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Sandy brings parking ticket holiday in lower Manhattan

By BILL SANDERSON and JAMIE SCHRAM

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There was at least one good thing that Hurricane Sandy blew away — the city's usual blizzard of parking tickets.

Sandy's flood has led to a drought of parking citations in lower Manhattan, with drivers spared hefty fines because city ticket agents were reassigned in the storm's aftermath, The Post has learned.

"There were almost no tickets at all," said parking- ticket watchdog Glen Bolofsky. "We normally would get many more than 1,000 tickets a week. It went down to, like, 30. So they weren't writing tickets."

The tickets — which soak drivers with fines from \$60 to more than \$100 — have dropped below 34th Street, where ticket agents were diverted to other duties, Bolofsky said.

Police sources confirmed that the agents have been busy with other tasks since the big storm. But city officials would not say how many fewer tickets have been written.

Bolofsky — who runs the Web site parkingticket.com and fights tickets by the thousands for delivery and trucking companies and regular commuters — says his workload dropped steeply after Sandy hit on Oct. 29.

That made sense because the city suspended alternate-side parking rules for 2 1/2 weeks after the storm.

But when the ticket drought continued into December in lower Manhattan, Bolofsky asked around.

He learned that traffic agents — who he says write about 90 percent of all parking tickets — were doing other jobs, such as directing traffic, instead of writing tickets.

"The agents are telling me they are being told not to write tickets," Bolofsky said.

He says delivery-truck drivers confirmed to him that they've gotten far fewer tickets in recent weeks.

Precinct police officers have been writing tickets about as often as usual, Bolofsky says. But he notes that cops generally write only 10 percent of all parking citations.

Don't expect the good times to last forever.

Bolofsky says he was told that lower Manhattan's parking-ticket holiday will end this week.

A police spokesperson said only that traffic agents are being gradually returned to their usual duties.

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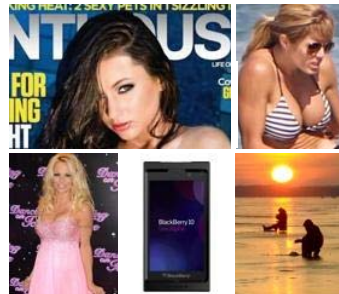
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