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Department of Environmental Protection Announces Graduation of 37 New Police Officers



Graduates will join force of more than 200 highly trained officers who protect New York City’s water supply and water supply infrastructure every day

Photos are Available on [DEP’s Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection celebrated the graduation of 37 new police officers and two promotions last Friday. The new environmental protection officers will be immediately deployed to protect the City’s water supply reservoirs, infrastructure, and the 2,000-square-mile watershed that stretches across parts of nine upstate counties. The graduates and the newly promoted were honored during a ceremony at the Ulster Performing Arts Center in Kingston.

“I would like to congratulate the new environmental police officers who are now officially members of the police force that protects the largest municipal water supply in the United States,” **DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza** said. “These young officers have just completed intensive and diverse law-enforcement training to prepare them for the vital work of securing our vast water supply and its infrastructure. The officers and their families should take great pride in their accomplishments and the work they are about to undertake.”

The new environmental police officers (EPOs) were trained at the Staff Sgt. Robert H. Dietz DEP Police Academy in Kingston. The academy is the first of its kind in the nation to provide training and concentrated coursework in environmental law. The new graduates live in 12 different counties and speak eight languages. They successfully completed a total of 31 weeks of instruction, during which they concentrated on topics such as counterterrorism, the

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NYC Department of
Environmental Protection
Public Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard
19th Floor
Flushing, NY 11373
(718) 595-6600

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environment, police science, and the proper use of firearms and defensive tactics. In addition, recruits completed courses in environmental conservation law, land navigation, fish and wildlife, and watershed protection.

The graduating class named Jack Amodeo as the class leader and Kenyatta Danclar, Gabriela Ferreras, Alexandra Gundermann, Eric Locher, Tammy Mejia and Christopher Poris as squad leaders. During the graduation ceremony several EPOs were given awards for their outstanding performance during the training. Eric Locher received the Academic Proficiency Award; Jack Amodeo received the Physical Fitness Award and the Firearms Proficiency Award; and Robert Ovcharik received the Best Overall Officer Award.

The complete list of graduates and their home counties:

Jack Amodeo, Westchester; Matthew Barsanti, Dutchess; Roger Berlyne, Queens; Patrick Callinan, Rockland; Joseph Carey, Orange; Jonathan Colon, Bronx; Kenyatta Danclar, Westchester; Eduardo Dennis, Bronx; Joseph Dinapoli, Kings; Patrick Donahue, Rockland; Franklin Fauble IV, Ulster; Jordan Fein, Dutchess; Gabriela Ferreras, Bronx; Michael Gasparrini, Putnam; Michael Gately, Dutchess; Lizbeth Gomez, Queens; Richard Green, Richmond; Alexandra Gundermann, Orange; Michael Halecki, Westchester; Vincent Jacobellis, Orange; Nickolaos Kokkinos, Queens; Arlex Leon, Dutchess; Eric Locher, Orange; SM Mahmood, Bronx; Michael Medina, Orange; Tammy Mejia, Westchester; Joseph Murphy, Nassau; Peter Nketsiah, Bronx; Robert Ovcharik, Kings; Tobiloba Oyenola, Kings; Francesco Palmeri, Kings; Christopher Poris, Queens; Michael Riveccio, Richmond; Alexander Sederholm, Manahattan; Charles Staffieri, Putnam; Andrew Urizzo Jr, Putnam; Megan Whelan, Orange.

The following sergeant was promoted to the rank of lieutenant:

Lieutenant Joseph C. Decker was appointed to the DEP Police in October 2002, and began his career in the Patrol Division reporting out of the Croton Precinct. In 2005, he became a Field Training Officer and has since trained multiple officers to prepare them for duty in the Patrol Division. In December 2012, he was selected and promoted to the rank of Sergeant assigned to the Eastview Precinct. Lieutenant Decker attended Dutchess Community College and majored in Criminal Justice.

The following officer was promoted to the rank of sergeant:

Sergeant Nnabuike C. Iloka was appointed to the DEP Police in October 2002, and began his career in the Patrol Division reporting out of the Hillview Precinct. In 2007, he became a Field Training Officer and has since trained multiple officers to prepare them for duty in the Patrol Division. In 2014 Sergeant Iloka was selected for and continues to serve as a member of the Honor Guard Unit.

The Bureau of Water Supply (BWS) Police was created through legislation enacted in the 1905 Water Supply Act. It was not until 1907 that the first provisional appointees were hired and assigned. On July 9, 1908, the first permanent police officers were appointed and assigned to the precincts in Peekskill, Garrison, Brown’s Station, and High Falls. The Bureau of Water Supply Police was the first police agency in upstate New York with a multiple county police jurisdiction. In 1983, the Bureau of Water Supply became the Department of Environmental Protection and the New York State Legislature revised the Criminal Procedure Law, part of New York State Law, to include DEP police officers. In 1999, the DEP jurisdiction was extended to include the five boroughs of New York City. Members of the DEP Police are New York State certified police officers. The DEP department maintains jurisdiction in 14 counties, including the five counties of New York City. DEP police patrol the watershed by foot, bicycle, all-terrain vehicle, motorcycle, boat and helicopter. The department maintains specially trained units that include an aviation unit, emergency services unit, marine patrol, K-9 patrol and detective bureau.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of high-quality water each day to more than 9.6 million New Yorkers. This includes more than 70 upstate communities and institutions in Ulster, Orange, Putnam and

Westchester counties who consume an average of 110 million total gallons of drinking water daily from New York City's water supply system. This water comes from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and the system comprises 19 reservoirs, three controlled lakes, and numerous tunnels and aqueducts. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and other professionals in the watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$166 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$1.7 billion in watershed protection programs—including partnership organizations such as the Catskill Watershed Corporation and the Watershed Agricultural Council—that support sustainable farming practices, environmentally sensitive economic development, and local economic opportunity. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program with \$19.4 billion in investments planned over the next decade 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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