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Governor

NEW YORK STATE
OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE
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David A. Hansell
Commissioner

Local Commissioners Memorandum

Section 1

Transmittal:	07-LCM-03
To:	Local District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Division of Program Support and Quality Improvement
Date:	April 5, 2007
Subject:	Local District Emergency Closings
Contact Person(s):	Deputy Commissioner's Office Program Support and Quality Improvement 518-473-3912
Attachments:	Attachment 1: LDSS Contact Information for Emergency Events
Attachment Available On – Line:	Yes

Section 2

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Local Commissioner's Memorandum (LCM) is to update the proper procedures for reporting emergency closings of local district offices. This LCM supersedes 05-LCM-12. An emergency is a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances requiring immediate action, e.g., inclement weather.

In addition, we need to establish an emergency contact listing for each local district to be used for off-hours communication with the Human Services Committee of the NYS Disaster Preparedness Commission during disaster response activities.

II. Background

Prompt reporting of emergency closings will enable OTDA to lend necessary assistance in serious emergency situations and to coordinate its activities with the district in less serious, more temporary emergency situations. It will also enable OTDA to respond to any inquires in an informed manner.

OTDA will post local departments of social services' office closures on both its internet and intranet homepages. This will alert OTDA staff of the closures to take into account during their work day as well as advise any OTDA staff assigned to those buildings of alternate plans for reporting to work that day.

As the Chair agency of the Human Services Committee for the NYS Disaster Preparedness Commission, OTDA assists and oversees the implementation of State plans that provide resources at the local government level when the Governor declares a State of Emergency.

A consistent message from the lessons learned from previous emergency events (Hurricane Katrina, Southern Tier flooding, and recent snow storms) has been that open lines of communication among decision makers at all levels of government improve the delivery of services that are critical for the health and safety of New Yorkers.

III. Actions Needed

In the event of an emergency closing, each local social services district should designate a staff member and alternates as may be needed, to be responsible for notifying the following, although not necessarily in this order:

- A. The Deputy Commissioner's Office of NYS OTDA's Division of Program Support and Quality Improvement in Albany (518-473-3912). The type of emergency necessitating the closing, its probable duration and any other significant impact should be described. Any required assistance from the State should be requested at this time, and arrangements made for contacting the local designee should that become necessary.
- B. In the event that a local district needs to notify OTDA during nights or weekends, we have established a mailbox that routes your message to designated OTDA staff who monitor this activity during off-hours. E-mail emergency closure information to Emergency@otda.state.ny.us. Once we receive such notification we will immediately publish this information on our intranet and Internet homepages, so that staff can obtain updated status from remote locations.
- C. Local police, sheriff, fire department and other local governmental entities as required by the nature of the emergency.
- D. Local media, especially radio stations, requesting announcement of the closing and advising the public how to obtain emergency services.
- E. Clients scheduled for appointments, if possible, to advise them of the emergency closing.

The designated staff should also assure that the district's plan for providing 24-hour emergency services (e.g., fuel emergencies and shelter) is operational and appropriate local authorities and agencies are aware of how to access these services.

In our continuing effort to improve our communications and responses to emergencies, please complete the attached form to provide a list of three (3) individuals who would be your primary, secondary and alternate contacts in emergency events. Along with each name, please provide office, home, cell/pager numbers and an email address. This information will be kept confidential and will be used only in the event of an emergency during off-hours in coordination with OTDA, the Human Services Committee, and the State Emergency Management Office.

Please send your (3) emergency contacts to chuck.latham@otda.state.ny.us by **April 13, 2007**. If you have any questions, Mr. Latham can be reached at (518)473-3099. Thank you for your assistance.

Issued By

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Title: Deputy Commissioner
Division/Office: Program Support and Quality Improvement