

Commissioner's Corner



Although Hurricane Joaquin is now tracking out into the Atlantic Ocean, I want to thank all of you for your work last week to prepare the department in case the storm impacted the New York City area or the watersheds. We can all

breathe a sigh of relief now, but the preparations we undertook were a good exercise to remind us all what needs to be done—and to consider every contingency—as hurricane season in the Atlantic runs through the end of November.

Spotlight on Safety

Fire Prevention Week 2015

This week is National Fire Prevention Week (October 4-10), commemorating the [Great Chicago Fire of 1871](#) and highlighting the importance of fire prevention. This year's theme – "Hear the Beep Where You Sleep," focuses on the installation of smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of your home, including the basement. Smoke alarms should be tested at least once a month and replaced when they are 10 years old. When a smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside!

Fire Prevention Week is also a chance to examine work areas to identify potential fire hazards. Remove clutter and file paper documents in fire resistant cabinets, off-site archives, or use electronic filing where possible. Check extension cords and surge protectors to insure that they are used properly. Power strips should never be used in series (e.g. a power strip plugged into another power strip) and extension cords should be rated for their use (light or heavy duty). For more information visit the [National Fire Protection Association](#).

At DEP, everyone is responsible for safety. If you or anyone on your team is concerned about your working conditions, it's okay to ask your supervisor or your bureau's EHS liaison how they can help. If you've still got questions, you can call the EHS Employee Concerns Hotline. It's DEP's responsibility to acknowledge and fix unsafe situations, procedures, and practices. With your help, we'll not only get the job done, we'll make it safer for ourselves, our coworkers, our families, and our city. CALL (800) 897-9677 OR SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH [PIPELINE](#). HELP IS ON THE WAY.

Beginning last Wednesday with the activation of the City's Flash Flood Emergency Plan, staff from the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations (BWSO) pre-inspected more than 70 flood-prone locations citywide to ensure the catch basins were clear of debris and could drain properly. On Thursday, we activated DEP's Emergency Operations Center, and all bureaus began to make preparations to ensure there would be no interruption in the critical services we provide.

The Bureau of Water Supply took delivery of extra treatment chemicals and pre-positioned emergency generators at key facilities. They also configured operations at the reservoirs to prepare for an influx of water and high winds, and took steps to coordinate increased water quality monitoring throughout the system.

In the city, BWSO continued with catch basin cleaning and made preparations throughout the bluebelt system, including lowering water levels and inspecting and clearing debris from outfalls. The Bureau of Wastewater Treatment took delivery of extra chemicals at the treatment plants, placed emergency generators at both the pump stations and plants, sandbagged some critical and low-lying facilities, and took steps to protect the marine fleet. They also alerted contractors to be on stand-by in case of any damage to our facilities. The



Bureau of Engineering, Design and Construction notified all ongoing project staff, both in-city and upstate, to tie down all loose materials, safeguard vulnerable equipment and lower all crane booms. They also coordinated with contractors to determine what equipment may be available to the City, such as front-end loaders and generators.

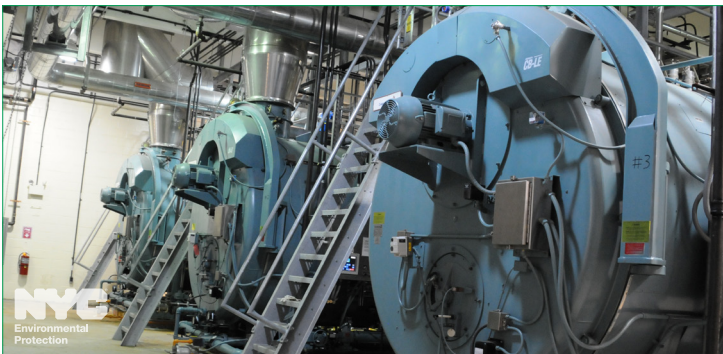
Behind all of these preparations were employees staffing the Office of Emergency Management's Operations Center, preparing staffing plans for all DEP facilities and coordinating human resources issues with City Hall. And, although the hurricane has not impacted our operations, the heavy rain and high winds in New York City on Friday led to many downed trees and branches. BWSO sent staff and dump trucks to Cunningham Park in Queens over the weekend to help with the mulching and hauling of the debris. Again, thanks to all of you for your dedication to public service and the City of New York. Click [here](#) to see more photos of our prep work and [here](#) to see a short video of catch basin cleaning.



A Breath of Fresh Air



Last year, New York City committed to the goal of achieving an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 levels by 2050. In order to reduce emissions from City government operations, an initiative was put in place to achieve net-zero energy use at the City's wastewater treatment plants by 2050. DEP operates 14 wastewater treatment plants throughout the city that clean and disinfect approximately 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater every day. This work requires an enormous amount of electricity, making DEP the third largest public energy user in New York City. Last week, we announced that the installation of three new boilers, a new exhaust capture system and one of the largest rooftop solar arrays in the city, at the Port Richmond Wastewater Treatment Plant on Staten Island will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from plant operations by more than 28,000 metric tons. The new boilers use a combination of biogas and natural gas and replace equipment dating to the 1970s that ran on heating oil alone. Earlier this year, in a partnership between DEP, the City's Department of Citywide Administrative Services and ConEdison Solutions, one of the city's largest rooftop solar arrays atop the facility was activated. Eliminating more than 28,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions is the equivalent of removing 5,895 passenger vehicles from the road, providing a year's worth of electricity to 3,851 homes or planting 717,949 trees and allowing them to grow for 10 years. Click [here](#) to read more and [here](#) to see more photos.

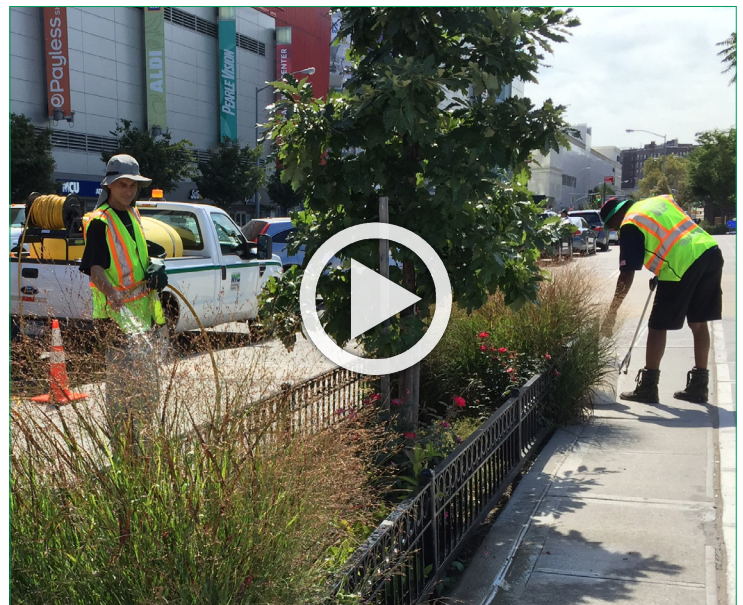


BWSO Green Thumbs



With thousands of curbside gardens either under construction or planned over the next several years, DEP has recently brought on six professional gardeners and nine field staff to ensure that the City's Green Infrastructure assets are functioning at their best. Green Infrastructure Maintenance is a new unit within the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations and currently maintains approximately 200 curbside gardens, stormwater green streets and enhanced tree pits in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. Their daily tasks range from monitoring plantings, weeding, pruning, and litter removal to inspecting installations for potential blockages prior to heavy rain events—like this past weekend. The team also provides critical observational feedback to the engineers and planners in the Office of Green Infrastructure to make sure that the most successful plantings are incorporated into new design strategies. The role of this specialized group will continue to develop as DEP takes on the responsibility of maintaining additional Green Infrastructure installations. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP.

Lon Ames, Maria Corporan (not pictured), **Dudley Dacruz, Jeffrey Davis, Keith Dechaul, Benjamin Demas** (not pictured) **Harman Duran, Michael Feder, Douglas Gutierrez, Frank Hollman, Katarzyna Kwaczynska, Francisco Mejia, Rafael Perez** (not pictured), **Marc Richardsen, Lamelle Wade** (not pictured).



We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: newsletter@dep.nyc.gov.