

*Commissioner's Corner*



**Vincent Sapienza**  
Commissioner

On the morning of July 19 a Consolidated Edison (Con Ed) steam pipe ruptured near the intersection of Fifth Avenue and 21<sup>st</sup> Street in the Flatiron District of Manhattan. DEP quickly mobilized and responded to the blast site, along with other City agencies including FDNY, NYPD, and the Departments of Buildings, Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), Transportation, and Emergency Management. Con Ed and the American Red Cross of Greater New York also responded.

Once Con Ed had the steam shut off, the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations inspected DEP infrastructure and shut off

water to portions of the area. When it was determined that the steam main was insulated with asbestos containing material, DEP's Bureau of Environmental Compliance (BEC) was mobilized for further asbestos testing and air monitoring.

Bulk testing of debris for asbestos allowed a hot zone to be established in the vicinity of the blast and more than 40 buildings were evacuated, including approximately 500 individuals. Continuous external air monitoring in the neighborhood shows that the air is safe. At the direction of BEC, Con Ed is cleaning building facades, sidewalks and roadways, and inspectors from DEP and DOHMH continue to examine building facades, roofs, and common areas. As buildings meet all necessary criteria



they are cleared for reoccupancy. If a resident or worker finds any debris in their apartment or work space that may be from the steam pipe incident, they are reminded to not touch or disturb the material. Rather they should report it to Con Edison by visiting the 10 E. 15<sup>th</sup> Street reception center, or by calling 212-358-4565.



I want to thank Deputy Commissioners **Angela Licata** and **Tasos Georgelis** for coordinating the around-the-clock efforts of their respective teams. Leading the asbestos testing and inspection efforts have been **Michael Gilsenan, Krish Radhakrishnan, Carlstein Lutchmedial** and their indefatigable crew of inspectors. All DEP personnel involved in aiding in this emergency response have done so with the highest level of professionalism and concern. I want to sincerely thank you

all for your ongoing dedication to our important work. For more updates on DEP's ongoing efforts at the blast site, please click [here](#).

*Spotlight on Safety*

**Hurricane Preparedness**

The Atlantic hurricane season takes place between the months of June and November, with the peak of the season occurring between August and October. New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM) provides "[Know Your Zone](#)" information about hurricane evacuation procedures for the area you live in. In the event that a hurricane watch is announced, you should follow news updates on the storm and ensure that you have an emergency [Go Bag](#) ready in case of evacuation.

The Occupational, Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provides information on how to prepare for a hurricane at work

and what safety precautions to take if you are working during a hurricane or part of a clean-up crew. According to OSHA, employers should:

- Ensure that all workers know what to do in case of an emergency.
- Practice evacuation plans on a regular basis.
- Update plans and procedures based on lessons learned from exercises.

DEP has an [Emergency Planning Policy](#) in place. For more information visit the [OSHA](#) and [NYCEM](#) websites.



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.

## Disability Pride on Parade



DEP's Office of EEO & Diversity and other employees continued the tradition of participating in the annual NYC Disability Pride Parade, underscoring the department's commitment to diversity and inclusion of people with disabilities. The parade served to celebrate and empower people with disabilities, as well as bring greater awareness to the needs of this community. The event also featured DEP Water On-the-Go stations to help participants stay hydrated. For more information regarding how to participate in next year's NYC Disability Pride Parade, and to participate in other Diversity and Inclusion events, please e-mail [diversitycommittee@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:diversitycommittee@dep.nyc.gov).

## Astoria Heights "Green" Playground



DEP recently joined NYC Parks Commissioner **Mitchell J. Silver**, FAICP, Council Member **Costa Constantinides**, and Community Board 1 District Manager **Florence Koulouris**, to cut the ribbon on the reconstruction of **Astoria Heights Playground**, including a full reconstruction of the comfort station. It is one of ten parks in Queens that is receiving an investment through the Community Parks Initiative, NYC Parks' plan for an equitable parks system. The project is funded with nearly \$8 million total, with approximately \$1.2 million from DEP, and was the first major renovation to Astoria Heights Playground in more than 20 years. The green infrastructure, including a rain garden and sub-surface storage retention, will reduce stormwater runoff by 2.7 million gallons per year. DEP has committed approximately \$50 million in funding for the construction of green infrastructure installations at CPI sites citywide.

## Watershed Boot Brush Station Debuts



A [new boot-brush station](#) was installed and unveiled earlier this month at the trailhead of the Shavertown Trail near Pepacton Reservoir. The station, which will help minimize the spread of invasive species, is among the first of its kind in the Catskills. It includes a mounted brush on which hikers can clean their boots, information to help identify several invasive species and plants, such as bittersweet and barberry, that are approaching the region, and a gravel pad that is intended to trap any seeds that might get brushed off. Invasive plants cannot move far on their own. Even wind-dispersed seeds generally do not blow too far. Most new infestations are started by people who unintentionally move the seeds through recreational activities such as hiking, hunting or fishing. That's why boot-brush stations are becoming more common throughout New York, especially in the northern and western parts of the state where outdoor recreation is popular.

## Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 24 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Director of Planning and Recruitment **Grace Pigott** and HR Specialist **Grace Franco**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

**Solomon D. Broadnax**, **Jahmil A. Courtney**, **Kevin M. Dolan**, **Kenya N. Dupree**, **Erika E. Dyer**, **Marquise A. Hoyte**, **Matthew T. McDonnell**, **Izaiah D. Miles**, **Sharon J. Oliver**, **Serjay Z. Parks** and **Lamont R. Void** with BCS; **Syed A. Haider** with BEPA; **Casey B. McCormack** with BLA; **Amelia B. DeGrace**, **MD Golam Farhad**, **Chung Kit Peng** and **Fahmida S. Rahman** with BWSO; **Karifala Kante**, **Kosta Tsirogiannis** and **Tao Xue** with BWT; **Rachel D. Reeves** with OD&HR; and **Scott D. Tardif** with OER; and **Donovan Li** and **Peniza Thapa** with Sustainability.

**We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: [newsletter@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:newsletter@dep.nyc.gov).**