

NEWS



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Mayor Nutter Unveils Emergency Evacuation Routes and Tactical Evacuation Plans for Philadelphia

Philadelphia, April 4, 2008 – Mayor Michael Nutter today unveiled Philadelphia’s first comprehensive Emergency Evacuation Routing Plan and several Tactical Evacuation Plans.

The Emergency Evacuation Routing Plan and Tactical Evacuation Plans are important milestones in a comprehensive Emergency Evacuation Planning Program that is designed to close the gaps identified in the Emergency Preparedness Review Committee (EPRC) Report issued in July 2006.

“The importance of providing key information to the public before, during and after a major crisis cannot be overstated. Citizens must trust that government will provide reliable and timely information so they can make the best decisions for themselves and their families when a crisis occurs,” said Mayor Nutter. “Absent good information, they may make unwise and uninformed decisions based on fear and rumor. By providing the City’s Evacuation Routes to the public now, before an emergency happens, we are creating a more open City government and providing critical information to help our citizens prepare now for any kind of emergency.”

To develop these plans, the Managing Director’s Office of Emergency Management (MDO-OEM) convened a workgroup of 25 City, State, and private sector organizations to identify evacuation routes for pedestrians, mass transit, and private vehicles as well as routes specifically for emergency vehicles. Areas of the City are assigned to Evacuation Zones that correlate with Philadelphia Police Department Districts.

The Evacuation Routing Plan was developed in four phases starting in April and concluding in October 2007. During its development, the workgroup conducted a detailed analysis of neighborhoods, including examining general demographic data such as total population and total households as well as information that identifies vulnerable populations which may have difficulty obtaining information about an evacuation or evacuating, including age, language spoken, disability, income level, and access to vehicles. Special consideration was also given to hospitals, nursing homes, healthcare and residential care facilities, and schools.

In addition to the Emergency Evacuation Routes, Tactical Evacuation Plans have been developed around critical infrastructure or in high impact areas, such as for the Sports Complex, Sunoco Refinery, and for high-rise office buildings in Center City.

Deputy Managing Director for Emergency Management MaryAnn Marrocolo noted, “In the event that we need to evacuate outside of the boundaries of Philadelphia, these emergency evacuation routes are being coordinated with regional stakeholders in Southeastern Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey.” MDO-OEM is continuing to work with these partners to manage evacuee movement across borders whether they utilize bridges along the Delaware River, PATCO, New Jersey Transit, SEPTA, or the highway system.

In addition, the Emergency Management Coordinators of Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties and the City of Philadelphia announced the start of an important regional preparedness project to further develop cross-border evacuation plans and coordinate evacuation operations during an emergency.

The project, which is being funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, will address evacuation using all modes of transportation within the region, including major and minor highways, local roads, public and private transit, maritime assets and the airports. The project will regionalize evacuation planning by connecting existing local and county planning efforts.

Montgomery County’s Department of Public Safety is leading the charge to develop the regional evacuation plan. “This plan presents an opportunity to truly work together as a region to develop a realistic approach for emergency evacuations,” said Tom Sullivan, Director of Public Safety for Montgomery County. “Coordination now will better prepare our region to respond to an emergency in the future,” added MaryAnn Marrocolo.

For more information about Philadelphia’s Emergency Evacuation Routing Plan and maps of emergency evacuation routes, visit www.phila.gov/ready or call 1-877-READY-11.

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