

COMMUNICATING DURING WEATHER RELATED EVENTS

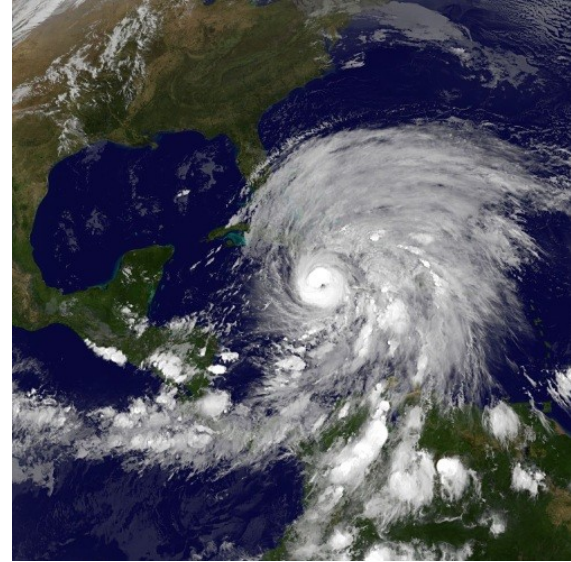
Lessons Learned in the Northeast



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INTRODUCTION

- Background
- Philosophy
- Case Studies
 - What went well, what didn't
- Open Issues
- Next Steps
- Answers



BACKGROUND

- NY Metro area
- Pre and post 911
- Numerous weather events, especially in the last 5 years
- Other key events



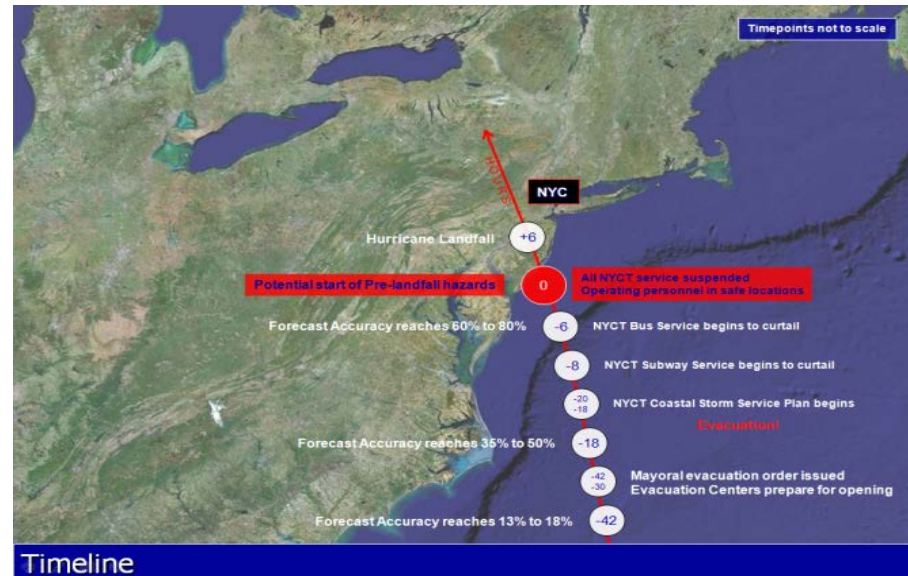
PHILOSOPHY

- Multi-discipline / Multi-modal
- Leverage existing infrastructure and procedures
- Keep it simple and focused
 - Operations not policy
- Build trust and relationships
- Coordination
 - Opening and closing
 - Information distribution



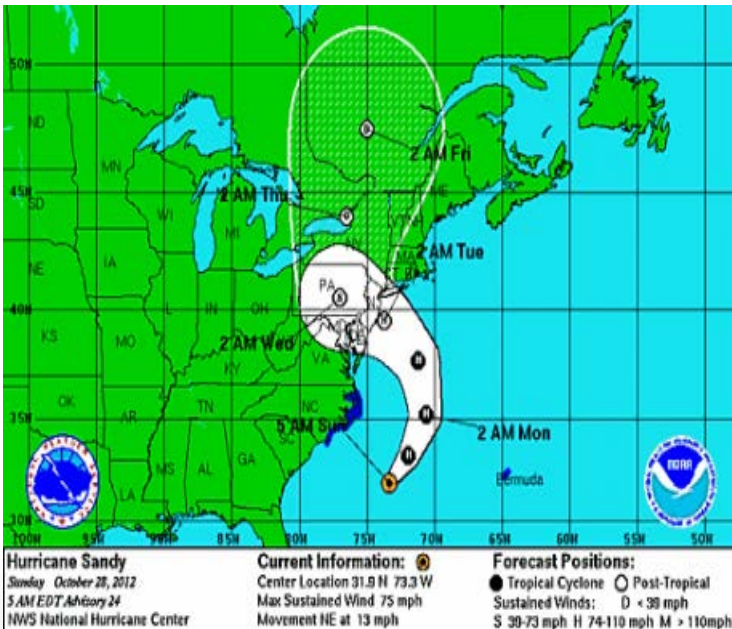
PHILOSOPHY

- Ensure prompt and accurate public notification
- Safety of Responders and Workers
- Pre-plan
 - Zero hour
- Develop and implement standard reporting
- All hazard



CASE STUDIES

- Snow Storms
- Irene
- Sandy
- Nemo



WHAT DIDN'T WORK (for operations)

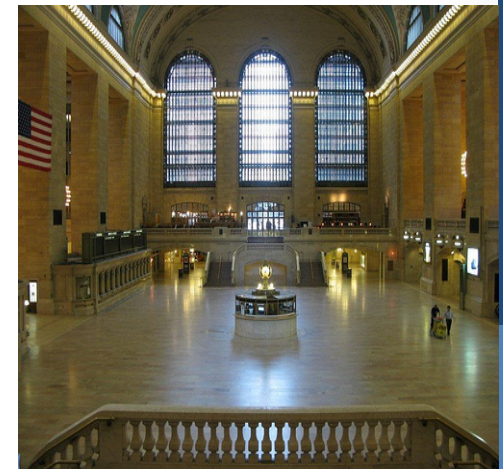


- Executive conference calls
- Individual agency collection and dissemination of information
- Different reporting requirements
- GAS: Are we talking to the right people
- Challenges with elected officials
 - Accurate information
 - Coordination
 - Education



WHAT WORKED

- Operational Conference Call
 - Transcom
 - Multi-state, Multi-modal
 - Policy decisions were taken off line
 - Focused on what was going to happen/happening operationally
- Coordinated advanced closures
- Coordinated openings
- Bridge Closure protocols
 - Used “trigger” facilities and conditions as a guide
 - Wind speeds



SNOW CONDITION REPORTING

Condition 1: Clear - No snow and ice is bonded or accumulated on the road surface. Bare pavement surface is maintained at all times.



Condition 2: Clear and wet - Bare/wet pavement surface is the general condition. There are occasional areas having snow or ice accumulations resulting from drifting, sheltering, cold spots, frozen melt-water, etc



Condition 3: Snow and/or slush covered with wheel tracks exposed - Accumulations of loose snow or slush ranging up to (2 in.) are found on the pavement surface. Packed and bonded snow and ice are not present.



Condition 4: Snow and/or slush covered - The pavement surface has continuous stretches of packed snow with or without loose snow on top of the packed snow or ice.



Condition 5: Icy - The pavement surface is completely covered with packed snow and/or ice. There may be loose snow on top of the icy or packed snow surface.



Condition 6: Impassable - The road is temporarily impassable. This may be the result of severe weather (low visibility, etc.) or road conditions (drifting, excessive unplowed snow, avalanche potential or actuality, glare ice, accidents, vehicles stuck on the road, etc.).

OPEN ISSUES

- Hard versus soft closures
- Pre-emptive closures
- Tolls!??
- Coordination across large regions (i.e. the whole east coast)
- Single sources of information
- Trucks, Trucks, Trucks
 - Parking
 - Crashing
 - Providing support



NEXT STEPS

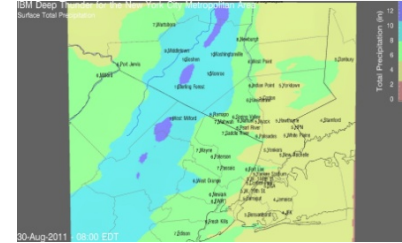
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- Key Issues
 - Travel Information Services Committee
 - “Close the Information Gaps Across Borders” among agencies and to the traveling public.
 - Coordinated Incident Management Committee
 - Address reporting to/among agencies for activities such as closing/opening of facilities; enhance trucking industry communications on real time system status.
 - Intermodal Freight & Passenger Movement Committee
 - Need to improve communications to commercial vehicle operators including closures/detours and to specialized carrier industry.
- Initial actions identified:
 - Increased situational awareness for agencies & public
 - Information exchange among agencies to address operational response issues
 - Improved coordination with the trucking industry



NEXT STEPS TECHNOLOGY

- Single source of information
 - Pointing all requests to the same sources
 - Separate Public and Emergency information
- Integrated forecasting
- AVL
- Mobile Video
- Data Mining/Reporting



COMMUNICATION is KEY!

- What is communication?
 - Technology
 - People/Relationships
 - We need to speak the same language
- How does information move?
 - Voice, Data, Word of mouth, Signs
- What are we communicating?
 - Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance!
 - Coordination and Consistency of accurate information is essential
- Who should be communicating
 - Key information for operational decisions
 - Keeping the public in the loop
 - Truckers
- When do we communicate the message?
 - Triggers; Mission guides message: pre-weather event; during the emergency; recovery



CONCLUSION

Using and improving existing methods of communication can have a positive impact on how we respond to weather emergencies. The right people, at the right time, sharing the right information can significantly improve our ability to manage the public's expectations and effectively resolve any event.

THANK YOU!