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Schoharie Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEP Issues Hydrant Safety Alert

As record-breaking temperatures have arrived in the City this week, Commissioner Christopher O. Ward of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has asked New Yorkers to avoid illegal opening of fire hydrants.

"Our water supply in the reservoirs is 35 percentage points below normal capacity for this time of year," said Commissioner Ward. "The City is in Stage 1 of a Drought Emergency and we cannot afford to waste water. An open hydrant can waste a thousand gallons of precious New York City water per minute. That's over one million gallons per wide-open hydrant in a 24-hour period.

"Hydrants are for fighting fires, not for having fun," said Commissioner Ward. "Illegally opened hydrants can lower water pressure in the City's neighborhoods, can cause problems at hospitals and other medical care facilities, and can hinder fire-fighting efforts by reducing the flow of water to fire hoses and pumps. Also, children can be at serious risk, because the powerful force of a fully flowing hydrant can push them into oncoming traffic."

To cool off safely, if people can't get to the nearest City pool or beach, they can contact their local firehouses and request a spray cap that can be fitted onto a neighborhood hydrant and will reduce the water flow to a safe 25 gallons a minute. The Fire Department will provide instructions on how to apply the spray cap.

DEP crews and inspectors are patrolling all five boroughs of the City looking for open hydrants and violations of Drought Emergency restrictions. The fine for opening a hydrant is \$750; fines for violations of Drought Emergency restrictions range from \$100 to \$1,000.

To report illegally opened hydrants or other water or sewer complaints, people should call the DEP's 24-Hour Help Center: (718) DEP-HELP (337-4357). For more information on water conservation, see the How Can I Save Water? section of DEP's Web site at nyc.gov/dep.