

Speaker 1 ([00:04](#)):

Welcome to "Prep Talk," the Emergency Management podcast. Find out what you need to know about preparedness, get all the latest tips from experts in the field and learn what to do before the next disaster strikes from the emergency management department in the city that never sleeps. Here are your hosts, Omar Bourne and Allison Pennisi.

Omar Bourne ([00:27](#)):

Hello everyone. Thank you for listening. I'm Omar Bourne.

Allison Pennisi ([00:30](#)):

And I'm Allison Pennisi. And you are our listeners and as always we thank you for joining us. We want you to come back as often as you can, so feel free to listen to Prep Talk on your favorite podcast provider. You can also follow us on social media, on our Twitter [@nycemergencymgt](#), Facebook, Instagram and much more.

Omar Bourne ([00:49](#)):

This is Black History Month and on today's episode we are going to be joined by Gregg Bishop, who is the commissioner for the New York City Department of Small Business Services.

Allison Pennisi ([01:00](#)):

That's right Omar. As leader of Small Business Services or SBS, Commissioner Bishop is charged with actively connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, creating stronger businesses and building a thriving economy in neighborhoods across the five boroughs.

Omar Bourne ([01:13](#)):

We are looking forward to hearing from commissioner Bishop, but before we dive in, you know what time it is. Let us get you up to date on the latest news in the emergency management field.

Speaker 2 ([01:25](#)):

Here's your "Prep Talk" Situation Report.

Allison Pennisi ([01:29](#)):

All right, this is the Situation Report. Let's get started. Scientists have found a link between rapid weather swings and a heightened risk of flu activity. A study published in the journal Environmental Research Letters, examined more than a decade of health and weather data in the United States, Mainland China, Italy and France. The researchers analyzed surface temperatures, weather patterns and health records from January 1st, 1997 to February 28th 2018 a total of 7,729 days. They found that the years with intense weather fluctuations in the Autumn months incited the flu, creating a robust patient population early in flu season that continued to grow throughout winter. The international team of researchers say that this trend would only continue to get worse as climate change drives more extreme and variable weather conditions.

Omar Bourne ([02:19](#)):

Thank you Allison. In other news, Somalia is among several countries declaring a national emergency due to the worst desert locusts invasion in a quarter century. Now, swarms of the insets are breeding

throughout East Africa, including nations like Sudan and have also spread to neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia where they are devouring swaths of farming and pasture land. Now, a typical desert locusts swarm can contain as many as... Get this Allison, 150 million locusts per square kilometer.

Allison Pennisi ([02:56](#)):

Oh, my gosh!

Omar Bourne ([02:56](#)):

Yep. Yeah, that's what I'm thinking. Now, swarms migrate with the wind and can cover 100 to 150 kilometers in a day, destroying the amount of crops in a day that would be sufficient to feed 2,500 people. Experts say the locust invasion may have been spurred by a cyclone that swept through North Eastern Somalia and Eastern Ethiopia in December bringing heavy rains to the area, which created ideal conditions for the insects to breed for... Get this, the next six months.

Allison Pennisi ([03:34](#)):

Well, let's hope this is just a phase and not a plague huh.

Omar Bourne ([03:36](#)):

We truly hope so.

Allison Pennisi ([03:39](#)):

All right, and that's the Situation Report. Still to come, we will be speaking with commissioner Gregg Bishop from the department of small business services, but first here is a public service announcement from New York City Emergency Management and the Ad Council.

Speaker 6 ([03:53](#)):

Your daughter doesn't want to talk about why her room is a horrible mess. Your son doesn't want to talk about why he's wearing mismatched socks. Your spouse doesn't want to talk about their bad haircut. Families don't have to talk about everything, but they should talk to plan for an emergency. Pack basic supplies in a go bag, water, canned food, flashlights, batteries, medical supplies, IDs and some cash. Talk about where you'll meet in case you lose one another. And of course, don't forget to pack the dog treats. Talk to your family and make an emergency plan. Go to [NYC.gov/readyny](http://NYC.gov/readyny). Or call 311 to make your family's emergency plan. Brought to you by New York City Emergency Management and the Ad Council.

Speaker 2 ([04:54](#)):

You are listening to "Prep Talk," the Emergency Management podcast.

Omar Bourne ([04:59](#)):

You are listening to "Prep Talk" and we are back. Let us welcome our special guests to the show, Gregg Bishop, Commissioner for the New York City Department of Small Business Services. Thank you for joining us Commissioner.

Gregg Bishop ([05:12](#)):

Thanks for having me.

Omar Bourne (05:14):

Let us get started. We're going to get right into it. What sparked your interest in government and how did you get started?

Gregg Bishop (05:21):

So, I appreciate you guys inviting me and I'm so jealous right now trying to figure how I can get a podcast for my agency. But I started at SBS actually 11 years ago and what sparked my interest was, because I worked in workforce and my job was to help young people train them in tech skills and find them jobs. And I was really looking at SBS to help me figure out how to actually place these young people into jobs. The system called them at risk, I called them at promise. We wanted to figure out ways to help individuals who maybe were sent to us at the non-profit that I was working at as an alternative to incarceration individuals who may not have gone to college. I grew up in Brooklyn, I went to Brooklyn Tech. I'm a Brooklyn person, but I too stumbled when I went taking this next step in terms of, I spent about maybe two and a half years in college and I dropped out. But I had a skill which was a tech skill.

Gregg Bishop (06:25):

So, I really understood that having a skill actually can help someone change their lives because I worked seven and a half years in tech. So, SBS was actually... A deputy commissioner at SBS was at one of our galas and she loved the work that I was doing to place individuals into jobs and she was like, "Hey, I can help." And literally it was her way of getting me in to then try to actually encourage me, recruit me to join the City of New York. Her first question was, "Have you ever thought about working for the City?" And you could imagine what I said, "Absolutely not, but I need you to help me with helping my kids get jobs." But then when she started talking about the minority women business enterprise program and the work that she was doing to revitalize that program, if you... You may not know this, but during the Giuliani administration, one of the things that the mayor did was he ran on eliminating the program. So during the Bloomberg administration, there was effort to rebuild the program.

Gregg Bishop (07:25):

So, she convinced me that that was a worthy effort and I sort of looked at the macro accomplishments if we could actually help minority women owned businesses here in New York City win city contracts, then they too can then hire within their communities. And that will solve the unemployment issue that I was trying to fix. So, that's how I ended up working for the City of New York and working for Small Business Services. I started off as assistant commissioner and my job was to streamline the certification process and make it easier to certify. And then I ended up moving to a broader responsibility in business development. So, now instead of just focus on how to help minority and women owned businesses, but then how to help all small businesses here in New York City. And four years and a couple months ago, I had the opportunity of being in Gracie Mansion and I went to the mayor. It was at a time when we were in transition with commissioners and I stood up and I said, "Hello, Mr. Mayor, my name is Gregg Bishop." And he was like, "I know who you are."

Omar Bourne (08:31):

Oh, wow!

Gregg Bishop (08:31):

And the reason why I know, he said, "I know who you are." He was like, "You're Gregg with two Gs." And a lot of people know that I'm just a Gregg. I'm not a Gregory, just G-R-E-G-G and that's when I knew he

knew who I was. And I was like, "I'd love to talk to you about the agency and the work that I would love to see us do. And he gave me an opportunity to become commissioner of the agency and it's been a blessing ever since.

Omar Bourne ([08:53](#)):

Let's talk a little about that, especially for those who may not feel that college is for them. But let's talk about the importance of having a skill if you don't want to go to college.

Gregg Bishop ([09:05](#)):

Right. So, there's a lot that we do at SBS that's around that. And you'll see all the things that we talk about, it's personal to me because I understand the impact that it can make. So, a lot of folks don't know because we're called Small Business Services. And I say SBS, we have nothing to do with Select Bus Service. I'm looking at my common theme here because we have to figure out how to fight that war with the MTA. And so how when people hear SBS they'll know it's Small Business Services, but until then, I have to say Small Business Services. Although, we... Business is our name, the larger part of the work that we do is actually workforce. We run 18 Workforce One centers across the city. We're responsible for connecting individuals to jobs, but we're also responsible for trading New Yorkers.

Gregg Bishop ([09:51](#)):

So, last year we trained... We actually connected over 27,000 individuals to jobs and we trained over 4,000 New Yorkers. And the focus that we have is focus on the skills and skills that are in demand because that's very important. If college is not your path immediately after high school, that's fine, but you need to have a skill. And what we have identified in the City of New York is that healthcare, tech, industrial manufacturing, food and beverage services and construction are areas that if you have a skill in those particular sectors, not only can you get a job relatively quickly, but you can actually earn a really good living.

Gregg Bishop ([10:31](#)):

So, we have trainings in healthcare, we have trainings in technology. We're actually in the middle of... We have application open for data analysts. So, individuals who want to improve their SQL skills, their skills in Excel or even Python, you can actually get trained for free and we will then help you find a job. We have training in industrial manufacturing where you could be a computer numerical control machinist. You don't even need to have the experience in the industry. There's so many things that have changed in the industrial manufacturing sector. Everything, technology has disrupted a number of sectors. So, it's not the old machinists. I went to Brooklyn Tech and I remember my major was mechanical engineering and in a machine shop it's a dirty place to be, but it's no longer. Most of the machines are computer controlled and you need to know how to program it. You need to speak that language.

Gregg Bishop ([11:26](#)):

So, we focus on the sectors that are not only fast growing, but they need a workforce that can actually take over from the workforce that's retiring right now. In industrial manufacturing, a lot of people don't know that literally the landing gear of a triple seven, some of those components are manufactured right here in New York City, in Brooklyn, in Red Hook. And that company is looking for employees because they're turning down jobs, because they need people who want to be in that sector. So, a lot of the work

that we do on the workforce side is to highlight the fact that you can actually earn a meaningful not only wage, but build a great career in these sectors. And you don't even need to have a college degree.

Omar Bourne ([12:10](#)):

And you don't even need to have a college degree.

Gregg Bishop ([12:12](#)):

But I will recommend for those listeners who are saying, "See, the commissioner said I don't need a college degree." I would not be sitting in front of you if I did not have my college degree. So, even though I dropped out, a couple of years later... Seven and a half years later, I did go back to school. I went to a historically black college and university called Florida A&M University. And I got my bachelor's then got my master's from Florida State. And because of the fact that I had my master's, I was able to actually join the City as assistant commissioner. So, a college degree is important, but we want to make sure New Yorkers know that if you don't have it, we can actually help you develop a skill. Or if you are thinking about actually starting a business that you may be passionate about an idea or something that you want to do, but we have different programs.

Gregg Bishop ([12:58](#)):

We focus on not only women entrepreneurs, immigrant entrepreneurs, but we recently just launched a new program for black entrepreneurs. Because we know black entrepreneurs have... There's different challenges in all those groups, but for black entrepreneurs, we make up about 20% of the city's population but only own 2% of the businesses. So, we want to make sure that everyone knows if you're an entrepreneur that the city's here to help you. So, through our nine set of services, through our NYC business solution centers, we help individuals understand how to start a business, how to fund their business, how to grow their business, how to navigate government and most importantly, how to prepare for disasters to make sure that they can continue their business.

Allison Pennisi ([13:38](#)):

I'm very glad you brought that up. So, in your message to New Yorkers, you talk-

Gregg Bishop ([13:43](#)):

That's what we call a layout.

Allison Pennisi ([13:43](#)):

There you go.

Omar Bourne ([13:45](#)):

There you go. We're going to dunk it.

Allison Pennisi ([13:45](#)):

So, in your message to New Yorkers, you talk about SBS's role to build a more inclusive economy. There's a certified record number of minority and business women enterprises here in New York City now, but SBS also or Small Business Services also works very closely with New York City Emergency Management-

Gregg Bishop ([14:05](#)):

Yes we do.

Allison Pennisi ([14:05](#)):

... on disaster preparedness through preparing businesses through the emergency response and through the recovery. Let's talk about that.

Gregg Bishop ([14:14](#)):

So, we have a terrific relationship and a lot of folks don't realize that after when a disaster happens, the first responders are out there, you guys are at the front line, you make sure that whatever's happening is taken care of and then we are immediately dispatched. So, we are part of the whole system notification system, I get alerts when there is any type of disaster that's happening and if there's anything that's related to commerce, we are dispatched. And our team, we are waiting until the fire or police say it's safe and then we immediately go to work. And our job is really to make it easier for that business owner to recover from that disaster. So, everything from helping them navigate the insurance process, we try to make sure that business owners understand that business interruption insurance is the best tool for them to help them recover from a disaster. If there's an issue aware to the City.

Gregg Bishop ([15:14](#)):

So, if it's a water main break, a steam pipe explosion, we help them with understanding the claims process. If it's a fire, we help them expedite the documents that they need from the fire department so that way they can get to the insurance, that way they can get the funding that they need to reopen much faster. And then of course when they're in the re-open process, for example if there's a restaurant, we try to get the health department to come out as quickly as possible to reinspect the space so that way they can open up as quickly as possible. So, we have a team and they work 24 seven. And any disaster that happens they're dispatched and then they work with different business owners to help them recover. And a disaster doesn't have to be anything major like hurricane Sandy. It's not just major disasters like hurricane Sandy. It could be anything.

Gregg Bishop ([16:00](#)):

If a brick falls off a building and the police department seals off that area for four or five hours, that's five hours of lost income for that business. And that could constitute to a disaster. So, we want to make sure that business owners understand that. The challenge though is that business owners and we have 230,000 small businesses in the city. Most of them have five or less employees. So, you have a business owner who's busy running their business and they don't have enough time to pay attention to certain things. And we try to get ahead of that. So, through our business program, we incorporate in terms of as you're thinking about operating a business, we incorporate disaster recovery as a principle. We want to make sure that people understand these are the things you need to pay attention to in order to quickly recover.

Omar Bourne ([16:49](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). And Emergency Management works really closely with SBS as you said, just to make sure that we're helping to go out to those businesses as well and prepare them and give them the information that they need so that they can be resilient. And we talk about consequence management and this is really what it is. And I think a lot of people may not understand as you said, Commissioner, it

doesn't take a major emergency. It could be something simple that disrupts your business for a few hours, but the consequence is significant.

Gregg Bishop ([17:22](#)):

And the program that we have, we literally have experts that will do a risk assessment of your business. So, everything from important documents. Where are you keeping your important documents? I cannot tell you how many times during Hurricane Sandy, we had business owners who came to us to get the emergency grant that we had that did not have the documentation. And because it was on one computer, one hard drive and that was under six feet of water, salt water. So, that hard drive was just lost. So, things like putting your stuff on the cloud. We do assessment of the business and then we figure out your weak points and then you can actually get a grant of up to \$3,000 to fix those things to make sure that you're prepared for whatever the next disaster can be. But the most important thing to anyone that's listening, business interruption insurance is your first line of defense. And a lot of times when we have a disaster, business owners will look at the city for help and we will be there.

Gregg Bishop ([18:24](#)):

But the lessons that we learned from Hurricane Sandy, we have a limited amount of funding. We typically work with the private sector to help us with additional funding, but we usually rely on the federal government. And if there's... When hurricane Sandy happened and the federal government took some time to get the dollars to us as a city and during that time a lot of businesses needed to continue operating. So, we want to make sure that if you have business interruption insurance, that's the best way to actually recover much faster. If you have challenges with your insurance, our emergency response team, we have a great relationship with the state and the department of financial services so we can help with any issues that you have with insurance, with claims, et cetera. So, it's a great partnership that we have with emergency management and we just want to make sure that business owners know that, one, you need to be prepared and then two, that the city will have your back.

Allison Pennisi ([19:21](#)):

Right. I also want to give a shout out to the Ready New York for Business guide and toolkit, which was created between New York City Emergency Management, our public-private initiatives unit and Small Business Services. It really does a great job at painting the picture of how to plan for hazards, how to make that plan and like you said before, all the different steps that you could take to make sure that you're prepared and you're resilient and small businesses, we say this all the time, they're the fabric of the community and without them we can't function.

Gregg Bishop ([19:49](#)):

Yep. Small businesses employ over three million New Yorkers. So, they are the economic engine of the city. So, we need to make sure, not only do we support our small businesses by shopping and consuming from small businesses, but that we also make sure that we provide all the resources necessary to make sure that they can recover from a disaster as quickly as possible. Because it's our small businesses that's going to provide that first internship opportunity for a young person in the community. It's a small business that's going to provide the funding for a youth league or something to get pizza or something like that. A small business is such a fabric of the city, that's why it's so important that we make sure that they're prepared for any disaster.

Gregg Bishop ([20:31](#)):

And we even have a mobile unit because of lessons that we learned from Hurricane Sandy, one of the challenges that we had was getting to the small business owners. And we wanted to be sure we're proactive. So, we have an emergency response vehicle, doesn't rival some of the vehicles that you guys have, but I do have a satellite-

Omar Bourne ([20:53](#)):

That's okay.

Gregg Bishop ([20:53](#)):

I have a satellite dish and I have emergency power. So, if someone needs to recharge their cell phone, we can actually help with that. But more importantly we bring our staff out to the different communities. So, in case of a disaster we can actually provide one-on-one assistance at that time.

Omar Bourne ([21:10](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). And to your point, I've seen Bernadette Nation, she's been on the podcast as well, but she... If there is an emergency-

Gregg Bishop ([21:19](#)):

Hold on, Bernadette was on the podcast before me? Okay, all right.

Allison Pennisi ([21:22](#)):

This is before you took the helm.

Gregg Bishop ([21:26](#)):

Now, I'm jealous. Now, Bernadette Nation has been with the City for over 30 something years and she is so passionate. I feel fortunate that we have some really, really good people on that team. She knows the ins and outs of different agencies and that's the expertise that we bring. And literally every business owner should know that when SBS shows up, we're going to hold your hand, we're going to make sure that everything that you need, we take care of in order to help you recover from a disaster.

Omar Bourne ([21:54](#)):

And what I love about this, we've mentioned this on numerous occasions, but we talk about building relationships within the community and that's what it's about. And when you for SBS can go out into the community, help them prepare when there is a disaster, there is that trust that is built up and they know who you are and they believe that you can help them. And that is key.

Gregg Bishop ([22:16](#)):

And if anyone wants more information, they should go to [NYC.gov/sbs](http://NYC.gov/sbs) and click on business and then they'll get more information about our business program, because I want to make sure business owners know that you need to be prepared. We have a number and as you talk about building relationships, there's a number of community organizations. One of the things that I've done since I've become commissioner is one, I wanted to make sure that we're more proactive, but we also build the capacity of our community partners because we wanted to make sure our community partners can actually be in the front line to handle disaster.



Gregg Bishop ([22:53](#)):

So, everything from our business improvement districts to our local chambers, to our LDCs, all the non-profit organizations that are working in a commercial space, we want to make sure that they're also prepared and they also know how to activate our services. That's so important. Hurricane Sandy was a lesson for us in communities where there was infrastructure where we knew exactly what businesses were affected, we were able to get services to them as quickly as possible, but in other communities we were not. And we've made a huge investment to make sure that we build, whether it's a merchant association or some type of group, so that way if a disaster happens, we know who to contact and we know how to get those services to them.

Allison Pennisi ([23:40](#)):

It comes back to something we say on this podcast all of the time, which is emergency management is a shared responsibility-

Gregg Bishop ([23:47](#)):

It is.

Allison Pennisi ([23:47](#)):

... and we're all in it together.

Gregg Bishop ([23:48](#)):

We are. Yeah, absolutely. And I just want to make sure that the listeners know that we have... It's such a shared responsibility... It's not even just the City, it's the State, the federal government. We all play a role in that, but certainly if you are unclear about any of the things that you need to do to prepare yourself for a disaster, come to SBS, we can help and we will be the person that will hold your hand to get you where you need to be.

Allison Pennisi ([24:18](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Omar Bourne ([24:20](#)):

Wonderful information. I want to switch gears a little bit-

Gregg Bishop ([24:23](#)):

Okay. I'm with you.

Omar Bourne ([24:24](#)):

... to Commissioner Greg Bishop, who for our listeners is a Caribbean born. Not sure that it's the best Caribbean Island there, but-

Gregg Bishop ([24:34](#)):

Here we go, here we go.

Allison Pennisi ([24:37](#)):

I'm not getting involved in that.

Gregg Bishop ([24:39](#)):

Listen. I'm from Grenada and I will say that I came up here when I was seven, but we are the Island of spice where everything is nice.

Omar Bourne ([24:51](#)):

You know what? You are-

Gregg Bishop ([24:51](#)):

There you go.

Omar Bourne ([24:53](#)):

... correct. Yeah, the spice it's a nice, nice Island. Not as good as Barbados, not as nice as Barbados, but it's nice.

Gregg Bishop ([25:00](#)):

There we go.

Omar Bourne ([25:02](#)):

But it's February, it's Black History Month. I like to say it's American history. When you just look back at the history of African Americans and even Caribbean Americans and just where we've come and where we are today. Talk a little about what influence and what a difference knowing the history and some of the people that have made in your life.

Gregg Bishop ([25:27](#)):

Yeah. So, I think it's so important that we celebrate our history. I always joke around and say Black History Month is when everybody else realizes the contribution that we make. But I celebrate our history every 12 months out of the year. But I think about where I come from and just the communities I come from. My grandmother was an entrepreneur and literally created an opportunity for my mom to come to this country. And this is a country of opportunity. And when I talk about the strategic plan of the agency and when we talk about equity of opportunity, that word opportunity is what makes America great. Someone can come here and literally think about starting a business and end up having a very successful business and changing not only their lives but generations. Had my mom not come here, I would not be sitting in front of you today. And my mom came here and really she became a nurse and worked in the state system for 30 something years before she retired.

Gregg Bishop ([26:30](#)):

But she gave me an opportunity not only to have a good education, but to actually just do what I do and what I'm doing now. And that is a testament to this country. So, that's a great thing about country. I would say that America we still have a lot to correct and that's one of the reasons why we started our black entrepreneur initiative because we know there's been systemic issues, systemic racism that's prevented black individuals from creating wealth. We know when you look at Black Wall Street, there was a successful enclave of entrepreneurs in a black community that literally was burned down. All that wealth was removed from the black community and therefore when you look at the challenges that

black entrepreneurs have, access to capital, access to other successful entrepreneurs that are preventing them from actually being successful and starting a business. Those are the things that we need to address. And that's one of the things that government needs to do.

Gregg Bishop ([27:31](#)):

And I think when you look at the work that we're doing here at Small Business Services, the work that a lot of other municipalities do figuring out how to take a piece of the procurement world. We spend anywhere between 13 and \$20 billion a year to run the City. And what the mayor said is 30% of that should go to small businesses, minority and women owned. And that includes black businesses. So, I think as government we recognize that we have created the environment for individuals to be successful. We created opportunities, we have all these services, our sister agency the Department of Consumer Worker Protection, they help with financial literacy. So, there's a number of different resources that you can use to be successful, but we also recognize that whether or not we were actively or passively, we do have to address some of the challenges. Access to capital, disinvestment in different communities. That's why the mayor has been so focused on different communities that have not had any investment in over 20 or something years as of making sure that we bring the power of government to address the wrongs I think is important.

Gregg Bishop ([28:47](#)):

And I just feel blessed to be part of that. And I know you guys feel, but when you see a disaster happen and Emergency Management steps in and we're able to help the community recover from that disaster as quickly as possible and return to some sense of normalcy, I think that's what makes us, when we wake up in the morning as public servants, we realize like, "Wow! We are so privileged to be in this job that we can actually give back and get paid to do."

Omar Bourne ([29:15](#)):

Yeah. And it makes the world of difference.

Gregg Bishop ([29:18](#)):

It definitely does. It definitely does.

Allison Pennisi ([29:20](#)):

Speaking with Commissioner Bishop from the Department of Small Business Services, thank you for creating a platform and an opportunity for all New Yorkers to know that there is opportunity to be an entrepreneur, have a business here in New York City. This is a place where dreams are made and-

Gregg Bishop ([29:35](#)):

Absolutely.

Allison Pennisi ([29:36](#)):

... we thank you for that. Any last words before we go to rapid response time?

Gregg Bishop ([29:39](#)):

I would say... And talk about opportunities we have of those 230,000 small businesses, over 52% are owned by immigrant New Yorkers. And what does that mean? When I talked about small businesses are

the economic engine of the city, we are an immigrant rich city. Immigrants are the economic backbone of the city. So we as a city, we need to cherish that, we need to celebrate that and certainly we have done and we have a mayor that's very much focused on making sure that we continue the welcome mat for immigrants, for immigrant entrepreneurs, for everyone to feel welcome in the city. So, we're just playing a part of that at Small Business Services and that I think is my last word in terms of all of the reasons why I'm smiling so much about being in this role.

Allison Pennisi ([30:27](#)):

Thank you very much. All right, for our listeners-

Gregg Bishop ([30:28](#)):

Rapid response.

Allison Pennisi ([30:28](#)):

Yes. [crosstalk 00:30:31]. Yes.

Gregg Bishop ([30:28](#)):

Okay. All right.

Allison Pennisi ([30:35](#)):

It is rapid response time and if you are a first time listener, it's simple. Omar and I will ask questions and our guest will give the first answer that comes to mind.

Speaker 2 ([30:44](#)):

If you don't know now you know. You're listening to "Prep Talk," the emergency management podcast. It's time for "Prep Talk" Rapid Response.

Allison Pennisi ([31:00](#)):

All right, Commissioner, what is the one emergency item you cannot live without?

Gregg Bishop ([31:05](#)):

A can of sardines.

Allison Pennisi ([31:09](#)):

That is the first.

Gregg Bishop ([31:11](#)):

That is the first. Can I just explain it really quickly?

Allison Pennisi ([31:13](#)):

Sure.

Omar Bourne ([31:13](#)):

Of course.

Gregg Bishop ([31:14](#)):

So, in my glove box I have a can of sardines because... My background I told you is in tech. I was in operations. So, I always assume the worst. So, I always assume at some point in time my car is going to go off a hill, I'm going to end up down or in backbend. Nobody's going to know I'm going to be there, I'm going to be trapped in the car and I need to figure out how to eat. So therefore, the one thing I carry is a can of sardines. So, I will ration that sardine until I figure out a way to get help.

Omar Bourne ([31:43](#)):

Not sure if this is an emergency item or just an item-

Gregg Bishop ([31:47](#)):

You need food.

Omar Bourne ([31:47](#)):

... of pleasure, but I liked that answer. I think that's the best answer that we've gotten for that question. So, in honor of Black History Month, which leader has been an inspiration to you?

Gregg Bishop ([32:02](#)):

So, I was thinking about that and I actually landed on Maurice Bishop and for those who don't know, Maurice Bishop was the prime minister of Grenada, actually when I was a kid. And he came on... And one of the reasons why I admire him as a prime minister, he was very much focused on what I've talked about in terms of opportunity. And when you talk about income inequality, when you talk about those things where we're seeing some of the challenges that happens actually here, not only in New York but in the United States. Maurice Bishop was about the people and he wanted to make sure that the people benefited from any economic development activity that was happening in the country. So for that, I have a special affinity to him. He is I think quasi-unrelated to me, but the family won't really talk about that. But literally-

Omar Bourne ([33:02](#)):

You can claim it.

Gregg Bishop ([33:03](#)):

I will claim it because every time I land at the airport it says Maurice Bishop International, I showed them my last name and I was like, "See, I'm a Bishop." You got to get me through the customs really quickly. But no, it's so important that as leaders that we ensure that everyone has the ability to be successful and the thing about capitalism and I could go into a rant about capitalism, but there's winners or losers. And government needs to be there to make sure that if there's someone that is not participating, that we actually help them and then we create an opportunity for them to get back on their feet because people will have stumbles and they will fall, but we need to be there to make sure that we pick them up, dust them off and get them going to become successful.

Allison Pennisi ([33:55](#)):

So, you have been leader of the Department for Small Business Services, you've had a lot of leadership roles at the agency as well. What is the best leadership advice you've received?

Gregg Bishop ([34:05](#)):

Listen. You've got to listen to people. And I would say that that has been one of the best things that I've actually employed as a leader. Sometimes you just have to sit down and listen to someone because as you're listening, you may actually find out what's a core challenge or what's a... Or you could actually find out the solution to a problem. Not every time you have to have the final word. So, I would say listening and... I know you said one word, but the other one is you just have to trust, because a lot of leaders are insecure and they don't want to have someone that's smarter than them. I'm not one of them. Literally when I build a team, I want everybody to be smarter than me. Why? Because it just makes me look good.

Omar Bourne ([34:52](#)):

There you go. And since he's talked about team, let's switch to sports. What's your favorite sports team?

Gregg Bishop ([35:00](#)):

Oh, the Giants. But let's not talk about that right now.

Omar Bourne ([35:02](#)):

Well, I'm a Giants fan. So, it's fine.

Allison Pennisi ([35:04](#)):

All right, final question. Sum up the work you do in one word.

Gregg Bishop ([35:07](#)):

A blessing. That's it. It's a blessing. And every day I wake up, I'm just thankful that I have this opportunity to be in this position to make a difference in the lives of New Yorkers. And I'm just thankful for that. So, thanks for having me.

Allison Pennisi ([35:23](#)):

Yes, thank you for being-

Gregg Bishop ([35:23](#)):

I appreciate it.

Allison Pennisi ([35:24](#)):

... here. We appreciate it. And for our listeners, you can visit [NYC.gov/sbs](http://NYC.gov/sbs) for more information on small businesses and small business services here in New York City.

Speaker 1 ([35:37](#)):

That's, this episode of "Prep Talk." If you liked what you heard, you can listen any time online or through your favorite RSS feed. Until next time, stay safe and prepared.