




DEPARTMENT OF OPERATIONS
"Building Pride In Providence"

DRAFT

DATE: April 24, 2008
TO: Deb Brayton, Chief of Staff
From: Alix Ogden, Director of Operations 
SUBJECT: Update on Snow Operations – 2008

This memo outlines the changes and enhancements in communications and operations made in the wake of the December 13, 2007 winter storm. Primary to this effort is the Emergency Advisory Board (EAB) established by the Mayor in December 2008. The EAB includes the Mayor, senior members of the administration and key department directors and staff. Peter Gaynor, Director of PEMA and Homeland Security in consultation with the Chief of Staff convenes the EAB in anticipation of and during a severe weather event to ensure consistent communication, coordinate services of City departments and with the State EMA, address shortfalls if necessary, and ensure prompt response citizen's needs. PEMA will automatically convene the EAB and put into effect the SOP under the following circumstances:

- As soon as warning of a severe weather event occurs (6-72 hours prior to the start of the event depending on the event). Severe Weather is defined as any destructive weather phenomenon that may include: Hurricane, Tornado, Thunderstorm, Hail, High Winds, Flooding, Snow, Ice, Dense Fog, Severe Heat or Cold.
- When school children are being transported during a weather emergency.
- When the school bus transportation schedule is substantially modified for any purpose.

In addition, the following measures have implemented by departments in order to improve service, enhance communications, increase public awareness and ensure public safety.

Providence Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)

- The PEMA Severe Weather City Coordination Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) is under development. This SOP lays out the procedures for cross-coordination, gathering information and assigning critical tasks among key decision-makers involved or supporting the public's safety during a known or anticipated Severe Weather event.
- PEMA is in the process of building a consolidated and fully automated "Public Safety" notification and recall network using the American Red Cross' Emergency Notification System as the engine to conduct city-wide notifications.
- PEMA is developing an Emergency Services Guide. This guide establishes roles, responsibilities and capabilities of PEMA during other than routine emergencies or major city public safety incidents that have the potential to quickly escalate.

Department of Public Works (DPW)

- DPW improved their operational communications in the field by purchasing 100 Nextel phones. The phones are assigned to area supervisors, ward inspectors, and to the operators of hired equipment. Each inspector is provided a map of their area with identified critical routes such as hospitals, schools, hills, etc. Permanent inspectors are assigned to each ward resulting in increased quality of inspection.
- DPW is actively working to discuss with RIDOT the implementation of RIDOT's statewide operations strategy and the coordination with City services.
- DPW is seeking an alternate site for salt/sand storage and alternate fuel sites to create additional ease of operations.

Providence School Department (PSD)

- The PSD developed a Snow Plan that outlines procedures for snow related school closing, delayed opening, and early release in the event of severe weather. This Plan is in draft form. It identifies:
 - PSD's team members convened by the Superintendent in anticipation of a weather event
 - appropriate staffing levels and communications among PSD staff and individual school communities

- priority age groups for early release including the practice to typically release elementary age children from school first during weather emergencies
 - steps for regular and frequent communications with parents
 - protocols for creating a “shelter in place” during weather related emergencies.
- The PSD established a dedicated “parent service hotline” system, that is activated during weather emergencies or when the school bus transportation schedule is substantially modified for any purpose. The hotline number is publicized and reminders will be sent via the *ConnectEd* communication system.
 - The PSD and First Student have been granted radio access with the Fire Department. A radio check is conducted weekly by Fire with PSD and First Student on this system to ensure consistent communication. Any roadway incidents involving school buses will be immediately reported (by First Student?) to City of Providence Public Safety departments to ensure an appropriate, timely and well-coordinated plan of action can be implemented through the EAB.
 - The PSD is exploring student tracking systems for bus attendance.

As you know, many of these measures involve other City departments, agencies, vendors, etc. and ongoing coordination with these departments and other City partners is ongoing. Please let me know if I can answer any questions.