

**OUR**

# **RESILIENT BUILDING**



**A Disaster Preparedness Handbook for HDFCs,  
Co-ops, and other Buildings in the Lower East Side**



Nazareth Housing (NH) is a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit, non-sectarian organization committed to the promotion of housing stability and economic independence among low-income families and individuals of New York City, through the provision of: homelessness prevention services, emergency family shelter, supportive housing and urgent needs assistance. NH is a founding member of the LESReady! Lower East Side Long Term Recovery Group, and a NY Rising Community Centers – Public Services provider.



LESReady! is a coalition of community groups and institutions based in the Lower East Side that cooperatively coordinate our response, resources, preparedness planning and trainings in response to Superstorm Sandy and in the event of future disasters. Our work focuses on Manhattan's Community Board 3 area and the immediately adjacent neighborhoods that our groups may serve. Visit [lesready.org](http://lesready.org) for more information.



The Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) addresses the urgent needs of communities impacted by Hurricane Irene, Tropical Storm Lee, and Superstorm Sandy, while also encouraging the identification of innovative and enduring solutions to strengthen the State's infrastructure and critical systems.



A NY Rising Community Center Recovery Service Provided In Partnership  
With The Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR)



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## The Purpose of this Handbook

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One of the lessons learned from Superstorm Sandy is that planning and organizing can make all the difference in a disaster. Buildings, community organizations, houses of worship, and other groups that had strong social ties and emergency plans in place were much better prepared to survive and thrive after the storm.

This handbook is designed to help you and your neighbors think critically about your building, plan for emergencies, and enhance your building's resiliency. It includes the following sections, which should be completed together as a group:

-  **OUR BUILDING.** Important information about your building, including its hurricane evacuation zone, languages spoken by tenants, and more.
-  **CREATING AN EMERGENCY TASK FORCE.** Suggested organizational structure for tenants working on disaster preparedness in your building.
-  **VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT.** Answering these questions will help get you thinking about the challenges facing your building and how to address them.
-  **OUR DISASTER PLAN.** This template outlines tasks to be completed by your Emergency Task Force Pre-Disaster, 72 Hours Pre-Disaster, 24 Hours Pre-Disaster, and Post-Disaster.
-  **RESILIENCY STRATEGIES.** Tips and best practices regarding back-up power, communications, community resiliency, and emergency supplies.
-  **CHECKLIST & NEXT STEPS.** Helps you keep track of what you've accomplished and what still needs to be done.
-  **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.** Information and links to various resources including retrofit programs, sample disaster plans, community organizations, and more.

# 1. OUR BUILDING



**Address:**

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**# of floors:**

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**# of units:**

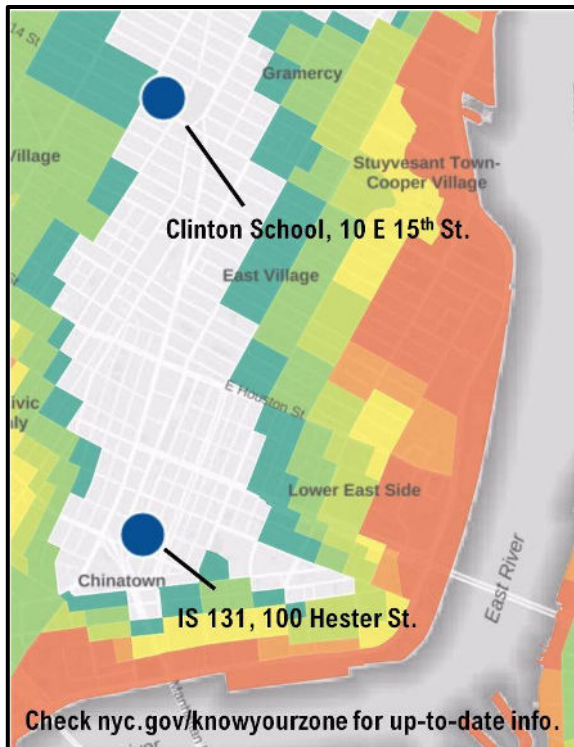
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**# of tenants:**

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**Flood Insurance?**

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**Locations of exits:**

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**Languages spoken in building:**

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**Evacuation Zone:**

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**Flood Risk:**

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## 2. CREATING AN EMERGENCY TASK FORCE

Residents are better equipped to handle emergencies if they are organized. A simple way to organize is to create an Emergency Task Force that meets regularly to discuss disaster preparedness and works to address the building's vulnerabilities. The Task Force also acts as a bridge between tenants, landlords, and the community.

The following are a few suggested Task Force roles; you can add or subtract positions based on your building's need.



### Emergency Task Force Co-Chairs

Co-Chairs schedule and facilitate Task Force meetings and make important preparedness decisions on behalf of tenants. They also act as liaisons between residents, the landlord / co-op board, and the community.



### Resident Engagement Team

The Resident Engagement Team is responsible for communicating emergency information to tenants, maintaining a list of tenants with special needs, and compiling information on local community resources.



### Building Protection Team

This team works to protect the infrastructure of the building, including electrical, mechanical, water, steam, gas, and elevator systems. It should include the building's superintendent and maintenance team.



### Floor Captains

Floor Captains take responsibility for their floors and assist in drills and evacuations. They are aware of the special needs of tenants on their floor, and might have relevant emergency skills (CPR, military experience, etc.).



Determine a way of assembling your Task Force that works for your building. Do members volunteer? Are they elected by tenants? Is membership rotating? How often do you meet?

# Our Emergency Task Force



## Emergency Task Force Co-Chairs

| Name | Cell Phone | Email |
|------|------------|-------|
|      |            |       |
|      |            |       |
|      |            |       |



## Resident Engagement Team

| Name | Cell Phone | Email |
|------|------------|-------|
|      |            |       |
|      |            |       |
|      |            |       |
|      |            |       |



## Building Protection Team

| Name | Cell Phone | Email |
|------|------------|-------|
|      |            |       |
|      |            |       |
|      |            |       |
|      |            |       |



## Floor Captains

| Name | Cell Phone | Floor |
|------|------------|-------|
|      |            | 1     |
|      |            | 2     |
|      |            | 3     |
|      |            | 4     |
|      |            | 5     |
|      |            | 6     |



Customize this structure based on your building’s needs – these are just suggestions! Also consider compiling a list of residents with relevant emergency skills or training, such as medical professionals, CERT volunteers, or radio operators.



### 3. VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT – What’s our building’s risk?

After creating your Task Force, the next step in making your building more resilient is to identify and understand its vulnerabilities. You can begin this process by coming together as a building, asking yourselves the following questions, and answering them as a group. You can also hire an architect or engineer to do a professional vulnerability assessment.

#### SITE

**What major structures or environmental features surround our building (power plants, telecommunications infrastructure, bodies of water, etc.)?**

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**Will future development or land use changes affect our building?**

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**What is our current and future flood risk? (visit [floodhelpny.org](http://floodhelpny.org) to find out)**

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#### ARCHITECTURAL / CONSTRUCTION

**What is our building type (walk-up, low/mid-rise contemporary, high-rise contemporary)?**

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**How old is our building? When was the last major renovation?**

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## PAST EMERGENCIES

**What was the last major disaster our building faced? What were the impacts (power outage, flooding, structural damage, etc.)?**

**For how long was the building affected?**

## UTILITIES

**What fuel source do we use (natural gas, fuel oil, combined heat and power, etc.)?**

**Do we have backup power? How long will it last?  
Do we have a backup domestic water supply?**





## SOCIAL VULNERABILITIES

**Do we have an emergency plan? Is everyone in the building familiar with it?**

**Do we have tenants with physical disabilities?**

## 4. OUR BUILDING DISASTER PLAN – Template

Having a disaster plan in place that you practice regularly will make your building more prepared to respond to and recover from emergencies. Working as a group, use the template below to identify critical tasks at different stages of an emergency. Some suggested tasks have been added already.

|  | 🕒 <b>Pre-Disaster</b>  | 🕒 <b>72 Hours Pre-Disaster</b>  |
|--|--|---|
|  <p><b>Emergency Task Force Co-Chairs</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with Task Force to complete your building's Vulnerability Assessment.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If emergency is anticipated (hurricane, winter storm, etc.), activate disaster plan.</li> </ul>  |
|  <p><b>Resident Engagement Team</b></p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with Floor Captains to compile and maintain an inventory of tenants with special needs.</li> <li>➤ Compile a list of community resources.</li> <li>➤ Schedule events in your building to promote connections between neighbors.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with Floor Captains to inform tenants of the severity of the event, the evacuation risk level, and how they can start preparing.</li> </ul> |
|  <p><b>Building Protection Team</b></p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with Co-Chairs and landlord / co-op board to identify relevant, affordable retrofits for the building.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Take necessary precautions ahead of the event to mitigate damage and ensure building services aren't disrupted.</li> </ul>                       |
|  <p><b>Floor Captains</b></p>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Learn the responsibilities of a Floor Captain.</li> <li>➤ Assist in emergency drills.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with Resident Engagement Team to share event info with tenants on your floor.</li> </ul>  |

This is just one suggested format your disaster plan might take. For other sample disaster plans, see the resources at the back of this handbook.



| 🕒 <b>24 Hours Pre-Disaster</b>   | 🕒 <b>Immediately After Disaster</b>   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assess the need to evacuate depending on the severity of the event.</li> <li>➤ Connect with other community groups for assistance post-disaster.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maintain communication with LESReady! (<a href="http://lesready.org">lesready.org</a>) and other disaster relief organizations.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with Building Protection Team to notify tenants of anticipated interruptions in building services.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Refer residents to appropriate service providers.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Raise elevators above the first floor, move equipment to a high place, and secure any items that may get picked up by the wind.</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assess damage to the building and begin necessary repairs.</li> <li>➤ Photograph damage for insurance claims.</li> </ul>                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assist tenants on your floor with evacuation, if necessary.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Notify Task Force of tenants on your floor sheltering-in-place and assess unmet needs.</li> </ul>  |



## Backup Power

Having backup power is critical during an emergency to keep elevators running and lights shining. Larger buildings are usually required to have backup power; smaller buildings aren't. Find out what sort of system your building has.

### What is our building's current backup power plan?

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### What are our power needs (charging cellphones, hallway lighting, etc.)?

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|  |



**Maintain a supply of flashlights or solar lanterns to be deployed during power outages.**



**Purchase a portable generator (such as propane or diesel) and store safely onsite.**



**Hire a licensed electrician to install a natural gas-fired generator on your building's roof.**



## Communications

Communications are an important component of your disaster plan. How will the different members of your Task Force communicate with each other, with tenants, and with building management? How will tenants communicate with loved ones in an emergency?

### Important contact information:

| Organization      | Phone Number |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Fire Department   |              |
| Police Department |              |
| Gas Company       |              |
| Power Company     |              |
| Insurance Agency  |              |
| Telephone Company |              |
| NYC OEM           | 311          |

### Some suggested strategies:

- **Create a Task Force phone tree for communicating during emergencies.**
- **Designate a community info space in a high traffic area (such as the lobby or laundry room) to share information with residents.**
- **Purchase solar phone chargers.**
- **Ensure there is at least one working landline.**

# Community



A resilient building is one in which there are strong social ties between neighbors. Residents who know and interact with one another are more likely to help each other in an emergency situation. It is also important to cultivate relationships with the larger community: service providers, houses of worship, city agencies, and others.

## Creating a Community Resilience Space



Set aside an area of your building to serve as a community resilience space. This is an area where residents can get to know each other during events and gatherings, and which can be used to store emergency supplies like food, water, flashlights, batteries, etc. After an emergency, the space can be a gathering point where residents go to receive information and supplies.

### What spaces can we potentially use?

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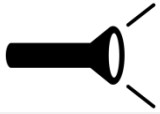
### What community events can we hold?

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| ➤ Building potluck            |
| ➤ Emergency tabletop exercise |
| ➤ CPR training                |
|                               |
|                               |
|                               |
|                               |
|                               |
|                               |
|                               |

## Holding an Emergency Tabletop Exercise



A tabletop exercise is an opportunity to bring your Task Force (and other interested residents) together to practice your disaster plan. Assign a facilitator, a note taker, and a time keeper. What were successes? Where was there room for improvement? Hold exercises for different disaster scenarios (hurricanes, winter storms, extreme heat, etc.). See the resources at the back of this handbook for links to pre-made exercises.



## Emergency Supplies

Every household in your building should have a Go Bag (for evacuating) and an emergency supply kit (for sheltering-in-place). Your Task Force can stockpile supplies, as well, to be used by residents or community members after an emergency. These can be stored in your community resilience space, or in any secure location above flood-level. Below are some suggested items to have on hand; you should customize this list to your building’s needs, and work with your maintenance team to inventory supplies you have.

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canned food / food rations          | <input type="checkbox"/> Purified drinking water | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical supplies               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work gloves                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Disposable dust masks   | <input type="checkbox"/> Manual can openers             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlights / solar lanterns        | <input type="checkbox"/> Batteries               | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand-crank radios              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garbage bags, buckets, mops, bleach | <input type="checkbox"/> Satellite phone         | <input type="checkbox"/> Solar phone and laptop charger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Generator and fuel                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sump pumps              | <input type="checkbox"/> Dehumidifiers                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Portable heaters                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Blankets, warm clothing | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof tarp                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                               | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                   | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                               | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                   | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                          |



### Becoming a Community Emergency Hub

If you have the capacity, consider becoming a community emergency hub. Does your building have a large space where social services can work from? What about backup power, allowing community members to charge their phones? Connect with LESReady! about becoming an emergency hub, or take the NYC Share Your Space Survey (find the link in the resources at the back of this handbook).

**Emergency supply storage location:**

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**Our emergency supply kit point person:**

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## 5. CHECKLIST & NEXT STEPS

|   |  | Status | Date |
|---|--|--------|------|
|    | Convene your Building Emergency Task Force and develop its structure.  |        |      |
|    | As a group, complete your building vulnerability assessment. Or, hire an engineer or architect to conduct a professional assessment.   |        |      |
|    | Work together to create a disaster plan for your building.   |        |      |
|    | Hold an Emergency Tabletop Exercise to practice your plan.   |        |      |
|   | Gather emergency supplies and designate a spot in your building to store them.   |        |      |
|  | Consider potential retrofits for your building to strengthen backup power, communications capacity, and overall resilience.  |        |      |
|  | Reach out to the community. Build relationships with emergency officials, fire departments, and police precincts. Visit <a href="http://LESReady.org">LESReady.org</a> and learn how to become a member. |        |      |
|  | Contact Nazareth Housing to schedule disaster preparedness workshops and connect with our client services.   |        |      |

**To schedule a workshop:**

Chris Barrett, Resiliency Coordinator  
 cbarrett@nazarethhousingnyc.org  
 646.713.2729

**For case management services:**

Ivan Becker, Outreach & Prevention  
 ibecker@nazarethhousingnyc.org  
 646.713.2671





## 6. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### NYC Emergency Resources

- **Ready New York.** <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/em/ready/ready-new-york.page>
- **Ready New York – Prepare for Hazards.** <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/em/ready/plan-hazards.page>
- **NYC Severe Weather – Preparedness for Homeowners and Building Owners.**  
<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/severeweather/resources/resources.page>
- **Notify NYC.** [www.nyc.gov/notifynyc](http://www.nyc.gov/notifynyc)
- **NYC Advanced Warning System.** <https://advancewarningsystemnyc.org/>
- **Know Your Zone.** [www.nyc.gov/knowyourzone](http://www.nyc.gov/knowyourzone)
- **NYC Emergency Management – Share Your Space Survey.**  
[www1.nyc.gov/site/em/community\\_business/share-your-space-survey.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/em/community_business/share-your-space-survey.page)

### Vulnerability / Hazard Assessments

- **Threat / Vulnerability Assessments and Risk Analysis.**  
<https://www.wbdg.org/resources/threat-vulnerability-assessments-and-risk-analysis>
- **FEMA – Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment.**  
<https://www.fema.gov/threat-and-hazard-identification-and-risk-assessment>
- **Ready.gov – Risk Assessment.** <https://www.ready.gov/risk-assessment>
- **U.S Climate Resilience Toolkit.** <https://toolkit.climate.gov/>

### Sample Disaster Plans

- **Enterprise Green Communities – Ready To Respond Disaster Staffing Toolkit.**  
<http://www.enterprisecommunity.org/solutions-and-innovation/green-communities/tools-and-services/ready-respond-disaster-staffing-toolkit>
- **Emergency Action Plan Template.**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-101/emrgact/files/emrgact.pdf>
- **Sample Emergency Plan – Hidden Valley Apartments.**  
[https://jobs.utah.gov/housing/owhlf/documents/Sample-pdf\\_000.pdf](https://jobs.utah.gov/housing/owhlf/documents/Sample-pdf_000.pdf)

## Sample Emergency Tabletop Exercises

- **FEMA – Hurricane Playbook.** <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/98410>
- **FEMA – Flood Playbook.** <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/98407>
- **FEMA – Winter Storm Playbook.** <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/98398>
- **FEMA – Earthquake Playbook.** <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/98396>
- **FEMA – Tornado Playbook.** <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/98412>
- **Enterprise Green Communities – Emergency Preparedness Coordinator**  
<http://www.enterprisecommunity.org/solutions-and-innovation/green-communities/ready-to-respond/disaster-staffing/emergency-preparedness-coordinator>

## Retrofit Programs & Resources

- **NYC Retrofit Accelerator.** <https://retrofitaccelerator.cityofnewyork.us/>
- **Flood Help NY.** <http://www.floodhelpny.org/>
- **Con Edison – Rebates and Incentives for Multifamily Buildings.**  
<https://www.coned.com/en/save-money/rebates-incentives-tax-credits/rebates-incentives-for-multifamily-customers>
- **Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).**  
<http://www.nyshcr.org/programs/weatherizationassistance/>
- **Enterprise Green Communities – Strategies for Multifamily Building Resilience.**  
<https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/resources/ready-respond-strategies-multifamily-building-resilience-13356>
- **NYC Planning – Retrofitting Buildings for Flood Risk.**  
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/plans/retrofitting-buildings/retrofitting-buildings.page>
- **SolarizeLES.** [solarizeles.org](http://solarizeles.org)

## Community Resources

- **Nazareth Housing Resiliency Services.** <http://nazarethhousingnyc.org/resiliency/>
- **LESReady! Long Term Recovery Group of the Lower East Side.** <http://lesready.org/>





