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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG OPENS NINE TEMPORARY WARMING CENTERS AND TAKES
ADDITIONAL STEPS TO HELP NEW YORKERS DURING COLD WEATHER
EMERGENCY**

*Office of Emergency Management Opens Nine Warming Centers in Areas with
Highest Concentration of 311 Calls for No Heat in Homes*

Homeless Services Doubles Homeless Outreach in Every Borough

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today announced that due to the extended extreme temperatures and the number of homes that have been without heat, the City has opened nine temporary warming centers in partnership with the American Red Cross. These centers, nearly twice as many as were opened during previous cold emergencies, are located in areas of the City from which the highest concentrations of 311 calls for lack of heat have come in recent days. Simultaneously, the City's Department of Homeless Services has doubled its homeless outreach and temporarily suspended certain shelter intake procedures to let homeless individuals access any available shelter as quickly as possible regardless of whether a particular shelter's services match that client's needs.

"Despite New York's historic gains reducing homelessness on our streets, when cold weather hits us and stays, we have to take extra measures," said Mayor Bloomberg. "The Office of Emergency Management and the American Red Cross are opening warming centers for New Yorkers without heat in their apartments or houses this afternoon, and for the first time, we are putting them in the areas that 311 calls are showing they are needed most"

"The City has ramped up all of its efforts to protect people from brutal cold conditions we are experiencing," said Office of Emergency Management Commissioner Joe Bruno. "But we can't do it all, so New Yorkers should check on their neighbors, particularly the elderly, and not hesitate to call for help if they see someone in need."

"Our outreach teams are always trying to bring homeless individuals in off the streets. When the weather can put their lives in danger, we have to be especially cautious and diligent," said Department of Homeless Services Commissioner Robert V. Hess. "Our emergency procedure aims to protect those most at risk; we don't want anyone dying on the streets."

The Mayor advised New Yorkers without heat in their buildings – after calling 311 to report the problem –to stay with friends or family if possible. For residents without heat who have no other options, the City today opened nine temporary warming centers. These centers were identified based
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on a geographical mapping of recent 311 calls for lack of heat, as well as any reports received directly by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development. This is the first time 311 information has been used to select sites for warming centers, during past cold emergencies the City has opened a relatively centrally-located warming center in each borough.

Manhattan:

Lower East Side: Rutgers Houses (200 Madison Street at Rutgers Street)
Harlem: King Towers (2 West 115th Street in Harlem)

Brooklyn:

Bushwick: Hope Gardens (422 Central Ave)
Canarsie: Breukelen (715 E 105th St)

Queens:

Flushing: Bland Houses (133-36 Roosevelt Avenue)
Jamaica: Baisley Park Houses (116-40 Guy Brewer Boulevard)

The Bronx:

Melrose: Melrose Houses (286 East 156th Street)
Kingsbridge/Kingsbridge Heights: Ft. Independence (3350 Bailey Ave)

Staten Island

West Brighton: West Brighton Houses (230 Broadway)

Any New York City tenant without adequate heat or hot water should first speak with the building owner, manager, or superintendent. If the problem is not corrected, tenants should call 311. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development will attempt to contact the building's owner to get heat or hot water service restored. If service is not been restored, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development will send an inspector to the building to verify the complaint and immediately issue a violation. If a landlord does not live up to his or her legal obligation, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development will call in emergency contractors (billed to the landlord or management agent) to fix the boiler or do whatever is required to get the heat and hot water working again.

The Department of Homeless Services has directed the City's Homeless Intake Centers to serve temporarily as drop-in centers where any homeless New Yorker can come to warm up, and to take in as many people as possible within the limitations of the fire code. Drop-in staff can also make arrangements for clients at other facilities citywide. Homeless Services has also temporarily suspended its shelter intake procedures that link a comprehensive range of medical and social service programs together in order to let homeless individuals access the warmth of an available shelter as quickly as possible. Beds are available system-wide to accommodate all clients brought in by outreach teams or those who walk-ins. Also, City shelters will not suspend any individuals during the cold emergency.

The Department of Homeless Services has also expanded its Cold Weather Emergency Procedure, which usually is in operation from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. when temperatures fall below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, to operate 24 hours a day. The Department of Homeless Service outreach workers, supplemented by Department of Health and Mental Hygiene personnel, are helping homeless New

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Yorkers to voluntarily come indoors, arranging for involuntary transport of at-risk homeless when appropriate, and calling 911 for any homeless individual who is actively drinking alcohol, hallucinating and/or grossly disorganized. When temperatures drop below freezing, Homeless Services outreach staff are trained to understand the dangers of cold weather. They utilize all the resources at their disposal to bring the person inside, including calling 911. Members of the Police Department focus more closely on homeless individuals during cold emergencies and will summon medical services or transport individuals to shelter as necessary.

Last night, Homeless Services conducted an additional training session and deployed additional staff, vans and drivers, to Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and The Bronx, doubling the outreach coverage on the streets. Homeless Services will also double its outreach in Manhattan tonight.

The City's Department for the Aging also encourages older New Yorkers to visit one of the City 329 senior centers for warmth, companionship, and a nutritious hot meal.

Guidelines on Warming Centers

- New Yorkers are encouraged to bring clothing, bedding, bathing and sanitary supplies, special food and pre-filled prescriptions and other medications if needed with them to warming centers.
- Alcoholic beverages, firearms and illegal substances are not allowed in warming centers.
- For more information about warming centers, New Yorkers should call 311.

Tips for Staying Warm

The City recommends all New Yorkers heed the following cold weather safety tips to ensure they are adequately protected. Exposure to cold can cause life-threatening health conditions. Avoid serious conditions such as frostbite and hypothermia, by keeping warm.

- Wear a hat, hood or scarf, as most heat is lost through the head.
- Wear layers, as they provide better insulation and warmth.
- Keep fingertips, earlobes and noses covered if you go outside.
- Keep clothing dry; if a layer becomes wet, remove it.

What to Do If You Lose Heat or Hot Water at Home

Call 311 to report the loss of heat or hot water. Take measures to trap existing warm air, and safely stay warm until heat returns, including:

- Insulate your home as much as possible. Hang blankets over windows and doorways and stay in a well-insulated room while power is out.
- Dress warmly. Wear hats, scarves, gloves and layered clothing.
- If you have a working fireplace, use it for heat and light, but be sure to keep the damper open for ventilation.
- If the cold persists and your heat is not restored, call family, neighbors or friends to see if you can stay with them.
- Open your faucets to a steady drip so pipes do not freeze.

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Safe Home Heating Tips

Improper use of portable heating equipment can lead to fire or dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. Take precautions to ensure you are heating your home safely.

Carbon Monoxide Safety Tips

- Make sure all fuel-burning items - such as furnaces, boilers, hot water heaters, and clothes dryers - are operating properly, ventilated and regularly inspected by a professional in order to prevent unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning.
- If you have a working fireplace, keep chimneys clean and clear of debris.
- Never turn on your oven to heat your kitchen, or operate gas or charcoal barbecue grills, kerosene- or oil-burning heater in an enclosed space.
- Common signs of carbon monoxide poisoning are headache dizziness, chest pain, nausea.
- If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, call 911, and get the victim to fresh air immediately, and open windows.
- Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide detector.

Fire Safety Tips

- Use only portable heating equipment that is approved for indoor use.
- Keep combustible materials, including furniture, drapes, and carpeting at least three feet away from the heat source. NEVER drape clothes over a space heater to dry them.
- Always keep an eye on heating equipment. Never leave children alone in the room where a space heater is running. Turn it off when you are unable to closely monitor it.
- Be careful not to overload electrical circuits.
- Make sure you have a working smoke detector in every room. Check and change batteries often.