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Department of Environmental Protection Celebrates 10th Anniversary of Successful Hydrant Education Action Team Program



HEAT Outreach Program has Helped Reduce Reports of Illegally Opened Hydrants by More Than 60 Percent

Photos of the HEAT Team are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) joins the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), Fire Department (FDNY), and South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBRO) to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the [Hydrant Education Action Team \(HEAT\) program](#), a fire hydrant abuse prevention campaign. HEAT deploys teams of teens hired through the DYCD's Summer Youth Employment program to inform New Yorkers about the dangers of illegally opening fire hydrants. Illegally opened fire hydrants release more than 1,000 gallons of water per minute and can reduce water pressure in neighborhoods making it difficult to fight fires. After 10 years of successful HEAT outreach, reports of illegally opened hydrants have fallen by more than 60 percent. Hydrants can be opened legally if equipped with a City-approved spray cap, which releases only 20 to 25 gallons per minute, ensuring adequate water pressure and reducing the risk that a child could be knocked over and injured by the force of the water. Spray caps can be obtained by an adult 18 or over, free of charge, at local firehouses.

"Over the past decade we have had tremendous success spreading the message about the dangers of illegally opened fire hydrants through our partnership with communities in northern Manhattan and the Bronx," said **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. "By reminding people that there is a safe and legal way to use hydrants to cool off during the hot summer months, the young New Yorkers who participate in the HEAT program are continuing to help keep

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their neighbors and our first responders safe.”

“The Department is proud to take part in this successful program which has helped improve the safety of our city,” said **Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro**. “Strong water pressure is critical to effectively fight fires and the HEAT program helps ensure that resource is not compromised while also allowing children and people of all ages to safely enjoy the hot summer months.”

“Over the past 10 years, the HEAT program has helped DYCD’s Summer Youth Employment Program participants become powerful advocates in their communities by educating their neighbors on the environmental and safety hazards of fire hydrant misuse,” said **Department of Youth and Community Development Commissioner Bill Chong**. “Everyone looks for ways to cool off during the hottest days of summer, and I am glad our youth are taking on a leadership role in spreading a very important message while developing essential professional skills that will help them throughout the summer, during the school year, and into their adult lives.”

“The Hydrant Education Action Team (HEAT) Program continues to impact the lives of Bronx and Manhattan residents by educating them on fire hydrant safety. The HEAT program doesn’t intend to stop New York City’s summer tradition of keeping cool with fire hydrants, but advocates for the use of spray caps as a safe and legal way to use hydrants,” said **SoBRO HEAT Coordinator Sandy Ramirez**.

The HEAT program is run in partnership with the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBRO) and deploys four teams of 10–12 young adults who distribute literature, posters, and other informational materials about fire hydrant safety at community events, parades, greenmarkets, churches, and libraries. The outreach campaign focuses on neighborhoods in northern Manhattan and the Bronx that have historically seen high rates of unauthorized fire hydrant use during heat waves. In addition to literature, the teams distribute reusable water bottles and other souvenirs that promote the safe operation of fire hydrants.

Opening a hydrant illegally can result in fines of up to \$1,000, imprisonment for up to 30 days, or both. New Yorkers are urged to [report illegally opened fire hydrants to 311](#) immediately.

[SoBro](#), a not-for-profit community development corporation, has been serving the South Bronx since 1972. SoBro’s programs include adult education and workforce training, real estate and community development, technical and financial assistance for businesses, and an array of programs for youth. For additional information about SoBro, visit sobro.org.

DYCD supports New York City’s afterschool and youth workforce development programs throughout the five boroughs. The agency also oversees funding for anti-poverty programs, such as adult literacy and immigrant services. For more information, please go to nyc.gov/dycd or follow DYCD on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing approximately 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.5 million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$20.7 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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