Tuesday is Election Day â€”Â Sandy Be Damned [Updated]

Posted on Oct 31, Posted by David Howard King Category Elections

Editor's Note: This post has been updated with statements from the city's Board of Elections.

"Election day will be on Tuesday, that is not going to change," John Conklin, spokesman for the New York State Board of Election, said earlier today.

He said county boards across the state are currently assessing the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy to polling places and trying to determine what alternate arrangements need to be made to make sure everyone who wants to vote can.

"The local boards impacted by the storm are assessing damage to the polling places right now," Conklin said. "We have been in meetings with the governor's office and local boards to work on these assessments. We have to see if power still remains at the polling site, if they remain accessible to the public, the board and the machines. We also need to make sure the sites are safe. Once that is done, we will check on alternate polling sites and make sure they have tents, generators and whatever else they need."

Conklin said he hopes that all polling sites will have power, but he admitted, "Some might not." In that case, paper ballots will be made available for voters. The ballots will be put in a lock box and then scanned at county BOE headquarters.

There isn't a firm deadline on when the poll site evaluations need to be completed. "We didnt give a deadline," Conklin said. "I dont know how to put a deadline on a thing like this. We hope to have it done by the end of the day."

Obviously, with the damage done by Sandy, voting may not be on the top of everyone's

to-do-list. Conklin said turnout for the primary election last year was depressed in the parts of the state that were effected by Hurricane Irene.

"I hope turnout is not siginificantly impacted," said Conklin, adding that "some people's homes also were burned down, some are under water and voting is not their biggest concern ... But we want to make sure that when they choose to vote that they have a place to do it."

City Board of Elections Commissioners Maria Guastella and Frederic Umane said in a statement on the agency's website that the BOE staff "has been working diligently to make sure that we are prepared for Election Day."

They said they have been assessing damage to poll sites caused by the storm. Meanwhile, poll workers are being trained and a temporary Manhattan office has been opened.

The BOE's usual Manhattan office is in lower Manhattan, where power is still being restored.

The commissioners also said that the "processing of absentee ballot applications has been delayed."

"But our staff are working diligently to process all absentee ballots that will be distributed by USPS overnight mail," they said. "Other NYC agencies have assigned some of their workers to assist in our efforts and we appreciate their assistance."

Sen. Joe Addabbo of Queens issued this statement in response to questions about how voting in his district might be affected.

â€śAs of now my main priority and that of my campaign staff is to focus on assisting my district in the clean up and aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, as many areas of my district were hit incredibly hard by the storm," said Addabbo, who is in a battle to retain his seat from his main challenger, Councilman Eric Ulrich. "The safety and well-being of my constituents is the most

important to me, and I will not focus my attention elsewhere until the recovery is well on its way.â€ť

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Aerial photo of Breezy Point, Queens provided by the Office of Governor Andrew Cuomo

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Joe Addabbo

Queens

voting