



**NEWS FROM:
THE JOINT COMMISSION ON PUBLIC ETHICS**

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**FORMER DIRECTOR OF STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
VIOLATED ETHICS LAW BY DIVERTING HURRICANE SANDY CRISIS
RECOVERY WORKERS FOR HIS OWN BENEFIT**

**\$4,000 Fine for Using Emergency Responders to Clear a Tree from His Own Property
Instead of Public Roads and Highways**

ALBANY – (May 26, 2015) – The New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics announced today that a former director of the State Office of Emergency Management was fined \$4,000 for diverting crisis recovery workers responding after Hurricane Sandy to remove a tree that had fallen across the driveway of his Long Island home.

Steven Kuhr, the former executive deputy commissioner of the State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, which encompasses the Office of Emergency Management, admitted in a settlement with the Joint Commission that he violated State ethics law prohibiting the use of his official position to secure unwarranted privileges for himself. Kuhr was also dismissed from State service after the incident.

According to the settlement, on Oct. 31, 2012, Kuhr, working from his offices in Albany, tasked crisis recovery workers with clearing a tree that had fallen on his property, blocking access to his East Northport house. Those workers were instead supposed to be clearing trees from public roads and highways that were impeding emergency response efforts throughout Long Island in the days following Hurricane Sandy.

“The days immediately following Superstorm Sandy saw an unprecedented crisis recovery effort and extraordinary dedication from countless public servants, and for one manager to divert precious resources for his own benefit is simply unacceptable,” said Joint Commission Executive Director Letizia Tagliafierro, “Public officials who put their own interests above the public they were meant to serve will be held accountable.”

The settlement follows an investigation into Kuhr’s actions by the Office of the New York State Inspector General, and its subsequent referral to the Joint Commission. A copy of the settlement may be obtained by clicking [HERE](#).