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**Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas Highlights
Agency's Storm Response Efforts**

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Montpelier, VT – Vermont Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas made clear today that her office is open for business and ready to serve the public. She emphasized, however, that she is empowering the Vermont Secretary of State (VTSOS) agency family to make helping others during this time of need a priority.

“The safety and well-being of all Vermonters is paramount right now,” said Secretary Copeland Hanzas. “The Secretary of State’s office is continuing to fulfill its mission to the State and Vermonters, but we also need to focus on helping our friends, neighbors, and co-workers right now.”

She also announced some key response efforts the agency is undertaking in the wake of the severe weather and devastation throughout the state in the last week.

The agency’s Office of Professional Regulation (OPR) is working on several fronts to assist in storm response. OPR will be issuing temporary emergency licenses, at no charge, to out of state licensed professionals during the declared state of emergency to assist Vermonters. The professions included in the temporary licensure provisions are: architects, engineers, foresters, land surveyors, pollution abatement facility operators, property inspectors, residential contractors, wastewater/water system designers, security guards, pharmacy, and well drillers. Please see OPR’s website for more information <https://sos.vermont.gov/opr/about-opr/flood-response/>

The Governor has just issued an executive order allowing pharmacists to provide a 30-day supply of maintenance medications. Additionally, the Office has established guidance for temporary locations for pharmacies affected by the flood. Please visit OPR’s pharmacy natural disaster webpage for guidance on this <https://cms.sec.state.vt.us:8443/share/s/snlRb0LmQKOkv36MUyAFEA>

The Corporations Division has communicated relief information out to the over 225,000 Vermont businesses and non-profits currently maintained in the Corporations database. The Secretary of State’s office has the widest network of contacts with businesses, so Secretary Copeland Hanzas has sent out a communication outlining where businesses can register their losses, as well as how businesses can offer help, supplies, and relief to Vermonters at this time.

The Secretary of State’s Vermont Archives and State Records Administration (VSARA) is working with municipalities and state agencies on storm response for public records and document management.

VSARA is also working through the Vermont Arts & Culture Disaster and Resilience Network <https://vacdarn.org/> to advise libraries, museums, and historical societies, all over the state, on storm response and recovery for protection of important cultural and historical artifacts and records.

The agency's Elections division, in collaboration with VTSOS's Municipal Services division, is utilizing its extensive network and relationships with city and town clerks to check in on municipalities across the state and offer any assistance they may need.

Safe at Home (SAH), which is an address confidentiality program, was affected by the flood because the Montpelier Post Office is not open. VTSOS is now able to pick up the Safe at Home mail at the temporary post office location in Montpelier and will be delivering mail to SAH participants as soon as possible.

Although the agency's 128 State Street office sustained significant basement flooding and it is unclear when staff will be allowed back in, its other two locations were spared flooding. VTSOS OPR offices at 89 Main Street will temporarily house Elections and Municipal Services, and the State Archives building in Middlesex will welcome Corporations and the agency's Administrative Services staff.

"We are fortunate that our Office is nearly 100 percent digital which allowed us to continue to provide services to Vermonters despite the flooding" said Secretary Copeland Hanzas. "I am encouraging my team to help their families and communities with storm clean-up, and I trust them to get their work done while they help Vermonters get through this together and come back stronger."

Learn more and find additional contact information on the VTSOS website: <https://sos.vermont.gov/>.

