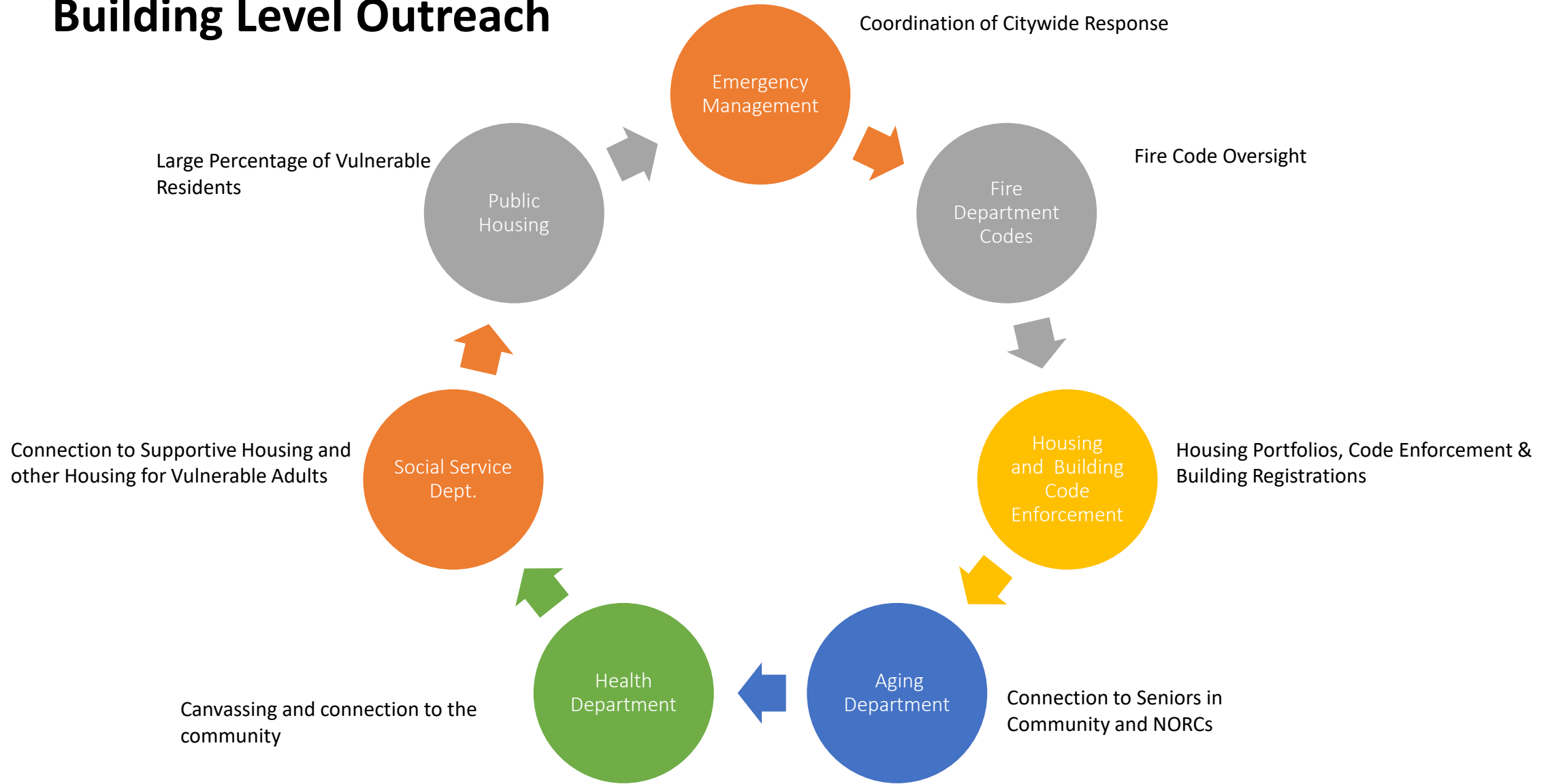
Examples: *public housing, supportive housing, NORCs (naturally occurring retirement communities), HUD Section 202 Housing, apartments, condos, and COOP buildings*

Focus Today is on Tenants



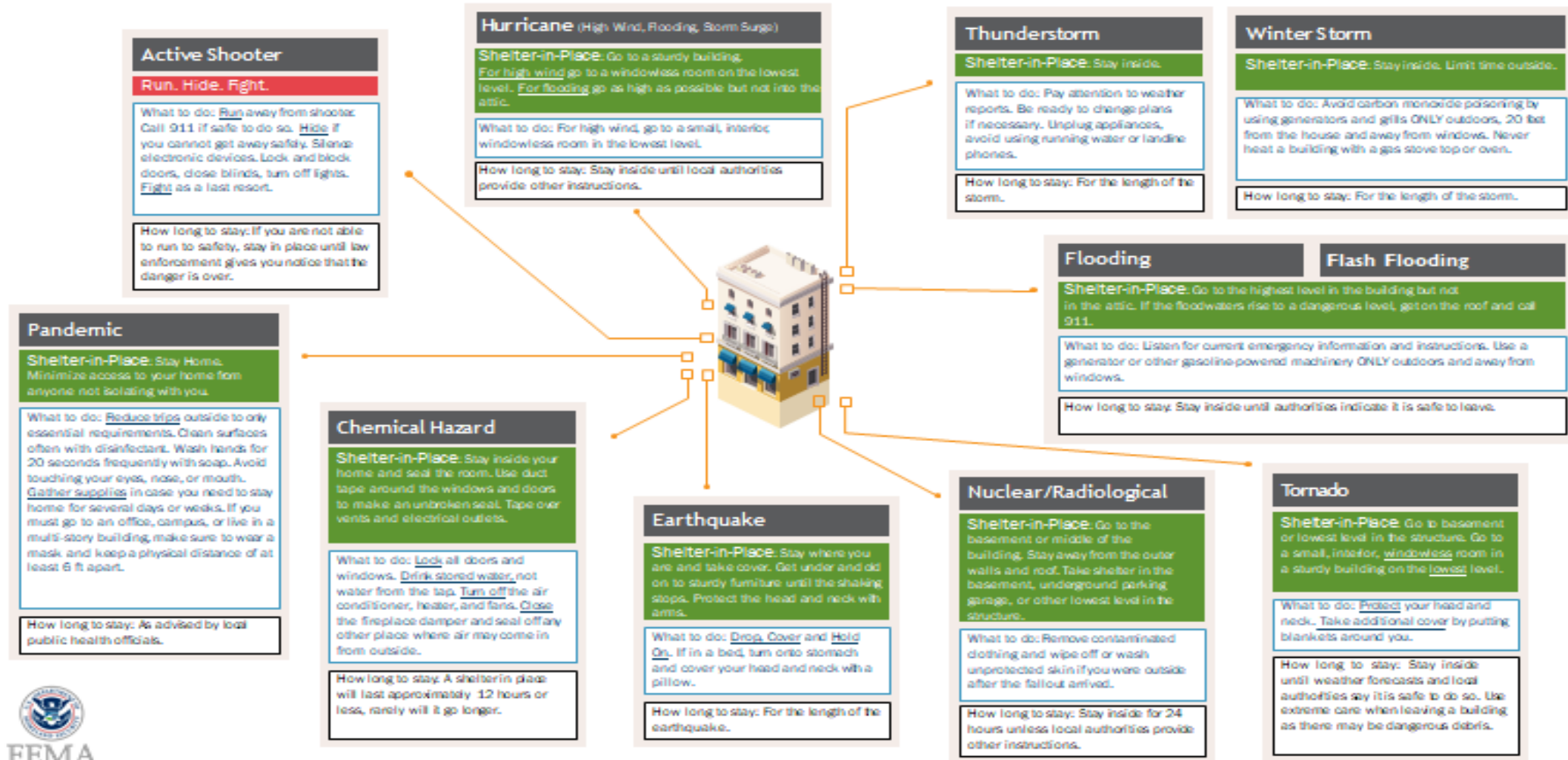


Building Level Outreach




Shelter-in-Place for Multistory Buildings

Includes condos, apartments, offices, and schools



How far could your message go if **ALL** the apartment buildings in your city shared it with ALL of their residents?





Breaking the Code (Fire and Building!)

How are changes made to codes?

- In New York City, Fire Code amendments are adopted by local law, detailed requirements implemented by agency-promulgated rule, and guidance and informational materials posted on FDNY website.
- New York City is part of International Code Council model code process, a national discussion addressing new code standards and technologies.

What changes can you make?

- Expand emergency planning mandates from fire to all hazards (medical emergencies, active shooters, coastal storms, heat waves and other weather emergencies, explosions, hazardous material releases, etc.)
- Require distribution of emergency planning guides and informational materials to building residents and staff, including building-specific information about building egress and fire safety features.
- Encourage owner/resident communications so that there are common expectations and if services are to be provided, responsibility is assumed and assigned.
- Allow/encourage use of email and other forms of communication between owners and tenants for emergency notifications and emergency preparedness
- Require posting of evacuation zone information and weather emergency notices



New York City Model

NYC Fire Code (Chapter 4, Emergency Planning and Preparedness) and other local laws

Requires owners of apartment building (Group R-2 occupancies) to prepare and distribute to the approximately 2.9 million apartments in New York City:

- ✓ *NYC Apartment Building Emergency Preparedness Guide to all residents at lease signing and once every 3 years. Include with Guide:*
 - *Building Information Section (1 page form completed with building-specific information)*
 - *NYC Apartment Building Individual Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Planning Checklist*

- ✓ *Annual Fire and Emergency Preparedness Bulletin (opportunity to share current lessons learned and fire safety reminders) – posted on FDNY use in Guide off-years for owner distribution*

Post required signs and notices:

- ✓ *Fire Safety Notice on the inside of all apartment doors*
- ✓ *Copy of Fire Safety Notice and Building Information Section in building lobby/common area*
- ✓ *“Close the Door” signs on stairwell entrances to reinforce the message when escaping from a fire*
- ✓ *Gas Leak Notice in the common area of the building.*
- ✓ *A temporary notice in at least the building lobby with emergency information prior to a weather emergency, after a natural disaster, and when a utility outage will last over 24 hours*
- ✓ *Hurricane evacuation zone notice in lobby with 311/website contact information.*

In a Fire, Close All Doors Behind You!
Keep Fire and Smoke Out of Building Hallways and Stairs.

Keep Apartment and Stairwell Doors Closed at All Other Times.
Protect Your Neighbors and Your Home!



NYC Admin Code §15-135

In a Fire, Close All Doors Behind You!
Keep Fire and Smoke Out of Building Hallways and Stairs.

Keep Apartment and Stairwell Doors Closed at All Other Times.
Protect Your Neighbors and Your Home!



NYC Admin Code §15-135

NYC Apartment Building Emergency Preparedness Guide

Emergency Preparedness Basics	People Who Need Assistance	Readiness Supplies	Home Safety and Fire Prevention	Know Your Building	What to Do In A Fire or Non-Fire Emergency	Emergency Preparedness Resources
-------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------	---------------------------------	--------------------	--	----------------------------------

**Promoting Emergency Planning and Preparedness in
Apartment Buildings**





Apartment Emergency Evacuation Checklist

BENEFITS:

- Added by local law seeking to address planning needs of persons with disabilities in particular
- Highlights key information from Guide and Building Information Sheet
- Encourages making own plan in consultation with building staff
- Encourages subscribing to NotifyNYC alerts (for emergency awareness)

SECTIONS:

- ✓ Know Your Building: construction, notification systems, coastal storm zone
- ✓ Prepare Your Household and Apartment: smoke and fire alarms, connecting with first responders and family plan
- ✓ When and How to Shelter in Place: Fire and dangers outside the building
- ✓ Assistance Evacuating the Building: Asks people to do some self-assessment, identify family or neighbors on the same floor, talk to building on notification and elevator plans

Tougher Discussion: Evacuation Devices

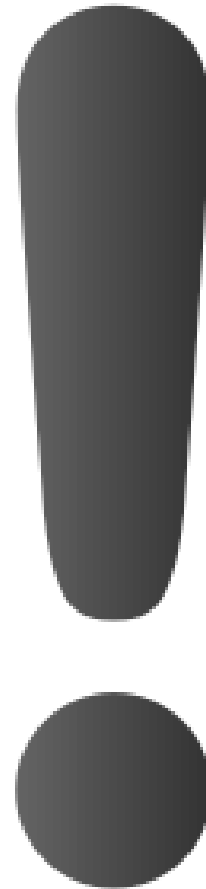
- Consideration worthy a discussion
- Tool to assist people to get down staircases when elevator is not working
 - Building could supply
 - Resident could purchase their own
 - Volunteers to help with device or carry
- Research before purchasing:
 - No national standards
 - Training
 - Stairway characteristics important- width, turn ratio, other residents exiting
 - Storage and maintenance
 - In NYC Fire Department will use own device





Set Realistic Expectations

- Building staff are NOT:
 - Social Workers
 - First Responders
- Property managers have different levels of training and experience.
- Building staff is limited in #s and when on-site
- How building owners/managers communicate with tenants varies
- Level of emergency preparation varies by building



What to Communicate to Building Staff

Stay Informed:

- ✓ Register with HPD in order to be contacted during emergencies at the property and during citywide emergencies
- ✓ Sign up for City emergency alerts at www.NYC.gov/NotifyNYC

Communicate with residents so they can respond and plan appropriately:

- ✓ Communicate your building's elevator policy to residents. Try 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.
- ✓ Evaluate your 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.
- ✓ When residents call 911, ask staff to hold elevator and guide EMS to the appropriate apartment. (Remind residents to let your staff know that they called 911 for a medical or other emergency.)
- ✓ At building meeting, talk about fire and emergency preparedness using the NYC Apartment Building Emergency Preparedness Guide and/or invite FDNY Fire Safety Education to present.
- ✓ Talk to vulnerable residents individually about emergency planning before an event and check on them afterwards.
- ✓ Provide training to building staff on emergency planning and assisting vulnerable residents with their planning

EXAMPLE

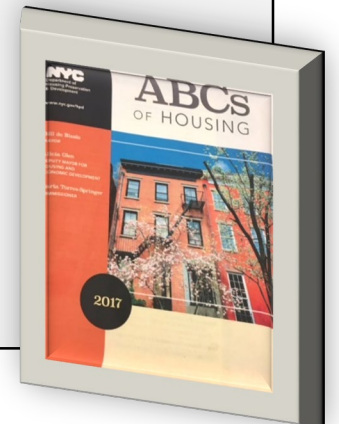
NYC Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)

ABC's of Housing, Section V, E. Emergency Planning and Evacuations for Residential Building Owners/Managers – This section reminds owners of Fire Code's requirement to distribute the Emergency Preparedness Guide and includes guidance on increased communication between building owners and residents.

HPD Webpage - provides information to residential building owners on disaster planning, and encourages them to take the necessary steps to prepare owners' buildings and their residents for weather emergencies, natural disasters or power outages including checking in on tenants before and after an event to see if they need assistance.

Compliance with Emergency Signage (Local Law 98) – HPD notifies residential building owners of their obligation to post emergency notices in the lobby before an expected weather emergency, after a natural disaster, and after being informed that a utility outage will last for more than 24 hours.

"Emergency Planning and Evacuations for Residential Building Owners/Managers" encourages building owners to train staff to aid first responders by, for example, recalling or holding an elevator, and advising first responders of, and escorting them to a building resident needing assistance.





Recap of Key Points

Good start but more progress is needed

Fire Code and Housing Departments are important resources in emergency planning

Set realistic expectations for residential buildings


Communication between buildings and residents is key

But hold on- what about AFTER a disaster?



Is it just about advanced planning?

- **No**, there are opportunities to collaborate right after an event, especially when situations continue to deteriorate.



Asking
everyone to
check on
residents,
especially the
most
vulnerable
residents

Family

Friends

Neighbors

Social Service Providers

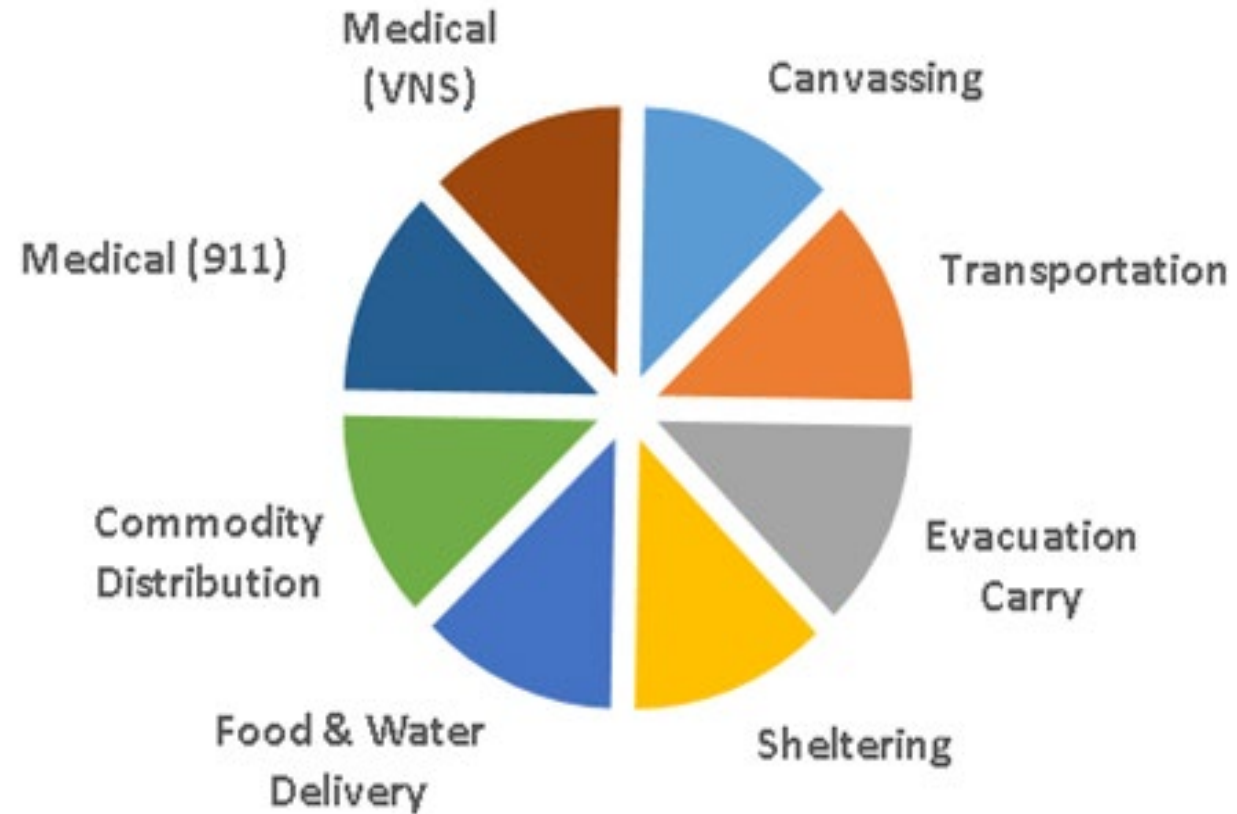
plus

Government

And.... **Building staff too**

Government: Door-to-Door Post Emergency Canvassing Operation (PECO)

- May be triggered after loss of essential services (gas, electric, and water) to more than 5000 households in a contiguous area projected to last for more than 48 hours
- Limited mission on persons with disabilities: “second chance” for residents to evacuate with assistance, or, if able to remain in home, to access non-emergent medical care
- Required recruiting and training thousands of City staff willing to canvass door-to-door in post-disaster environment
- Required development of app-based survey tool to automate "referral" process to partner agencies
- Requires standing up multiple supporting operations (*see pie chart*)





Residential Buildings Post Event

- Last August when Hurricane Isaias knocked out power for multiple days, moved to a "modified PECO" due to public health risks of door-to-door canvassing during community transmission of COVID-19
- Developed agreement with VNSNY to respond to requests for assistance by building management
- Built off of several years of multi-agency planning on High Rise Emergency Planning and PECO
- Recognized a promising approach for the future
- Amplified outreach to individuals and service providers but added a request to buildings
- Quickest way to try and reach potentially isolated and vulnerable individuals
- Resolved need referral source (remember buildings staff are not social workers!, shelters were not opened)
- Need to tailor message to private buildings – tell them what to do!

Residential Buildings Post Event

- The City reached out to over 36,000 building and property managers requesting them to check in on residents (several days into power outage)

Part of Message:

For those buildings without power, we also ask that you communicate with your tenants directly. Check on your tenants, particularly those who are at most risk during a power outage such as residents that:

- *have limited mobility, or are unable to leave the home,*
- *that potentially rely on medical equipment that requires electricity to operate, and*
- *those that are socially isolating*

If you identify a resident experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 911 immediately.

If you identify a resident who uses electrical or other medical equipment or have other non-life threatening health or medical needs and require assistance, call 311.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

All hazards planning requires coordination across agencies

Fire Code and Housing Departments open up new doors in emergency outreach


Set realistic expectations for residential buildings- they are not social workers or first responders

Communication between buildings and residents is key before and after an emergency

Reaching out to residential buildings post event is a quick way to identify those in need

If canvassing is necessary, outreach can help focus canvassing efforts

ITS ALL ABOUT MAKING SURE NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND



QUESTION AND ANSWERS