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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Storm Response Update August 17, 2020**

CEDAR RAPIDS, IA – August 17, 2020 – Cedar Rapids and community partners continue storm clean-up efforts. For the most up-to-date information on response, resources, shelters, meals, and where to volunteer, visit [cedar-rapids.org](http://cedar-rapids.org).

### **Public Safety Update**

A burn ban has been added to the Emergency Proclamation. All outdoor recreational fires are prohibited. We want to remind citizens that burning debris is prohibited and now outdoor recreational fires are also prohibited. Citizens can still use dried firewood in a fire pit to cook food for the period of time necessary to prepare the meal, but then should extinguish it. Charcoal and propane grills may still be used by single-family homeowners. Charcoal and propane grills larger than a one-pound cylinder have always been prohibited above ground level in multi-family dwellings and will continue to be prohibited.

Firefighters and police officers continue to respond to increased calls for service since last Monday's storm. Emergency calls include approximately 350 – 400 9-1-1 calls daily and approximately 700 – 800 non-emergency calls daily (normal average is 200 9-1-1 calls and 500 non-emergency calls daily).

Several fires have been caused by generators located too close to residential properties. Residents are reminded to keep generators 20 feet from a structure and to keep exhaust pointed away from the house. As residents continue with storm debris cleanup, we remind everyone to wear protective equipment while operating chainsaws.

As electrical power has been restored to some homes and businesses, there have been electrical fires. To prevent a surge when the power is restored, turn off the air conditioning unit and unplug appliances to prevent an electrical surge.

### **Garbage Collection Update**

Garbage collection following the normal schedule has resumed. Recycling and yard waste collections are still suspended. **Carts must be located at the street in front of your home, NOT**

**the alley.** Double bag any spoiled food that won't fit in your cart and place the bag on the ground next to your garbage cart. Extra bags of spoiled food will not require an extra garbage tag.

There may be some streets that we are not able to navigate at this time. Find accessible areas to group GARBY carts and spoiled food waste in garbage bags. Debris and materials damaged in the storm do not need to go into your GARBY cart. Place these items near the curb. Keep debris out of the street and sidewalk. Keep garbage debris in separate piles from tree debris.

Work with your neighbors to locate extra garbage carts that were moved by the storm. Contact [solid-waste-recycling@cedar-rapids.org](mailto:solid-waste-recycling@cedar-rapids.org) or 319-286-5897 to report damaged carts and lids.

### **Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants**

The J Avenue NE Water Treatment Plant, Ellis Road NW Water Treatment Plant, and Bertram Road SE Water Pollution Control Facilities are now running on line power. Additional well capacity has been brought online. Water remains safe for consumption, as treatment processes remained online for the duration of the power outages.

### **Community Needs Assessment Survey**

A new survey has been published to help capture an updated snapshot of community needs and support resource coordination. Residents with storm-related assistance needs are encouraged to complete the survey. The information will be shared with our partner agencies to focus and allocate additional assistance and resources. Residents will not be contacted directly following the survey. Take the survey online at <https://arcg.is/1HGhKb0>. Copies of the survey will also be available for residents to complete at the Neighborhood Resource Centers.

Residents with immediate needs are urged to contact United Way of East Central Iowa 2-1-1 (by cell phone, dial 319-739-4211). For emergencies, please call 911. The Foundation 2 Crisis Line is also available for those needing assistance from a trained counselor by dialing 319-362-2174.

### **Building Services Update**

Our Building Services Department continues to work on conducting further assessments of damaged properties throughout the city. In the immediate aftermath of the storm, Cedar Rapids firefighters began a visual sweep of the entire community to determine preliminary damage to structures. During these initial visual inspections, firefighters identified nearly 1,100 properties that suffered a full or partial collapse of a roof, wall, ceiling, or floor and were unsafe to occupy. This number changes daily as property owners conduct repairs, trees are removed, and other repairs or stabilization work is conducted by professional contractors. The inspections conducted by firefighters helped identify needs for public assistance in the immediate aftermath of the destructive storm. Moving forward, every structure that received an initial placard will be inspected again by a certified building inspector, who will assess structural integrity. Contractors conducting home repairs are responsible for obtaining the appropriate permits from the Building Services Department. For questions about the permit process, please call 286-5831.

### **Tree Debris Removal & Pick-Up**

Crews continue to prioritize making roads passable and picking up truckloads of debris. Our focus is on restoring critical infrastructure and clearing roads for emergency access – making sure larger vehicles such as fire or utility trucks can get into neighborhoods. As of Sunday night, 5,562 dump truck loads of debris have been hauled away, using approximately 36 city trucks, 30 DOT trucks, and 70 private contractor trucks. Additionally, we added 18 trucks from the National Guard on

Saturday, who are assisting with clearing debris and clearing roadways. Crews' first priority is on clearing blockages and opening emergency access. We are slowly beginning the process of hauling debris out of neighborhoods, which will take several weeks. As a reminder, the public site for tree debris drop-off is located at the former Cooper's Mill location, and is open for city residents who wish to take tree debris off their property and leave it somewhere, rather than wait for our crews to arrive. The site is located at F Avenue and 1st Street NW, and is open 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Over the weekend, more than 1,000 vehicles visited the public site and dropped off debris.

### **Traffic Signals & Signs**

We have restored power to approximately 100 signals, or approximately 50 percent of our signalized intersections. We appreciate our municipal partners assisting from other communities, including Dubuque, Council Bluffs, Waterloo, and Cedar Falls. Generators continue to operate at major intersections, and we continue making repairs and working to keep intersections safe and operational. Residents are reminded to drive slowly and treat all intersections as all-way stops – drive slow, stop, and proceed with caution when driving through intersections.

### **Neighborhood Resource Centers**

Starting today, Neighborhood Resource Centers are operating at five sites throughout Cedar Rapids to consolidate resident services. Locations include:

- Ladd Library, 3750 Williams Blvd SW
- Northwest Recreation Center parking lot, 1340 11th St NW
- St. Paul's Methodist Church, 1340 3rd Ave SE
- The ROC Center, 1202 10th Street SE
- Taylor Elementary School, 720 7th Ave SW

The centers will operate from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. daily and be staffed with City employees and volunteers willing to help provide information or other resources. Hot meals will be served daily from noon – 2:00 p.m.; and 5:00 p.m. -7:00 p.m. thanks to the generosity of Operation BBQ Relief with the support of several Corridor area restaurants. The sites are coordinated by Linn Area Partners Active in Disaster (LAPAID) organizations. As the needs of our community change, our services will continue to adapt as needed.

### **Transit Service Resumes**

Cedar Rapids Transit services resumed today, Monday, August 17.

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