

GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
DIVISION: Center for Employment & Economic Supports

December 23, 2008

Page: 1

TO: Commissioners; TA & FS Directors; WMS Coordinators; CAP Coordinators

FROM: Russell Sykes, Deputy Commissioner, Center for Employment and Economic Supports

SUBJECT: Extension of the Ten Day Reporting Deadline for Request of Replacement Food Stamp Benefits

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: FS Questions – Food Stamp Policy Bureau (518) 473-1469

This GIS message is being issued to clarify the ten-day reporting limit to request replacement food stamp benefits as a result of the recent ice storm and weather events.

Power outages due to the ice storm weather events began on Friday, December 12th and continued through Thursday, December 18th. We saw relatively few requests for replacements in the days immediately following the start of the widespread power outage. It may have been difficult for many households to report loss to the local district either by phone, since landline phones were out, or in person, since travel was restricted in many areas. Also, many local district workers were unable to work because of their own household emergencies and restrictions on travel.

On the afternoon of Thursday, December 18th, Governor Paterson issued a press release informing people of the availability of replacement benefits for food stamp households that had lost perishable food items due to the power outages. While power had been universally reestablished on 12/18/08, a foot of snow fell during the day on December 19th in the districts most affected by the ice storm. Unfortunately, this prevented many people from traveling to their local districts to report food loss in person. On Monday, December 22nd, several districts saw a great increase in reported food loss and requests for replacement in response to the press release from the Governor's Office.

Because it will be very difficult to establish the date of food loss and after discussions with USDA, OTDA believes that it is reasonable to use 12/18/08 as the start of the 10-day report period, allowing Food Stamp households to report loss and request replacement through Monday, December 29, 2008.