

N. Battery Park City wait to end

Some can return in 'days,' source predicts

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Residents of the northern end of Battery Park City may be able to resume living in their apartments "in a matter of days," a source close to the Battery Park City Authority said yesterday.

People in the southern part will have more of a wait, which the source characterized as longer than days but shorter than months. He said he could not be more specific.

There is no official estimate of when the waterfront neighborhood of luxury rentals and condos across from the World Trade Center will be habitable again.

Even once all the buildings are certified as safe, they still fall within the restricted zone, one official said.

About 9,000 residents of Battery Park City and other area buildings have been displaced for more than a week.

The northern end of Battery Park City has electricity, and

workers were running tests yesterday to determine whether the gas can safely be turned on.

"I think the city needs be more informative to the Battery Park City residents as to when they can return to their apartments," said Tom Anguilla, 46, a financial services salesman who lives in the southern part on Rector Place.

"Or, if not when, what are the issues that need to be resolved before they can return. I'm fortunate because I'm single, but there are elderly people, people with families."

As they have been for several days, Battery Park City residents were being escorted to their homes from Pier 40 and

Bowling Green to retrieve belongings yesterday. So were residents of several buildings near the disaster site: 1-66 West St., 1-90 Greenwich St., 1-53 Trinity Place and 1-92 Washington St.

People living north of those building numbers were out of luck, although police said the list of restricted areas is changing constantly.

Paperwork in hand, Stephanie Cangiano did her best to try to return home yesterday.

The 45-year-old food store owner rushed to Bowling Green from Staten Island after hearing she might be able to get into her apartment, which is in a 35-story building at 75 West St.

"I just ran here as fast as I could," she said. "I'd like to get my passport, all my bankbooks, all my jewelry."

The National Guardsman was sympathetic, but unyielding. Her apartment, just two buildings away from Ground Zero,

was off limits.

Earlier, Josh Weinstein, a 35-year-old ad writer, had better luck, tricking a military escort into taking him to the same building by giving a Washington St. address.

The exterior was covered with dust and papers from offices in the World Trade Center were strewn all around, but the building appeared undamaged, Weinstein said.

"It's more a question of who would want to live there," he said. "The mess spilled down the street. You can smell it. I'll be a refugee for a little while."

Juan Buitron, a 30-year-old banker, was happy to have navigated the bureaucracy as he walked out of the area with several suitcases yesterday.

"It was kinda difficult," he said. "You have to show your I.D., but I was living in a corporate apartment. It took me a week to get my stuff out. I just

had one pair of clothes, one pair of underwear."

A police lieutenant emphasized that the restrictions are for the protection of residents, and to guard against looting.

"It hurts me to feel so cruel, to deny people access to their homes," he said.

But, he added, "If you can't live there, you don't want anyone else wandering around in there."

Nursery school owner Karen Klomp, 62, said she was given 45 minutes to retrieve belongings in Battery Park City, and she didn't mind the checkpoints.

"They have been just wonderful here," she said. "Patient, kind and helpful."

Gerald Hanweck, 36, an equity researcher who lives at 70 Battery Place, said, "Hopefully, we can get back soon and start to lead a normal life. Everybody's doing a great job, right down to the building superintendent and the doorman."

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