

Speaker 1 ([00:04](#)):

Welcome to 'Prep Talk,' the Emergency Management podcast. Find out what you need to know about preparedness. Get all the latest tips from experts in the field and learn what to do before the next disaster strikes from the Emergency Management Department in the city that never sleeps. Here are your hosts, Omar Bourne and Allison Pennisi.

Omar Bourne ([00:27](#)):

Hello everyone. Thank you for listening, I am Omar Bourne.

Allison Pennisi ([00:30](#)):

And I'm Allison Pennisi and you are our listeners. And as always, we thank you for joining us. We want you to come back as often as you can. So feel free to listen to Prep Talk on your favorite podcast provider. You can also follow us on social media, on our Twitter [@nycemergencymgt](#), Facebook, Instagram, and much more.

Omar Bourne ([00:48](#)):

This episode, we are discussing my favorite time of the year. And I say that sarcastically because I dread the winter season, but we're going to be talking winter weather. We're going to be talking about what the City is doing to prepare for the upcoming season.

Allison Pennisi ([01:07](#)):

That's right Omar, we will be discussing winter and while New York City is no stranger to winter weather, as we have seen over the past year, the way emergency managers prepare for and respond to emergencies like extreme weather, may be a little different than in seasons past.

Omar Bourne ([01:23](#)):

We have none other than our regular guest acting commissioner for the New York City Sanitation Department, Edward Grayson. And we were joking offline that he is a regular now and he is going to be looking for some type of gift for being such a regular guest on our show. Is that right?

Edward Grayson ([01:44](#)):

Yes I mean I feel like I've been on so many times. It's almost like when you host "Saturday Night Live" a few times, they're going to give you something so you give something small like a pencil or a cup or... Yeah.

Omar Bourne ([01:57](#)):

We'll get you something for next year. But as always, we thank you for being with us. You have a wealth of knowledge. You've been at this now for many, many years, and this year before we used to call you chief. Now we're calling you acting commissioner. So congratulations on that.

Edward Grayson ([02:19](#)):

Thank you.

Omar Bourne ([02:20](#)):

So let's get right into it. You've mentioned that the sanitation department are the heroes when the iron meets the asphalt, we all know that. So what are the goals for the department this year? And especially as their new leader.

Edward Grayson ([02:34](#)):

Thank you Omar and it's great to actually be here with you and Allison remote as it is, it's an absolute pleasure. And I just, before I get into my answers, I do want to thank you again. This show, this podcast and the commitment of New York City's Emergency Management team to be, help New Yorkers get prepared and hosts information to let people actually start thinking about things and give that level of preparedness and an insight into what's going on. It's critical and I can't thank you enough for that. I think that the men and women in this department are absolutely heroes, everyday heroes, who are the quintessential definition of essential. And when it snows or when mother nature shows its power in other ways, meteorologically, the New York City Department of Sanitation becomes the first of the first responders. They're out there from the first flake throughout the entire event, only to flip back and go back to that, from the hero with the plow back to being the hero with the curb.

Edward Grayson ([03:32](#)):

Our goal is always to keep New York City safe and healthy and clean. And in snow operations are our goals to keep the roadways passable and critical travel routes open for first responders and central travelers. Personally, my goal as leader this year is to serve my workforce, to do everything in my capacity, to keep them safe and support them in what they need to do to succeed in our mission, to keep everybody else safe.

Allison Pennisi ([04:00](#)):

Commissioner Grayson on previous episodes of our show, you've talked about X factors influencing snow operations. The mayor recently announced that outdoor dining will be available to New Yorkers for the foreseeable future. So talk to us about how snow removal operations are affected by factors like this.

Edward Grayson ([04:18](#)):

Absolutely Allison, and there is such a... The first thing I think I want to get out there to set expectations is the reminder to all New Yorkers that no snow event with or without a pandemic with or without outdoor dining is ever easy. So it's an incredibly intricate and complex operation, especially in the Gotham of the free world that is New York and our tight streets and our travel routes and the number of people in cars and traffic involved. So it's never easy, there are a million X-factors such as, what time does the storm come in? When, what are the temps leading in? What are the temps leading out, or what kind of help are we going to get from sun our mother nature, if any at all, and what day of the week it comes in.

Edward Grayson ([05:00](#)):

There's so many little intricate parts. And I think that this year, especially with outdoor dining and other outdoor programs that are totally needed. See, we support what's going on with the City's response to try to overcome the impacts of what COVID-19 has done everybody, including small business, including these restaurants, these restaurants need this option for dining. And quite frankly, I've said this in other places as well. So to the people, I mean, I know that my wife wants to go out to dinner whenever we can. If we're lucky to be able to do that and to be able to know that you have a place to go to pivot and

actually try to be, have that sense of normalcy. We've all been through a lot together in 2020 and to be able to try to work together with the local stakeholders and the small businesses and work with DOT and our other City agency counterparts like New York City Emergency Management and the whole team to be able to come up with at least a plan to be able to service these streets that are hosting dining structures.

Edward Grayson (06:06):

And more importantly, to have awareness. That's the key goal, there's nothing easy about it, but I think that the more we can set expectations and have awareness the better off we'll be. Now, what are some of the things that we potentially can see as everybody knows when we were at the onset of a snow storm, at least if you're in New York City, we plow snow towards the right. Snow gets plowed towards the right of the roadway travel so that we don't plow left otherwise, we'd be plowing into oncoming traffic into two-way streets. So with that said, we displaced snow that's in the center line roadway towards the right-hand side, we're now going to be in a landscape on the streetscape rather where we're displacing snow towards the right. And there may be an outdoor dining structure. Our goal is to make sure that the restaurant owners are aware of what that looks like ahead of time, give them that reality.

Edward Grayson (06:58):

Everybody knows what a plow ridge looks like, except that let's face it. Most people don't think about snow until it's snowing. And, you now think about digging your car out of that ridge until you have to. So this is to just remind everybody that will be out there plowing supply storm, which is anything over two inches from New York City. And we'll be displacing that snow to the right-hand side of the road, and we want the restaurant owners and all pedestrians, and we want everybody to be aware of what that could potentially look like and be, and also give them guidance to say, "Listen, at these thresholds, you may want start securing."

Edward Grayson (07:31):

For example, when New York City Department of Sanitation issues a snow alert, dining in those structures will no longer be allowed. And then if it's a very significant snowfall expectation, we may send out some messaging through the whole city, through the administration, through a city-wide messaging plan that instructs businesses to secure and try to compact their operation that is outside just to minimize those impacts, make sure that we have as much room as possible to plow, because if we're expecting a lot of snow, that's just even more snow to displace to the right-hand side towards some of these structures.

Edward Grayson (08:07):

And I think that those are some things that people need to understand and recognize as we look at it from a very holistic approach, because these businesses need to be out there, people need a place to go. And we certainly want to be cognizant of the realities Winter Weather in New York City and the realities of trying to be New Yorkers, true New Yorkers in New York while we're having them a winter season. So we're trying to put all of that together with some great people, some dedicated public servants across the whole span, sanitation staff, DOT staff, Emergency Management staff, and naturally the team at City Hall to try to work together with small businesses and their representatives and make sure that they're, everybody's aware. I think that the thing for this season leading into the winter is awareness and messaging.

Edward Grayson ([09:00](#)):

And I think that if we can get that. We will be able to plow the streets. It's the question of what setting those expectations ahead of time to let people know that anything that's in the roadway can impede our ability to do that. And what does that look like? A structure on a roadway may not be a problem, but that double parked car that's 10 feet in front of the structure on the other side of the road, you may have created a narrowing situation that now delays the plausibility to get through. So again, sometimes when you look at something strategically from a map or a planning perspective, what it looks like it will be on paper will seem to work, but it's those real life reality checks that we want people to be aware of. This would not be the season to linger and double park in the middle of a snow storm.

Edward Grayson ([09:49](#)):

This is exactly the season that we're going to recommend to all New Yorkers, to listen to the public messaging that comes out. If we're asking you to stay off the road, please do that. If we're asking you to only travel for essential purposes, please do that. If we're asking you to be very mindful, because there may be changes to the streetscape that you weren't prepared for. And if you are doing essential travel to travel slowly at a rate of speed that is commensurate with the traction you may or may not have, please do that as well. So I think that if there was any cornerstone message for setting expectations this year for New Yorkers and all across the border, our visitors, our residents, our guests listen to the public messaging that comes out, via Emergency Management, via City Hall, via my department. And just understand that you have an entire team of people that are working very, very hard to keep you safe. And this would be the best year ever to listen to those messages.

Omar Bourne ([10:42](#)):

And am glad you brought up messaging, shameless plug here @NotifyNYC on Twitter. We'll provide a lot of that messaging for you as a New Yorker. If you have questions or concerns about the winter season and any winter emergency that may occur, I want to ask you practically speak now to the business owners who might be a little frustrated and say, "Oh, we put down these structures outside and now we may have to pick them back up to clear the snow." And there may be a little frustrated by the process. So what message do you have for those small business owners and those restaurant owners about this process and what it means for them?

Edward Grayson ([11:29](#)):

I think that the best thing I could speak to, to the small business owners and is to first say that we completely understand that you're doing everything in your power to stay in business. And we completely understand that you've made some investments to try to stay viable in what is definitely a competitive market with these needs that you've never had before. I would remind them that... And this is part of something that I would say later we're all in this together. And so we want to be as open and accepting to the needs to keep you viable. But when you're creating a business plan, part of that, that normally these, so these businesses may or may not have had the plan for the way municipal service providers plan for the way emergency managers plan for. You're now taking, you now are part of that X-factor group that we spoke of before.

Edward Grayson ([12:21](#)):

You're now hosting an operation that has an outdoor element that you may not have had prior to in seasons past, if you were the kind of person that could open up in a snow storm and the worst thing you had to worry about was whether you get a heavy traffic flow at the dinner rush that's something that

you are hosting indoors. In an outdoor environment, you have made those investments and my advice to them would be to think realistically about how do you intend to protect your investment? Because when it snows, you're in the right of way, we do have to plow the street, we do have to salt the street, we do have to keep the critical travel routes open to make sure that people are safe and that we can have a city that is also running on regular business.

Edward Grayson ([13:06](#)):

And you're now living with that with the rest of us. So I think that I understand frustration. I understand... I can't even imagine I'm not a small business owner. I'm a public servant. So I respect the men and women that are trying to run these establishments and keep people employed and keep people viable, small family businesses that have been in the city for years that have such a great local flavor and local reputation. When I look around and I see my heart is with them and as a New Yorker as a consummate New Yorker, I want them to succeed. And I want to in my department and the men and women that work for the Department of Sanitation among... And I wouldn't say I can speak, I've been on these calls, we've been planning and thinking about this for such a long time.

Edward Grayson ([13:50](#)):

You have such a team of people who care about not only the New Yorkers that would patronize these restaurants, but the restaurant owners in the entire community, we're trying everything in our power to come up with a viable way to have a winter season and have this all at the same time. And I would remind all New Yorkers and the business owners, this is the first time we're doing this as a group will be lessons that we do have to learn in real time, because with any... There's an old saying, planning is everything, and the plan can go out the window. You have to remember that in theory, you come up with the best possible solution for what may happen. And you have a lot of people thinking about a lot of what could happen.

Edward Grayson ([14:37](#)):

And in real time, there's going to be a myriad of factors that may change the course of how you would play it out. I think that for the business owners, they just need to hear from me as the servant, from the sanitation side of it. We are very committed to keeping you solvent and keeping the streets open so people can come and use your establishment. But when the snow comes, we have to plow it. We have to move it. We have to treat the roadways. We have to give the traction control to keep people safe.

Edward Grayson ([15:09](#)):

And we're doing everything we can to give the proper message and give the proper awareness so that they can then take some ownership of the process themselves to protect their investment and understand that I would be looking to see what I could do to possibly do both if I were them. How do I stay solvent on the days that the weather is allowing me to do that? And how do I condense my operation to protect my investment and allow plows to traverse the streets that I occupy. And I think that there's a way that we can work together. And I think that we will be learning lessons in real time throughout the season.

Omar Bourne ([15:43](#)):

Patience is key, but we're in this together. I like that. Now some of those businesses do have outdoor dining on the sidewalk itself. And I know there were certain laws in place for when you can remove your

snow after the final snow falls. So will those protocols be different this year because of the fact that people will have outdoor dining in place on sidewalks, especially?

Edward Grayson ([16:11](#)):

Well, that's an interesting thing. We know that the landscape and the streetscape are going to be a little bit different. We have a few different things going on that we've never had in seasons past with regard to outdoor occupancy for various businesses. And I would remind everyone that I would say that most... I think that this year, if any year, if I were going to forecast out on compliance and on those on people shoveling now would be the year that any business would be wanting to make sure that they, if you're looking to have people come to your business, you're going to want to clear your snow and ice so that you can provide your customers traction control. With regard to shoveling and clearing snow and ice and the protocols that landlords and business owners and property owners have, we have to have passable streets for essential travelers who may not also be walking with people that are taking more open air approaches and still the countless New Yorkers that we have that have mobility concerns.

Edward Grayson ([17:16](#)):

We always have to be cognizant that while there is definitely a change to how people will operate this year, that is also an unforeseen eventuality. We do not know where anyone will be in operating inside New York City. Where is the virus rates? Are there other protocols or other things that have limited travel or change people's behavior. We will not know what that happens until it's in real time, but as far as when it's snowing and what happens after the snow stops falling, we still need to have a plan. This is a perfect opportunity as it's, well it's a little cold today. And we had our 30 degree temperatures in the overnight, but now is the perfect time, if you haven't started thinking about what your snow removal plans will be. Now is the perfect time if you're a business owner or property owner to think what is my plan for when it snows, what's my plan.

Edward Grayson ([18:10](#)):

And that would be my quintessential message this year for people to think about. The Department of Sanitation publishes its plan every year, you can go online and you can see what our borough-based snow plans are. And we do that. And it's a nice public view of how we prepare, and it gives a great outline of what we're doing and where we are this season. But I think that my message this year for all New Yorkers and all business owners and everyone is think about the snow, it will come. What is your plan for one of those.

Allison Pennisi ([18:40](#)):

Excellent points, Acting Commissioner Grayson. So I have to ask, because we ask every time you're on the show, how much salt and equipment are ready for the upcoming season?

Edward Grayson ([18:50](#)):

So Allison we spent all year planning on it. So this season we will be, we are already at over 300,000 tons of rock salt on hand with capacity to bring in another 600,000 tons. If we needed to, we have over 700 salt spreaders and 2000 trucks we can put plows on, on top of that. And this year, our brine fleet has actually grown a bit. And this year we're going out with 30 brine trucks and the new equipment we got in is a larger capacity. So we're in really good shape with equipment for the season.

Allison Pennisi ([19:26](#)):

So you mentioned the brine, and I know you're not talking about baking the Turkey. So talk to our listeners a little bit more about that.

Edward Grayson ([19:33](#)):

Last season. We had a pre-brining component into our snow plan. And as everybody knows, thankfully, last season was one of the lowest recorded snow depth winters in history of New York City. Naturally, we are not planning for that again for this year. We expect there definitely to be some snow, but brine is a great product that goes out ahead of time. It's another layer of protection. And what brining does is we basically take a liquid sodium chloride solution so it's just like the rock salt that we're using only in liquid form that goes out ahead of time, you lay that liquid down on the roadway, and then that liquid pre-treatment what it does is it helps create a layer of protection that naturally breaks down as the snow starts to build up on it as it dilutes. But that first pass can buy you some time with helping not have ice and snow accrete to the roadway.

Edward Grayson ([20:34](#)):

So it won't bond to the roadway. It helps our plows do their job, and it basically is another layer of protection inside to be out there ahead of the first flake. So normally our salt spreaders are out there at the first flake of snow. The brine vehicles be out there on specified roadways that have a icing component to them. They have a history of icing up quicker. They're either high elevations or they're roadways that are built with more steel infrastructure. There are things that make that roadway colder has a longer track record of icing up. We treat, we have those routes that we go out and we're going to treat with the brine when the conditions are right. And we're also going to be expanding brine with our smaller brining units into some of the local streets. It may come in to play with some of the outdoor dining areas, but since this is a new process for us, for that application, we're going to have to see how that plays out.

Edward Grayson ([21:23](#)):

We definitely have plans for that, but we are excited about what brine's going to be this year. And we think it will be a much bigger component in this season snow operation than it was in last season. And I mentioned conditions, and this is very important. Brine is not something you would put out in a forecasted event that is going to be rain to snow turnover. We have a lot of events in New York City that had that wintry mix. Whereas there's a lot of moisture content and the temps are flooding with freezing. So it could go snow, it could go... If we think that there's a high likelihood of there being rain at the front end of it, that would not be an event where you would brine, because then the rain would just allude it, it'd be worthless. So brining is for when the conditions are cold and we expect the precept to come in as snow. So we can head off snow before it's a problem. You wouldn't use brine when you think it's going to rain.

Omar Bourne ([22:17](#)):

Makes a lot of sense.

Allison Pennisi ([22:18](#)):

So obviously we have a lot of salted equipment that are ready for the upcoming season, but I think that in addition to the heroes where the iron meets the asphalt, sometimes the sanitation department needs a little help. So you have something really great called the Snow Laborer Program. Talk to us about the importance of this program and how can people sign up this year?

Edward Grayson ([22:38](#)):

The Snow Laborer Program is a very important assist. We rely on those volunteers, so snow laborers are volunteer army, you registered to become a snow laborer. And then the department notifies you when we are in a situation where we would be employing snow laborers and the laborers report for duty, we give them brooms and shovels, we give them shovels and ice picks and scrapers. And we give them transportation out to the routes and the areas of the city where we need their help with manual shoveling operations.

Edward Grayson ([23:07](#)):

I think that if there were ever a season that we could really use as many laborers that are available to come and register and be willing to come with work with us, this is definitely a year as I think that we will definitely find ourselves in need for more manual shoveling operations. We're going to be looking to have clear the corner caps and the catch basins and in front of the hydrants more and more this season, I think that this year what we had to do, normally we would put out a registration process and people would report to our garages and they would sign up and then we would call them and like I said, it's a very good program. And we embraced that assist every year.

Edward Grayson ([23:42](#)):

This year because of COVID, we do a new way. We would like everyone to make an appointment. You can make an appointment online at our website nyc.gov DSNY and you know, when you signed there is a place to how to register to be an emergency snow labor, and with that, you sign up to make an appointment. This way we want you to come and register it, and we will still make those notifications when we are employing for you to report to duty. But this way the registration process has a layer of safety for not only the people coming down to volunteer, to be a worker, but also for the DSNY staff that's doing the registration.

Omar Bourne ([24:19](#)):

Wonderful. And you mentioned COVID-19 and obviously we are in a pandemic, I know that you care about your workers who go out to help clean the streets, pick up the trash and the garbage, and then obviously clear the snow when it does indeed precipitate. So question for you in terms of the pandemic and the protocols that are in place to ensure that your workers are doing the great work, but doing it safely.

Edward Grayson ([24:47](#)):

Oh, yes. So since the start of the pandemic, so sanitation workers and our frontline supervisors and our office staff, the entire department has embraced the social distancing protocols, wearing masks, sanitation workers, our frontline folks out in the field that most of the New Yorkers are more familiar with. They're a PPE agency regarding they're always wearing gloves and are always wearing safety boots. And every now and again, depending on the function, you would see our staff wearing masks anyway, if they were operating power tools or they working in a high dust environment on specific tasks. Right now our employees are out there. They're issued masks if they need masks, a lot of our employees they've embraced their role and they've gone. And they're doing like everybody else, they doing their own custom mask, or they're doing some kind of a bandana and everybody's got their own version of what a face covering is with regard to social distancing are our workers do implore it amongst each other.



Edward Grayson ([25:48](#)):

They certainly looking to keep their distance away from the men and women in the public as best to their part. And when you look at a sanitation worker out there every day, usually they are moving in some way, and so you don't really see a lot of time where they're congregating with members of the public and talking, they're usually out there in action and they'll continue to do that. We automated our operating shifts at the start of the pandemic. So we brought everybody in into our earlier. So our collection operation shift went to 5:00 AM and that's to keep everybody out of the public's right of way and keep our employees a little bit more socially distant, even temporarily distant. So we have a lot of functions. We have a lot of staff that worked the overnight on refuse and recycling collection.

Edward Grayson ([26:35](#)):

We have a lot of staff that's coming in earlier they're coming in at 5:00 a.m. to start the day line. And now, when we go into winter operations, we try to our work force out over the three shifts. So go the overnight the day line and then the 4:00 p.m. To midnight shift, where we spread our people apart, and then this way that keeps them less interacting with the public and also keeps the garages as minimally staffed as possible. So to speak, to give even more social distancing at the physical plant. Now when we go with the snow operations our workforce, basically you're assigned a plow or a spreader.

Edward Grayson ([27:11](#)):

Typically, you're not, it's not a two person function or a team function you're out there. And as a single occupant of a plow, and throughout the entire snow storm, we get to employ a social distancing completely as they are in usually single occupant vehicles doing their jobs, communicating via radios and stuff. So it's an interesting thing. This department has taken it's response to COVID-19 seriously, like many other response agencies and essential workers. We have definitely seen our fair share of the virus. We've had over 740 employee positives since the pandemic. And we've had eight fatalities that a COVID related. And it's definitely, it's definitely changed the way us like the rest of New York. This workforce has been through it, and we are completely committed to coming in everyday, serving this great city and trying to keep the public safe as well as ourselves.

Omar Bourne ([28:12](#)):

And our hearts go out to those families of your workers who have lost a loved one.

Allison Pennisi ([28:19](#)):

Over this past year, we've talked about how 2020 has been incredibly unprecedented. So what other safety tips should New Yorkers keep in mind this season?

Edward Grayson ([28:29](#)):

I think I would like your listeners to know some basics. Think about, I think I want to revert back to a little bit of what I was saying earlier. Have a plan. Think about when you're looking at your property. Now, if you're a property owner, where do you shovel your snow? That makes sense, make sure that you don't block hydrants, make sure that you're not... If you're on the corner, make sure that you're not blocking the catch basins so that there's some place for the runoff after the fall, when you're thinking about what am I going to do if it snows tomorrow? That is something that's real. I think that paying attention to the messaging, but more importantly we don't live in a world that's, we're getting our

messages by Pony Express so we're not waiting until 6:00 PM to hear Walter Cronkite anymore. People are talking about, this is a very proactive news-centric world.

Edward Grayson ([29:21](#)):

You get weather updates very early three, four or five days in advance that there's a winter weather threat. I think that for Winter Weather and for everything now will be a great time for everybody to embrace technology, embrace Notify NYC, embrace all of the complete stream of information that will help you make good decisions that you're not behind the eight ball. And I understand that there are a lot of New Yorkers that are struggling. I totally, my heart goes out to them. I think that one thing to remember when you are struggling is that awareness, especially these free streams of awareness are more important when your life is already difficult.

Edward Grayson ([30:05](#)):

I will take that extra 10 seconds to keep myself abreast of what the weather's going to be. And what's going on in the world. It's even more important that you have that awareness, even when life is hard, you don't want to be blindsided by something that you could have seen coming for three days. It's a tough enough time when things do blind search something like it might snow on Thursday that you can hear on Monday. That's an easy one to prepare.

Omar Bourne ([30:32](#)):

We like to say in emergency management winging it is not an emergency plan. So to your point, have a plan and be prepared and listen out for that message.

Allison Pennisi ([30:42](#)):

Speaking with New York City Department of Sanitation Commissioner Grayson. Up next is rapid response. But first here's a message from New York City Emergency Management.

Speaker 1 ([30:56](#)):

New Yorkers love to be the first to know. That's why the City of New York has Notify NYC. So you can be the first to know when an emergency happens. If there's a fire in your neighborhood, or the weather takes a turn for the worse, stay informed with Notify NYC, get the free app today for your Apple or Android device. You can also visit [NYC.gov/NotifyNYC](http://NYC.gov/NotifyNYC). Call 311 or follow @NotifyNYC on Twitter because a notified New Yorker is a prepared New Yorker.

Speaker 5 ([31:38](#)):

You're listening to 'Prep Talk,' the Emergency Management podcast.

Allison Pennisi ([31:46](#)):

It is rapid response time. And if you are first time listener, it's simple Omar and I will ask questions and our guests will give the first answer that comes to mind.

Speaker 5 ([31:56](#)):

It's time for 'Prep Talk' rapid response.

Omar Bourne ([32:05](#)):

Commissioner Grayson. First question. What is the one thing you want listeners to know about public service?

Edward Grayson ([32:12](#)):

I think I'd like your listeners to know that public service and the men and women that are called to that, they are all dedicated and they are all professional and they are all trying their hardest to give that service. However, they are also victims as well as responders with the public. So I just think that I would like to remind everybody that when you see your public service worker across agencies across all spans that man or woman is out there trying to serve the public, trying to do their job, trying to get whatever your expectations are for their work done. And then they go home and they join the population. They're victims and responders and especially in 2020, we are all in this together. And I think that if there was ever a time to get one point the central message for this season, be it snow. Be it, anything that comes up, we are all in this together and let's give each other that patients that we need.

Allison Pennisi ([33:12](#)):

Okay. What is one thing you want New Yorkers to know about snow removal or winter weather preparation?

Edward Grayson ([33:18](#)):

Have a plan. My one tip for the year is to have a plan. It will snow. In 151 years of recorded Winter Weather depths in Central Park, we've only had a snow depth that was a single digit nine times including last year. And usually the year that follows is something that is much greater than a single digit. So I would remind everybody it will snow. And this year of all years, 2020 has shown us all that we are - number one, we are all survivors. We are all tough. New Yorkers are tough. But hope is not a plan, have a plan. I am hoping that the world turns around and gets great. I am hoping for a lot of things, but I have a plan. And I think that this year above any of the year, I want New Yorkers to understand and want small business owners to understand that we have a plan to come and serve the public. You have to have a plan on how you will operate as well. And I think that we could find that common ground together.

Omar Bourne ([34:26](#)):

well said, I'm going to switch gears a little here to something more light. So what is your favorite winter weather TV episode or movie?

Edward Grayson ([34:39](#)):

For me, dating myself but it is definitely the stop action "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" special. I wait for it every year. I love that Yukon Cornelius. And when he tackles the abominable snowman over the mountain, and then it comes back at the end for the big sing along. It's the best I wait for it every year.

Allison Pennisi ([35:01](#)):

That's a good one. I like that. Sum up the work you do in one word.

Edward Grayson ([35:05](#)):

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Epic's my word. I think that the men and women of this department to something that is just incredibly heroic every day, I have never been prouder to be a member of the Department of Sanitation. I am humbled and honored that I am the acting commissioner for the time being. And I have, I just, it is an Epic operation and these men and women are heroes every single day.

Allison Pennisi ([35:31](#)):

It's a great word and very well said. Thank you again for joining us for 'Prep Talk,' for our listeners as we've said time and time again, winter is coming and the best time to be prepared for an emergency is now. Take the time to be winter ready. If you want tips and additional information, visit [NYC.gov/emergencymanagement](http://NYC.gov/emergencymanagement), or visit [NYC.gov/sanitation](http://NYC.gov/sanitation) to learn more.

Speaker 1 ([36:01](#)):

That's this episode of 'Prep Talk.' If you like what you heard, you can listen anytime online or through your favorite RSS feed. Until next time, stay safe and prepared.