



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (OEM) ACTIVATES
CORPORATE EMERGENCY ACCESS SYSTEM (CEAS)
FOR STEAM PIPE EXPLOSION IN MIDTOWN MANHATTAN**

As a result of the aftermath of the steam pipe explosion the New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has officially activated for the first time the innovative Corporate Emergency Access System (CEAS). CEAS is designed by the Business Network of Emergency Resources (BNet). BNET is a 'not-for-profit' corporation, dedicated to establishing practical, effective emergency and crisis management solutions for businesses through partnerships with local government.

CEAS is a credentialing program for businesses, operating in conjunction with local government. The program helps facilitate access for critical business employees to their workplace quickly following an emergency event such as the steam pipe explosion in Manhattan, which resulted in travel and access restrictions. By enabling businesses to initiate a reentry and recovery process as quickly as possible, CEAS allows companies to maintain core IT systems, meet regulatory requirements and secure critical data and records in the aftermath of an emergency; all with the aim of continuing the functions of business throughout or soon after a disaster.

"This event provided an excellent opportunity for the city to utilize and test the CEAS system under actual emergency conditions," said Joseph Bruno, Commissioner, NYC Office of Emergency Management. "It allowed OEM and the NYPD to get hands-on experience in the decision making steps and processes required to initiate CEAS. I am confident that we are even better prepared to utilize the program if it is needed in the future."

"We are extremely pleased that the New York City Office of Emergency Management has activated the CEAS program. Response to an emergency is clearly more than just evacuating people; it is also about getting people back in," said Peter Picarillo, Executive Director of BNet, Inc. This activation demonstrated to us and to all the CEAS participating businesses that the City of New York takes business recovery very seriously and is using the tools they have such as the CEAS program to accomplish it.

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The CEAS program allows businesses to determine who should have access to company facilities following an emergency by identifying their critical employees to receive CEAS cards. Coordinators within the company are responsible for screening employees, managing turnover and re-assignment of personnel. The local government ensures that police agencies enforce CEAS through a written protocol, which is integrated into local emergency operations plans. The CEAS high priority access cards are an easy way for local law enforcement to differentiate between critical business employees approved for entry to an area and those who need to be excluded from the site.

“While the CEAS program itself does not meet the classic example of ‘first responder’ credentialing, it none the less is becoming a best practice solution for governments who are looking for a cost effective solution to private sector credentialing,” commented Robert Leviton, M.D., President of BNet, Inc. “We also plan to expand our credentialing efforts to the areas of private sector critical infrastructure, logistics, and health care, all of which clearly require regional interoperability.”

BNet’s CEAS program, in addition to New York City, has also been implemented in Buffalo, New York, Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Stamford, Connecticut. More cities like Philadelphia, Pennsylvania are expected to participate in the near future. Any city, county or state can adopt CEAS through a written agreement with BNet. Once adopted by a municipality, any business can elect to participate in the program, assigning a designated number of CEAS cards to critical employees or contractors, prior to any emergency or disaster.

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