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## Fall Foliage

Cannonsville Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Ian Michaels (718) 595-6600

## Water Inspectors Suspended Following Internal Investigation

Commissioner Emily Lloyd of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today the suspension of seven inspectors from the Division of Drinking Water Quality Control (DWQC) after an internal investigation discovered that certain equipment used for testing water quality in the City had not been routinely checked for calibration as specified in DEP's sample collection and test protocols.

"Accurate data collection and reporting in the City's water supply is of utmost importance to City residents," said Commissioner Lloyd. "We cannot tolerate any lapses in our procedures. Although backup data from independent sampling by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and other sources confirm that there has been no threat to water quality, we have taken these disciplinary measures to maintain the integrity of the testing program. The City's drinking water continues to be safe."

Health Commissioner Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH, said, "In addition to the DEP's extensive program, the Health Department performs its own independent testing of the water supply. These tests have shown nothing out of the ordinary and we continue to believe that the City's drinking water is safe."

The seven inspectors are accused of not properly performing an internal quality control check of testing devices that were used to monitor drinking water samples for chlorine and pH levels. The employees have been suspended for 30 days without pay and with the possibility of further disciplinary action. An eighth inspector has been reassigned pending further investigation.

Standard operating procedure requires inspectors to test each of the devices daily and to record the results of those tests in a computerized database. The issue of whether the devices had in fact been properly tested first arose when a DWQC supervisor compared testing data entered by one of the inspectors with the results of continuous automated water monitoring devices that are set at entry points to the City's water distribution system. Another supervisor then conducted a broader review and determined that the results

### MORE INFORMATION

NYC Department of Environmental Protection  
Communications & Intergovernmental Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard  
19th Floor  
Flushing, NY 11373

(718) 595 - 6600

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suggested that certain testing equipment was not being regularly checked as required by DEP protocols.

The tests in question are a very small percentage of the City's comprehensive water testing program. New York City's testing program exceeds what is required by law and what is performed by most major cities. Most of the water samples are collected from about 1,000 sampling stations that can be seen near the curblines on City streets. The results of water quality sampling are presented each year in the annual Drinking Water Supply and Quality Report, which is available online at

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/wsstate.html>.

Additional testing of the City's water is done on a regular basis by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, which conducts daily and weekly monitoring of the City's drinking water at points of use throughout the distribution system in all five boroughs. Samples are analyzed for bacteria, metals, chemicals and other physical indicators.