

Special Guest Commissioner's Corner



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Last week, DEP successfully launched the "Trash It. Don't Flush It." public awareness campaign to spread the message that improperly disposing of grease,

wipes, and other trash can clog pipes, lead to sewer backups, and cause flooding and costly damage. Ads reminding New Yorkers to properly dispose of their trash are featured around the city at select subway stations, bus shelters, and on trains, buses, television, and on social media. The campaign will run for the next four weeks and aims to reduce sewer backups and

costly damage to private plumbing and the City's wastewater system.

The campaign's new website fatbergfree.nyc includes a "Trash It. Don't Flush It." flyer that can be downloaded for free by businesses, building owners, and property managers who experience clogs in their internal plumbing.

Commissioner Sapienza recently directed executive staff to have the flyer posted in all DEP restrooms, and DEP is partnering with City agencies to have it posted in their public restrooms as well. DEP spends nearly \$19 million annually to clean clogged sewers, dispose of wipes and repair damaged machinery. It can cost a property owner more than \$10,000 to repair household plumbing damaged by grease and wipes.

Over time, grease and improperly flushed items—including wipes, feminine products, make-up applicators, condoms, and cat litter—build up within the sewers causing "fatbergs." The word fatberg combines the word "fat" and "iceberg" to describe large masses that clog sewers and impair operations. The problem of fatbergs is affecting municipalities across the country and around the world, including London, where a 210-foot long, 130-ton fatberg was found blocking a sewer.

This campaign will help to raise awareness of this important issue and remind New Yorkers to dispose of trash where it belongs—in a trash can. To that end, I really want to encourage New Yorkers, and



DEP staffers as well, to help spread the message:

- Take a photo whenever you see the ad and post it on social media with [#fatbergfreenyc](https://twitter.com/fatbergfreenyc)
- Follow [@nycwater](https://twitter.com/nycwater) and retweet our [#fatbergfreenyc](https://twitter.com/fatbergfreenyc) posts

Send out your own message with one of our handy taglines:

- Fatbergs form when grease, wipes, and other stuff get flushed, clogging pipes and draining wall-lets. Trash it. Don't Flush it. [@nycwater](https://twitter.com/nycwater) [#fatbergfreenyc](https://twitter.com/fatbergfreenyc)
- You know what? "Flushable" wipes aren't flushable. Trash it. Don't Flush it. [@nycwater](https://twitter.com/nycwater) [#fatbergfreenyc](https://twitter.com/fatbergfreenyc)

I'd like to thank the team for their efforts in getting this campaign off the ground and successfully launched citywide.



Spotlight on Safety

Noise Control

DEP has implemented a Hearing Conservation Program whenever workers are exposed to a time weighted average noise level of 85 dBA or higher over an 8-hour work shift. DEP is also required to provide free annual hearing exams, hearing protection, and training. There are several ways to control and reduce worker exposure to noise in the workplace:

- **Engineering controls**—Involve modifying or replacing equipment to reduce noise level.

- **Administrative controls**—Include changes in the workplace that reduce or eliminate the worker exposure to noise. (e.g. limiting the amount of time a person spends at a noise source).
- **Hearing protection devices**—such as earmuffs and plugs when engineering or administrative controls aren't feasible.

For more information, consult [OSHA's Occupational Noise Exposure site](#) and [DEP's Hearing Conservation Policy](#).

At DEP, everyone is responsible for safety. If you or anyone on your team is concerned about your working conditions, it's okay to ask your supervisor or your bureau's EHS liaison how they can help. If you've still got questions, you can call the EHS Employee Concerns Hotline. It's DEP's responsibility to acknowledge and fix unsafe situations, procedures, and practices. With your help, we'll not only get the job done, we'll make it safer for ourselves, our coworkers, our families, and our city. CALL (800) 897-9677 OR SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH [PIPELINE](#). HELP IS ON THE WAY.



Commissioner Sapienza gave CBS 2 News a tour of the Newtown Creek WRRF to show how wipes and other items damage equipment.

Focus on the Field: Value Ambassadors for Service

This month, Weekly Pipeline celebrated DEP's core value of Service with the Value Ambassador program. As part of the program, we are highlighting five DEP employees nominated by their peers who, through their work, best represent Service at DEP. Over the next few months, Weekly Pipeline will continue to showcase DEP's core values.



November: Innovation



December: Support



January: Diversity



February: Service



March: Integrity



April: Sustainability



May: Transparency



June: Safety

WEI YU, Assistant Director of Sustainability's Hazardous Materials and Superfund Planning & Analysis unit, provides efficient and critical expertise to internal staff and other City agencies on a wide variety of hazardous materials investigations and remediation issues as they relate to the City Environmental Quality Review process. Wei provides excellent service to the city by his interpretation of policies, legislation, regulations, and standards. Wei Yu was nominated by **Ron Weissbard**.



MARY ANN WRIGHT has been with DEP for five years as Principal Administrative Associate in Water Treatment Operations-North for the Bureau of Water Supply. Mary Ann supports the Division with a range of critical services, such as research and procurement of needed assets or services, coordination of facility tours and luncheons, and everything in between. Because of her diligent, prompt and courteous attitude, Mary Ann is a big part of the reason why facilities in this Division are able to operate so smoothly. Mary Ann was nominated by **Douglass Walton**.



JOE ANZUETA, District Supervisor for Brooklyn North Water and Sewer Operations has been with DEP for 30 years. He was nominated by **Suraya Kashi** (a private citizen) and his District Supervisor **John Abrusci**, for his willingness to go the extra mile to help others in need. For example, during a heavy rain event, Ms. Kashi found herself stranded in her car when street flooding caused her car to stall. Joe, while patrolling the area, saw the woman yelling for help and waded through the water to help Ms. Kashi out of her vehicle. Joe's efforts came as no surprise because he is a very conscientious employee who always works hard to get the job done.



KIAH MILLER of BWT is the Plant Chief at DEP's North River Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility and an employee at DEP for 27 years. As plant chief, Kiah embraces a community-focused approach, regularly attending the local Community Board meetings and professionally representing DEP on sensitive issues. In addition, he optimized the facility odor control systems to significantly reduce odors, and successfully had zero odor complaints over one year. Kiah has also worked closely with the Lions Soccer Club and Riverbank State Park officials to ensure the community's ability to use these recreational facilities. Kiah was nominated by **Robert LaGrotta** and **Artie Spangel**.



PAUL PUGLIA of BCS is the Chief Inspector for the Meter Test Facility in Maspeth Queens. Paul exemplifies service by the care with which he reviews customer requests for meter accuracy and provides testing services. He also keeps meticulous inventory and tracking of all meter related equipment so that our supply of meters is adequately stocked in the warehouse. On top of these duties, he processes all the needed meter deliveries and returns, lends a hand to staff in trailer loading and unloading, or any task that needs to be done. Whether in the field or on the bench, Paul provides quality service to keep metering services accurate and reliable. Paul was nominated by **Michael Roach**.



We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: newsletter@dep.nyc.gov.