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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department of Environmental Protection Urges That Fire Hydrants Remain Closed

Lack of Water Pressure Could Leave High-Rises Dry and Hinder Firefighting

Hydrants Can Be Opened With Spray Caps in Places With No Water Service

Commissioner Christopher O. Ward of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection urged New York City residents today to not open fire hydrants in the aftermath of the blackout. Where water service has been interrupted, residents should request that the local fire house install a spray cap and open a nearby fire hydrant.

"Hydrants are for fighting fires, and should be used responsibly," said Commissioner Ward. "Illegally opened hydrants can lower water pressure, causing problems at hospitals and other medical care facilities, and hindering fire-fighting by reducing the flow of water to hoses and pumps.

"Also," Commissioner Ward continued, "during the blackout many people who live in high-rise buildings lost water service because the electric pumps that fill the roof tanks for those buildings stopped working. As the electricity is restored, the pumps will need sufficient water pressure to refill the roof tanks. Without that water pressure, people in buildings over five stories tall will not be able to regain their water service."

Hydrants can be opened legally if equipped with a City-approved spray cap. Spray caps can be obtained by an adult 18 or over, free of charge, at local firehouses. In places where buildings have lost water service the FDNY will provide spray caps and use special wrenches to open hydrants that may be locked.

"The key is to use water responsibly during this crisis," said Commissioner Ward.

MORE INFORMATION

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