

## Environmental Health & Safety News for BWSO

### Think you have Everything EHS Covered at Home?



Picture excerpted from [www.sunsetenvironmental.com](http://www.sunsetenvironmental.com)

*"In older cities like New York, many buildings contain materials with lead, PCBs, and asbestos which are subject to wear and tear as they age."—BWSO EHS*



BUREAU OF WATER & SEWER OPERATIONS  
 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY DIVISION

As a DEP employee, you probably have solid knowledge of potential environmental, health and safety (EHS) hazards in your workplace, and know what actions to take to deal with them. DEP assures that employees are advised of hazards and safe work practices through Hazard Communication, Employee Right-to-Know and other training on DEP EHS policies. This helps us to approach EHS challenges in the same way.

But what about at home? Do you know how to manage similar safety challenges in your own house or apartment? In older cities like New York, many buildings contain materials with lead, PCBs, and asbestos which are subject to wear and tear as they age. Homes have oil or gas burning equipment and associated tanks that need care and maintenance as well. Familiarity with these EHS protocols at home may be useful to you in the long run.

Interestingly, EHS regulations that apply to homeowners are much less stringent than those that apply to businesses and municipalities. The Occupational Safety and Health

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### Powered Industrial Truck Safety

#### What are Powered Industrial Trucks?

Powered industrial trucks (PITs), commonly called forklifts or lift trucks, are used in many industries, primarily to move heavy materials. PITs can be used to move, raise, lower, or remove large objects, such as *pallets of cement bags* or a number of smaller objects such as *catch basin covers or frames*. The existence of PITs in the workplace has made jobs safer for workers as they favorably contribute to a reduction in heavy lifting, and eliminate unnecessary physical stress. Still, PITs have a number of inherent hazards that workers must be aware of in order to prevent bodily injury, and accidents.

#### Who Can Operate PITs?

Did you know that everyone cannot operate a PIT? Operating a PIT is a specialized job that requires comprehensive training (formal and hands-on), and continuous evaluation to ensure safe operation. Authorized employees who operate PITs must conduct a pre-use inspection using Attachment A of the DEP PIT Policy each time they operate a PIT. Employees who operate the PITs must be re-evaluated every three years after their initial training (refer to Attachment C of the PIT policy). In addition, the person who conducts the evaluation must have knowledge, training, and experience to evaluate the PIT operator's competence.

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<http://nethyneth.wordpress.com>

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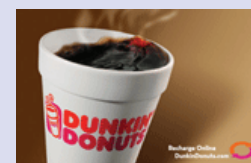
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### Do you know what to do... if you find lead in your home?



<https://test-fortress.wa.gov>

*See articles on page 2 & 3.*



**WIN A DUNKIN' DONUTS  
 GIFT CARD!  
 TAKE QUIZ ON PAGE 4**

## Think you have Everything EHS Covered at Home?

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Administration (OSHA) has no jurisdiction over the homeowner, while the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) only has limited jurisdiction. On the other hand, it is important to know that any contractor who works on your home *is* subject to most Federal, State, and City regulations.

### What should I do if I think I may have asbestos in my home?

If you have possible asbestos insulation on pipes, boilers, or in other building materials inside your home, maintaining these materials so that they stay in shape and intact is essential. "Intact" means a state which does not release fibers into the air. If you are not sure whether the materials contain asbestos, you have the option of hiring a Certified Asbestos Inspector to test it... Please keep in mind that you should only hire trained and licensed workers to remove, repair, and/or clean asbestos in your home. If you choose not to test insulation or other suspect materials, another option is to assume that the materials do contain asbestos, and keep them in good repair. (Note: Do not disturb or expose any suspect or presumed asbestos-containing material.) In recent times, most new construction relies on less hazardous insulating materials, such as covered fiberglass. However, if you do decide to repair or remove asbestos insulation within your home, a vital component of the job is to ensure that your contractor and asbestos workers are licensed by the New York State (NYS) Department of Labor. NYC DEP is the regulatory body that standardizes proper removal and handling of asbestos in buildings.

Source: NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

(See [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/ei/eiasbest.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/ei/eiasbest.shtml) for more information)

### What if I think I have mold in my house or apartment?

The most important thing to understand about mold is that it needs *moisture* to grow. Therefore, what you can do to stop and prevent mold growth is repair the underlying condition that is creating the moisture (leaking pipes, ceilings, or radiator valves, etc.). If you do find a moist condition or see visible mold as a result of moisture, you should correct the water leak ASAP, and dry any damaged or wet items, walls, carpets, flooring within 24-48 hours. It is during this time period that mold is known to proliferate.

### If you do discover a moldy condition:

- ☒ Fix the source of water.
- ☒ For smaller areas (less than 3 ft by 3 ft), on non-porous or finished surfaces, you can clean the mold or mildew yourself by using a sponge and a good detergent to wipe it off. Make sure the surface dries completely. Moldy ceiling tiles, carpet, and other porous materials should be thrown away. These items may be bagged and thrown out as regular household waste (Note: NYC Sanitation will pick up bagged renovation or repair waste at curbside from work conducted by homeowners). As a precaution, when cleaning or removing moldy materials you should use gloves, dust masks, and a disposable respirator (N-95).

If the mold returns quickly or spreads, you have not corrected the underlying source of water, and will need to do so. For larger jobs or a mold problem caused by major water damage, you will need to hire a professional.

### If you have a home heating oil tank, what type of care and maintenance is required under New York State (NYS) law?

When you pump up the heat on a chilly winter night or turn on the hot water to take a steamy shower, many of you may not think twice about the process that goes into producing the heat and hot water in your homes. In New York, many homes have heating oil tanks located either aboveground or buried underground which store fuel for heating purposes. These tanks, especially those buried underground, can become major environmental headaches if not taken care of properly.

While most home heating oil tanks are not regulated by the State (tanks less than 1,100 gallons in capacity), homeowners still have responsibilities for the care and maintenance of their tanks. According to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), most 10-15-year-old tanks are probably not leaking, but the chances of a leak occurring increases as time passes. Keep in mind that when an underground tank or pipe leaks, the cleanup can cost \$20,000 or more. Typically, many homeowners' insurance policies contain a 'pollution exclusion' clause, which means you could get stuck with the bill. So, to ensure that you protect both the environment and your wallet, the best course of action is to have older tanks replaced with modern double-walled underground tanks or aboveground basement tanks.

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## Lifting Hydrant Tops on the Job

*"The key to preventing injury while lifting heavy hydrant tops is to make sure that proper lifting techniques are used."*

– BWSO EHS

In the normal line of duty, Construction Laborers are occasionally required to lift awkwardly-shaped heavy objects. Some of these items include hydrant tops, manhole covers, manhole sleeves, jackhammers, and bags of black top. The key to prevent injury while lifting heavy items, like the aforementioned, is to ensure that proper lifting techniques are used.

When employees lift a hydrant top, it is important to remember that the weight, shape, and size of the object call for more than one person to lift it. Ideally, all lifters should be approximately the same size. First, keep in mind that one individual should be assigned the responsibility of controlling the action. Second, before lifting the hydrant tops, remember that it should be positioned horizontally on the ground with its caps removed (to lighten the load), if possible. For step-by-step guidelines on how to safely lift hydrant tops, review the techniques outlined below.



### Proper Lifting Techniques

1. Size up the load and check overall conditions, such as the shape of the item, the space available for movement, and the potential for good footing.
2. Do not attempt to lift by yourself if the load appears to be too heavy or awkward.
3. Make sure your balance is good and your feet and shoulder are positioned wide apart – you should have one foot beside the object, and the other foot behind the object.
4. Bend your knees, keep your back straight (it doesn't have to be vertical), and tuck in your chin.
5. Use your body weight to start moving the load, and then lift by pushing up with your legs.
6. Keep the arms and elbows close to the body while lifting.
7. Carry the load close to your body.
8. Remember—do not twist your body while carrying the load. To change direction, shift the positioning of your feet, and then twist your entire body.
9. Don't forget to watch where you're going.
10. To deposit the object, place it on its edge, and push it into position. Make sure your hands and feet are clear when placing the load.

<sup>1</sup>Per the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).



For more information on mold in homes see: [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/epi/healthy-home-mold.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/epi/healthy-home-mold.pdf) or contact Bureau EHS.



### What effects does lead have on the human body?

Both children and adults can suffer from lead poisoning, but not equally. Children are much more susceptible! Typically, lead enters your body through inhalation and/or ingestion. Upon entry, the substance travels throughout your bloodstream, and eventually settles in your long bones (e.g. femur, tibia, and humerus). Any lead-contaminated blood that temporarily remains unsettled subsequently travels to your kidneys and brain where it then stays for a long time.

It is important to remember that children are more susceptible to lead poisoning than adults, since they tend to put their hands and/or other lead contaminated objects in their mouths. On average, a child's body absorbs more lead than an adult's. Common health-related problems that lead-poisoned children suffer from include impaired growth, short-term memory loss, behavior problems, reduced intelligence quotients (IQs), and learning disabilities. In contrast, some lead poisoning problems associated with adults include nerve disorders, reproductive disorders, and memory loss.

### What if I think I may have lead in my home?

By far, environmental lead exposure materializes from disturbed or deteriorated indoor and/or outdoor lead-containing paint, dust, and soil. Airborne lead-contaminated dust commonly settles on horizontal surfaces such as window sills, window wells, floors, cabinet tops, table tops, and refrigerators. Individuals who come into contact with contaminated surfaces or inhale lead-dust may be at risk for lead poisoning.

If you think your home might be contaminated with lead-dust, we recommend that you carefully and thoroughly use a HEPA vacuum (High Efficiency Particulate Air vacuum) to safely remove the dust from affected surfaces in your home. If a HEPA vacuum is not available to you, vigorously wet-washing or wet-wiping the affected surfaces with soapy water should remove all or most of the lead dust. For the best results, we advise that you carry out this procedure in three steps:

1) Wash and/or wipe down the lead-contaminated surfaces with soapy water; 2) Use clean water from a second bucket to wipe down the surfaces again; and 3) Use a third bucket of clean water to sanitize the surfaces for cleanliness.

If you are concerned that you or someone you know may have been exposed to lead hazards, contact your doctor for a lead blood test.



### UPCOMING TRAINING:

May – June 2009

1. Bloodborne Pathogens
2. EHS Awareness/ Hearing Conservation Training

### Questions?

Contact Nelson Leon (718) 595-5544

### Some Additional Useful Safety Tips:

- ☐ FDNY regulations require PITs to be equipped with a portable fire extinguisher.
- ☐ Never modify or allow employees to make a modification to a PIT, which affects the capacity and safe operation of the PIT.
- ☐ Always look out for others before moving your PIT.
- ☐ Never let anyone, including yourself, walk or stand under the forks when they are raised.
- ☐ Never let unauthorized personnel operate or ride on the PIT.
- ☐ Only operate PITs in approved locations.
- ☐ Always fully lower the load lifts, set the brakes, and remove the key when you leave your PIT unattended.
- ☐ PITs are equipped with seat belts. Use them!

Questions? Contact EH&S

## ALERT!!

### Blue 24.5 inch Sewer Hook... Do Not Use!

Remove all blue 24.5 inch sewer hooks from the equipment supply and ensure that these hooks are not used. The hooks should be returned to GS-1, and replaced with the 32 inch black hook that is currently in stock.



## Eyes on Environmental Awareness Award Program at BWSO!

### Edward Sullivan Eyes on Environmental Awareness Award Nominee, January 2009

Edward Sullivan, Oiler at BWSO's New Clove Pump Station was nominated for an EOE award after contacting the EHS Hotline to report a Petroleum Bulk Storage (PBS) underground tank on the New Clove Pump Station property, which may not have been properly closed. With a pond located across the street from the facility, Mr. Sullivan was concerned about the potential impact to the environment that an improperly closed tank could cause. After his call to the EHS hotline, a tank investigation was initiated, the tank was found, and properly removed from the ground – thus, eliminating a possible environmental threat. Edward Sullivan's keen observation and concern for the environment during this situation is why he deserved the nomination.

### Brian Smith Eyes on Environmental Awareness Award Nominee, January 2009

Brian Smith, City Laborer at BWSO's Groundwater Operations was nominated for an EOE award shortly after he discovered, and reported that two discharge pipes were protruding from a private building adjacent to Groundwater Station 56 in late December 2008. At the time the finding was noted, the discharge pipes were terminating on DEP's property, and the substance being released was unknown. Consequently, Mr. Smith notified his supervisor about the potential illegal discharge. EHS was then contacted, and in turn called the New York State (NYS) Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Police. The DEC Police Officer in-charge initiated an inspection, and it was later determined that the pipes were roof drains that were discharging storm water. Although no illegal discharge and/or environmental violations were identified, Brian Smith's proactive approach to ensuring that a potential illegal discharge was investigated upon its discovery is admirable.

### Congratulations to:

**Bronx Water Maintenance  
& Reservoir Machine Shop**  
for achieving a high level of EH&S  
compliance and for their  
**OUTSTANDING  
PERFORMANCE\***

at their

**OEHS EHS AUDITS**

\*Based on a comparison of their two  
most recent audits resulting in a 50% or  
more reduction of their total findings.

## NYC Department of Environmental Protection

Environmental Health & Safety Division  
Bureau of Water & Sewer Operations  
59-17 Junction Boulevard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Flushing, NY 11373-5108  
Phone: (718) 595-5343  
Fax: (718) 595-5541  
E-mail:  
BWSOEHS\_suggestions@dep.nyc.gov

**James J. Roberts, P.E.**  
BWSO, Deputy Commissioner

**Persis D. Luke**  
Director, Environmental Health & Safety

### Occupational Health & Safety:

Fred Chyke-Okpuzor, Manager  
Alexander Grabarnik  
Fernando Park  
Vyacheslav Repik  
Lal Sarju  
John Townsend

Field Operations—*Manhattan & Queens:*

Jacqueline Hincapié, Supervisor  
Evette Imarhiagbe  
Monica Niedbala  
Sandra Knight-Lemons  
John Sloane

Field Operations—*Brooklyn, Bronx & Staten Island:*

Marc Blaise, Supervisor  
Tarek Ahmed  
Adenike Bamgboye  
Lovely Desir  
Glenroy Simpson

### Environmental Compliance:

Shay McAtamney, Manager  
Harry Singh  
Matthew Dominick  
Nicholas Minunni  
Jane Weber  
Melissa Whitley

### Program Development:

Karen Marino, Manager  
Education, Training & Administration:  
Nelson Leon, Supervisor  
Jenny Lai  
Michele Moorgen  
Andrea Shivcharan  
Allan Straker  
Audits & Communications:  
Esther Rodriguez, Supervisor  
Julie Bae  
Sheldon Hudson  
Jennifer Jones

Editor: Andrea Shivcharan  
Co-editors: Julie Bae,  
Karen Marino & Persis D. Luke

*We'd love to hear  
from you!*

E-mail us at:

BWSOEHS\_suggestions@dep.nyc.gov

## Serious about Safety Award Program at BWSO! 2008 - 2009



**Joseph Kazemi**  
*Serious about Safety Award*  
Recipient, January 2008

Joseph Kazemi, *Engineer-In-Charge* at BWSO's Water & Sewer Connections Unit was the recipient of a SAS award after commendably instructing his colleagues (worksite inspectors) to report unsafe excavations and trenching conditions to his office upon discovery. When the Water and Sewer Connections Unit identifies deficiencies in safety compliance, Mr. Kazemi notifies OSHA of existing safety lapses. OSHA then reports to the jobsites to conduct safety inspections. One such OSHA check-up determined that JFR Construction Corp. failed to maintain an efficient safety program. Specifically, JFR Construction Corp. failed to train its workers on how to detect jobsite hazards, and did not provide safety hardhats to their employees who worked in and around 13 feet deep trenches. Four violations and penalties were issued as a result of that OSHA inspection. Joseph Kazemi deserved the award because of his efforts to ensure a safe work environment.



**Joseph Amaniera**  
*Serious about Safety Award*  
Nominee, July 2008

Joseph Amaniera, *Construction Laborer* at BWSO's Staten Island Sewer Maintenance was nominated for a SAS award for his down-to-business approach in dealing with potential EHS audit findings. During an audit conducted on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Bureau EHS had the opportunity to work with Mr. Amaniera up-close, and was able to confirm Mr. Amaniera's sensible approach to maintaining a safe work environment at Staten Island Sewer Maintenance. His recordkeeping is concise and organized, and he constantly monitors the facility and strives to correct any deficiencies found. Mr. Amaniera takes his role as a Safety Officer very seriously and is a vital asset to Bureau EHS. Personnel at Staten Island Sewer Maintenance claim that they "feel safer knowing that Joe is constantly looking out for us." Joseph Amaniera's dedication to his EHS duties is honorable.



**James Donahue**  
*Serious about Safety Award*  
Nominee, April 2009

James Donahue, *Stationary Engineer, Electric* at BWSO's 179 Street Pump Station was nominated for a SAS award after he took the initiative to correct safety deficiencies found in a contractor's crane inspection form. Subsequent to meticulously comparing the contractor's crane inspection form to DEP's *Crane and Hoist Safety Policy's Attachment E – Crane Inspection form*, Mr. Donahue recognized that the contractor's form differed from our Agency's. Commendably, he questioned whether the contractor's form met all regulatory requirements for periodic crane inspections. As a result of his inquiry, Bureau EHS with assistance from Distribution Operations, identified additional deficiencies in the contractor's inspection forms and later worked with the DEP Contract Manager-in-charge to make all the necessary revisions required for OSHA and ANSI compliance. James Donahue's hands-on approach to ensuring that cranes are inspected for safety the right way was outstanding.

TAKE THIS QUIZ: SUBMIT CORRECT ANSWERS FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A FREE GIFT CARD  
BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR FULL NAME AND WORK ADDRESS. FAX: (718) 595-5541 AND/OR  
EMAIL: BWSOEHS\_suggestions@dep.nyc.gov

1. According to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, homeowners should follow which of these recommendations for the maintenance of their heating oil tanks:  
a) Tanks have a limited useful life and eventually need to be repaired or replaced every 5-6 years  
b) Choose insurance policies that contain "Pollution Exclusion" clauses  
c) Remove the tank lid and look inside once a month to check for leaks  
d) Replace older tanks with modern double-walled underground tanks or aboveground basement tanks.
2. Attachment C of the Powered Industrial Truck (PIT) policy states that employees who operate PITs must be reevaluated every \_\_\_\_ years after their initial training.  
a) Two      b) Three      c) Four      d) Five

3. Mold, as a result of moisture, tends to proliferate within a \_\_\_\_ growth period.  
a) Less than 24 hours      b) 1-2 days  
c) 2-3 days      d) 4 days or more
4. Which of the following is a proper lifting technique?  
a) Keeping your legs straight and your knees locked  
b) Lift by pushing up with your back  
c) Keeping your arms and elbows close to the body  
d) Keeping your eyes closed so you can concentrate

Answers for February 2008 Newsletter Quiz: 1) A 2) D 3) A 4) B