

DEP Featured at Water Summit



Commissioner Sapienza was a featured speaker at this year's second annual [Water Summit](#) hosted by *The Atlantic* magazine on Nov. 29 at Apella, an event venue in Manhattan. The day's discussions explored how environmentalists and policymakers, communities and business leaders can work to preserve the world's supply of safe water. Commissioner Sapienza spoke on a panel titled, "Come Hell or High Water," along with **Jainey Bavishi**, Director of the NYC Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency, and **Marisa Lago**, Director of the New York City Department of City Planning. Their conversation focused on the impact and aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, developing crisis management strategies and city planning in New York City. [Click here](#) to watch the video.

Spotlight on Safety

EHS Insights: Safe Driving tips for Winter Weather



Persis Luke
Assistant Commissioner
Environmental, Health
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DEP's work doesn't stop because snow and ice is on the roads. We still need to check our facilities, sample drinking water, and maintain critical infrastructure.

When winter weather arrives, be prepared. Take extra caution when driving in rain or sleet, particularly when the temperature is hovering around 32°F. Use the New York State Department of Transportation's "511" or go to [511NY.org](#) for travel and weather updates.

Distracted driving continues to be a growing problem with all vehicle operators, and City Fleet drivers are no exception. We all have preoccupations or schedules we are trying to meet; or we may be tempted to check our emails or use other devices while driving. Various fleet safety experts have determined that some form of distraction is a factor in 80% of all accidents. Take a few extra minutes to prepare for your trip and slow down, especially this time of year.

For more information, visit the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#), [Department of Transportation](#), and [National Safety Council](#) 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.

VALUE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Special Guest Commissioner's Corner



Mitchell Paluszek
Assistant Commissioner
Organizational Development &
Human Resources

What an honor to be asked to highlight the ways DEP supports its employees! And this, on the heels of returning to DEP after 20 years (to the day!) to serve as Assistant Commissioner of Organizational Development & Human Resources (OD&HR). After having now served in five different agencies, I can assure you, without exaggeration, that there is no other department in this City like DEP, both because of its mission and its people.

SUPPORT. DEP's [Strategic Plan](#) states that "we support a culture of respect and invest in the professional growth and development of our workforce." There's a lot of very important stuff packed into this one sentence.

What does it mean to support a culture of respect? Well, it means encouraging all employees to conduct themselves with civility. When new employees start with DEP, they attend OD&HR's New Hire Orientation and are given lots of information about how they are (or are not) expected to relate to their colleagues. For example, new employees are given the Uniform Code of Discipline and receive training on discrimination, sexual harassment and workplace violence.

These laws and rules are obviously very important, but promoting a culture of respect goes well beyond merely expecting employees to follow these rules. It means promoting an atmosphere where employees treat colleagues—whether co-workers, subordinates, or su-

pervisors—as they would like to be treated themselves. It means ensuring that everyone at every level in the agency is held accountable for the way they treat others. It means promoting a workplace that embraces diversity and values the opinions of everyone. It doesn't mean that everyone must agree on everything, but it does mean that, even when we disagree, we should nevertheless make an effort to understand our colleagues' point-of-view. We all have an obligation to make these more than just aspirational sentiments. It is our shared responsibility to make this the reality at DEP.

I am proud of the many ways OD&HR supports DEP employees. While some of that support is unseen (people, for example, don't always think of all the hard work that goes into getting employees appointed, promoted, and paid), much of that support is very visible. Did you know that DEP has an Office of Staff Support and Assistance (staffsupportassistance@dep.nyc.gov), which provides guidance, coaching, counseling, and resources for all employees on a variety of issues affecting them at home or work? OD&HR's Workforce Development team works tirelessly to provide training and development opportunities for all employees, both for the jobs they are doing right now and the jobs to which they aspire. And the Employee Service Center is on the 3rd Floor and at 718-595-4311 to answer questions ranging from "How can I reset my CityTime password?" to "I was called to attend a civil service hiring pool at another agency. What do I need to do?"

We are a resource for all of you. We are here to SUPPORT you.

It's good to be back!



This month, DEP is celebrating our value of support. If you know someone who embodies this value, please send an email by December 14 to values@dep.nyc.gov and include the name of who you are nominating, their bureau, and a brief description of how they embody this value.

Kudos Corner



In a recent correspondence to DEP, City Council Minority Leader **Steven Matteo** wrote, “I would also like to take the opportunity to recognize DEP’s Staten Island crew for their responsiveness and professionalism. They are truly among the best in City government and I appreciate all they do for Staten Islanders.”

BWSO’s borough operations teams are perhaps the most visible members of DEP, responding to thousands of 311 calls from anything pertaining to ponding conditions and cave-ins, to sewer backups and water main breaks. The field operations team on Staten Island exemplifies our commitment to excellence and customer service, responding quickly to concerns from both the public and elected officials.

Led by Borough Manager **Stephen Sforza**, District Supervisor **Jason Seminara**, Acting District Supervisor **Kevin Patton**, Acting District Supervisor **Jeff Jay**, and work or-

der coordinator **Jessica Ramos**, a team of more than 50 staffers responds to public requests for water and sewer investigations. Many on the team are native New Yorkers, with most being life-long Staten Islanders residing in the very communities in which they serve. Staffers in this unit are dispatched to perform investigations and then determine what the best solution is to permanently address any infrastructure conditions, with public safety being the number one priority.

The team also partners with DEP’s sister agencies, including DOT, with whom it is working to develop a pilot project to jointly coordinate projects aimed at cutting down repair times, street cuts, and the need for multiple paving jobs. BWSO’s Staten Island staff are a critical part of addressing not only quality of life issues that affect Staten Islanders, but any disruptions in service, and they perform a job we simply could not live without.

Please Give to Holiday Food Drive



The generosity of DEP employees has helped multitudes of needy families over the years. This year, we are again partnering with the NYC Food Bank to provide some relief to NYC families. If you would like to help fight hunger, please donate any of the non-perishable items [listed here](#). Donated items can be brought to the 19th floor until Wednesday, Dec. 5. Collection boxes will be set up in the Flocculator Enclave. Please call **Joe Sokolowski** at ext. 6168 if you have any questions.

New Green Playground in the Bronx



DEP recently joined NYC Parks Commissioner **Mitchell J. Silver**, Council Member **Rafael Salamanca**, Community Board 2 (CB2) District Manager **Ralph Acevedo**, CB2 Chairman **Robert Crespo**, and students and staff from P.S. 75 to cut the ribbon on the newly transformed Longfellow Playground in Hunts Point. This site is the sixth Bronx park to be completely renovated under the Community Parks Initiative (CPI). To manage stormwater runoff, green infrastructure has been added throughout Longfellow Playground. DEP has committed approximately \$50 million in funding for green infrastructure installations at CPI sites throughout the city, helping to reduce sewer overflows that sometimes occur during heavy rainfall, improve air quality and lower summertime temperatures. This project completely reconstructed Longfellow Playground, adding a playground with a tree house motif, mini stage, efficient spray showers with timers, new seating areas, bike racks, a new fence, lighting, landscaping, subsurface stabilization and greenery.

Donations Needed for Toy Drive



Please take part in DEP’s Holiday Toy Drive by donating new and unwrapped toys, sports equipment or accessories for young people from tots to teens.

This year’s donations will go to:

- Girl Scouts of Greater New York Troop 6000*
- Greater New York Council Boy Scouts of America*
- Elmhurst Hospital’s Pediatrics’ Department

*These two programs service children in the NYC Shelter System.

Please drop off toys with your bureau coordinators. The final day to donate is Wednesday, Dec. 5. For any questions, please reach out to **Joe Sokolowski** at ext. 6168.

For more information on when and where to donate, [click here](#).

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