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Department of Environmental Protection Launches 2014 Summer Fire Hydrant Abuse Prevention Campaign

HEAT Outreach Program has Helped Reduce Reports of Illegally Opened Hydrants by More Than 50 Percent

Photos of the HEAT Team Can be Viewed on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Emily Lloyd today launched the 2014 Hydrant Education Action Team (HEAT) program, a fire hydrant abuse prevention campaign that deploys teams of teens hired through the Department of Youth and Community Development'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 seven years of successful HEAT outreach campaigns, reports of illegally opened hydrants have fallen by more than 50 percent during June and July. 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.

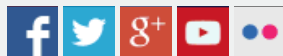
"By partnering with communities in northern Manhattan and the south Bronx we have had success spreading the message about the dangers of illegally opened fire hydrants," said **DEP Commissioner Lloyd**. "By reminding people that there is a safe and legal way to use hydrants to cool off during the hot summer

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months, the young New Yorkers who participate in the HEAT program help keep their neighbors and our first responders safe.”

“In addition to providing jobs at thousands of diverse worksites in all five boroughs, DYCD’s Summer Youth Employment Program gives young people an opportunity to be neighborhood ambassadors,” said **Department of Youth and Community Development Commissioner Bill Chong**. “By educating their neighbors and fellow New Yorkers, SYEP participants in the HEAT program are helping to save water—and lives—while learning leadership, outreach and professional skills that will serve them well in the summer and for years to come.”

“The Hydrant Education Action Team Program has impacted Bronx and Manhattan communities by increasing the awareness of dangers associated with illegally opened fire hydrants. Youth participating in the program have consequently become advocates for their own communities,” said, **SoBro Vice President of Education and Career Development Johanna Dejesus**.

“Although it is understandable that we all want to cool down during the hot summer months, we must not do so at the expense of safety,” said **City Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez**. Illegally opened fire hydrants decrease water pressure in surrounding apartments and can make it impossible for residents to complete even the most basic necessities. In addition, they pose a serious risk to combating fires. I applaud DEP’s HEAT program and look forward to working with them to spread awareness on how we can reduce the number of illegally opened fire hydrants in Northern Manhattan.”

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 will 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/dydc or follow DYCD on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight 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. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city’s Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the

city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/nycwater](https://www.facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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