



**Environmental
Protection**

Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Carter Strickland, Commissioner

WEEKLY

PIPELINE

January 07, 2014

Volume V • Issue 209

Spotlight on Safety

Winter Safety Guidance for Workers

Working in cold winter conditions brings a unique set of safety hazards that can result in slips and falls, frostbite, hypothermia, and vehicular accidents. To stay safe, be properly prepared:

1. Listen carefully to weather forecasts and advisories.
2. Wear proper clothing for the forecasted conditions.
3. Follow the safety tips in DEP's "[Exposure to Extreme Heat and Cold](#)" Guidance and learn the signs and symptoms of cold-induced illnesses and injuries and what to do to help an employee:
 - Frost-bite affects the extremities, including fingers, hands, toes, feet, ears and the nose. The skin becomes hard and numb and there is freezing in the deep layers of skin and tissue.
 - Hypothermia causes the body temperature to drop below 95 degrees and symptoms include fatigue or drowsiness, uncontrolled shivering, and irritable, irrational or confused behavior.

Those who drive face their own set of safety hazards. When operating a vehicle in wintery conditions follow these safety tips:

- Ensure that tires have adequate tread.
- Clean windshield wiper blades, and make sure the vehicle has window washing fluid.
- To properly use antilock braking systems, "Stomp, stay, and steer."
- If you hit a slick patch, don't overcompensate by trying to steer out of it. Take your foot off the gas and allow the steering system to right itself, and then slowly steer out of the situation.
- Don't be fooled by all-wheel drive or electronic stability control.
- Adjust speed for road conditions and maintain a safe distance from other vehicles.

By following simple winter weather safety guidelines, you can avoid hazards that can cause serious physical harm.

Commissioner's Corner



Operating a vast drinking water and wastewater system from the Catskills to Staten Island means that we must constantly monitor weather conditions and proactively plan ahead to ensure that we can continue to fulfill our vital mission. From Friday's significant snowstorm and the bone chilling winds that followed, to Sunday's freezing rain and the near record low temperatures the region is now experiencing, our operational staff has done exemplary work in often hazardous conditions. These relatively routine events keep us prepared for truly extreme conditions such as Hurricanes Irene and Sandy.

Last Thursday, **Mayor de Blasio** and **First Deputy Mayor Shorris** convened a meeting of all agency commissioners at the Office of Emergency Management so that they could be briefed on preparations for the coming snow storm. DEP activates certain measures for all storms, including pre-positioning staff or making sure they have the means to travel in inclement weather, accepting early supplies of chemicals and fuel, and testing installed generators and pre-positioning portable generators so that essential operations can continue in the event that deliveries are delayed, transportation is compromised, or utility power is unavailable. To this end, the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations (BWSO) kept all repair yards open Thursday night and had additional staff on hand. The Bureau of Wastewater Treatment also held extra staff overnight to

ensure that snow was cleared at the 14 treatment plants and 96 pumping stations and provided plow trucks and drivers to the Department of Sanitation to help with city-wide snow clearing. The Bureau of Water Supply verified that essential generators were operational in the event of a power loss and took steps to ensure that all required water monitoring could be completed. DEP operations and the City as a whole performed well during the snowstorm.

As the extreme cold weather settled in, staff also responded to emergencies throughout the weekend. On Friday, a water main broke on a dead end block in Rockaway Park and BWSO crews worked throughout the night and into Saturday morning as temperatures reached the single digits to make the necessary repairs and restore service. Crews also responded to a water main leak on Staten Island and several broken private service lines in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Very early on Saturday morning, BWSO engineers were notified of a 2 alarm fire at a lumber yard in Greenpoint. By 3:00 am, the fire had escalated to 5 alarms and District Supervisor **Eddie Hernandez** did a terrific job working with the Fire Department's Incident Commander (IC) to ensure there was an adequate supply of water for the firefighters to do their job. In addition, when the IC called for additional water pressure, Hernandez and his team guided them from a hydrant fed by an 8-inch water main to one fed by a 20-inch main. By 9:00 Saturday morning the fire had been downgraded to 1 alarm and DEP crews were released from the scene.

As we are still in the early stages of the winter season, I'd just like to remind all staff to take extra precautions while working outdoors. Please refer to this week's Spotlight on Safety for specifics and thank you all once again for your hard work.

Press Box



Frigid Day for City's Workers: "The Owls Head Wastewater Treatment Plant sits on the Brooklyn waterfront, but on a record cold day it resembled a polar ice station. A foggy mist rose from the settling tanks that treat the wastewater from the homes of hundreds of thousands of western Brooklyn residents."

View the entire NY1 story [here](#).

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.

Focus on the Field



Steven Coppey always takes a mental snapshot when he arrives at any worksite across the watersheds that feed the upstate reservoirs. Are there work-zone traffic concerns? Are City employees and contractors wearing the correct personal protective equipment? Is heavy equipment free of leaks?

These are the kinds of hazards that Coppey has tried to prevent and correct during his eight years working for DEP as an environmental health and safety specialist. Coppey inspects as many as seven field projects during a typical day. Those projects run the gamut of watershed work, including timber harvesting, building demolitions, and stream restoration projects.

Because DEP has promoted a culture of safety awareness, Coppey said it's rare to encounter serious problems at the jobsites he inspects. "DEP employees and contractors that work for the City know through experience that safety is very important," he said.

Cold weather—such as the arctic blasts that swept the watershed over the past two weeks—can add new elements to the typical safety inspection. On Monday, Coppey drove up a steep hill alongside Rondout Reservoir to inspect a timber project where contractors are removing roughly 60 acres of trees that fell during Hurricane Sandy. Coppey was concerned that ice might hamper trucks from hauling lumber up and down the steep road. But, good maintenance by the contractor had melted the ice and kept the road passable.

On jobsites such as this one, Coppey also oversees monthly illness and injury reports, as well as site-specific safety training for all workers before the project begins. That training accounts for hazards that might be unique to each project.

"The work that Steve does keeping DEP employees and our contractors safe are only part of the picture," said Director of Compliance **Charlene Graff**. "He also ensures the safety of the public who may be in the general area and ensures the integrity of our natural resources. Steve's commitment to environmental and safety excellence is evident in all of his work."

Coppey came to DEP after working in health and safety at IBM for 16 years. While there, he tended to safety at the T.J. Watson Research Center in Westchester County, home to some of IBM's greatest inventions. He learned about the job at DEP while searching the web for information about his City-issued access permit for fishing at the reservoirs.

Since arriving at DEP, Coppey said he's tried to deliver a personal touch to safety. He learns the names of as many DEP employees and contractors as possible, and he also takes interest in their hobbies and families. It's a subtle way of showing workers that he's on their side—that safety and productivity can coexist.

"You get to know people and they realize that you genuinely care about their safety," he said.

Save the Date



Please join us this Friday, January 10, at noon in the 3rd floor cafeteria at Lefrak when, as part of the DEP Experience Brown Bag Luncheon, we will hear from **Patricia Cerro-Reehil**, Executive Director of the New York Water Environment Association. The event will also be video conferenced to the Grahamsville, Kingstons, and Valhalla offices.

Extra, Extra!



Please take a moment to view our latest news segment on DEP's Service Line Protection Program. If you have any ideas for future news stories please email them [here](#). The video can also be viewed [here](#) on our YouTube channel.

Follow the M/V Hunts Point



The M/V Hunts Point, the newest addition to the DEP marine fleet, recently completed its sea trials and left its dock in Louisiana for the trip around the tip of Florida and up the East Coast. It is expected to arrive in New York City next week. You can follow its progress [here](#). The Hunts Point is the first of three new sludge vessels that DEP has commissioned and it will replace the 1967-vintage M/V Newtown Creek.

A Warm Feeling



DEP's annual NY Cares coat drive was a great success. DEP staffers donated more than 100 coats and jackets to be distributed to those that need them—especially timely during this extreme bout of cold weather. And, while the agency is no longer collecting coats—NY Cares has extended their coat drive collection until February 7. Anyone who still wishes to donate may do so at one of the many NY Cares [collection points](#).

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