



IEWS & INFORMATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL & WORKPLACE SAFETY



Integrating EHS Training into DEP

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We all share the learning experience. Our education began in the school system regardless of our profession or job that we hold today. Each thing that we learned generally shared a similar pattern; it began as small steps toward the completion of a foundation. For example, before we could do mathematical word problems, we had to learn the basics of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Before we could read, we had to learn the basics of letters and forming sentences. Eventually, we used our education to prepare us for our future careers. The same principle holds true for Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) training.

The world of EHS, while still considered relatively new within DEP, is very important to the workforce of this agency. I came on board as the new Director of EHS Training in December of 2005, and that in itself has proved to be an ongoing learning experience. DEP is a huge agency, consisting of over 6,000 employees in various capacities and professions, and with each specific position comes a host of training needs in the world of EHS. In addition, ensuring that everyone gets the proper training is crucial. Why? Because training teaches people the skills they need to perform their jobs and, at the same time, allows them to recognize and become aware of potential hazards regardless of their work environment. It also teaches them tools or procedures to follow to aid them in dealing with on-site health and safety situations. Studies have shown that this knowledge gained from EHS training helps increase employee safety. Refreshers of certain courses are also important because many people have integrated their job responsibilities into their daily routines and often lose sight of things that could happen to injure them on the job. Environmental Health & Safety means looking at those aspects of the job that may be of an environmental concern, a health concern, or a safety concern to its workforce or individually, to the employee. When I joined the workforce (prior to coming to DEP), I was put in several situations where no type of EHS training was implemented or enforced because regulations were not in place at the time, or if they were, there was no tracking mechanism to check whether or not people got the training they needed to perform their jobs well and safely. We are very fortunate to have these avenues now.

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HAZARD ASSESSMENT AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Hazard Assessment

OSHA requires that each employer assess the workplace to determine if hazards that workers may be exposed to are present or are likely to be present that necessitate the use of PPE. This assessment incorporates provisions for the systematic identification, evaluation, prevention, or control of general workplace hazards, those specific job hazards that may arise from foreseeable conditions. In compliance with the law and specific OSHA requirements, DEP employees are provided personal protection equipment (PPE) and are required to use it in accordance with the PPE Hazards Assessments for specific job tasks or work areas as directed by their Supervisors.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is required to reduce exposures to hazards when engineering and administrative precautions are not feasible or effective in reducing exposures to Permissible Exposure Limits (PEL). Three years ago, a Personal Protection Equipment Policy was developed by the Agency.

The program that is shaped by this policy identifies and evaluates hazards in the DEP facilities to determine if PPE is an appropriate control measure.

Training

Any employee who is required to wear PPE must receive training for proper use and care of the PPE. The training must include but not limited to:

- ✦ When it is necessary to wear PPE
- ✦ What particular PPE is necessary
- ✦ How to properly don, doff, adjust, and wear PPE
- ✦ Limitations of the particular PPE worn

After training in the PPE program, the employee must show how to use the PPE properly. If they cannot, they could be required to be retrained.

Types of PPE



(a) Eye and Face Protection. Appropriate eye and face PPE is worn to provide protection against impact from flying objects, radiation, chemicals, dusts, and other hazards. Goggles, safety glasses with side protectors, and face shields are some examples of this type of protective device.

(b) Foot Protection. Appropriate foot protection is worn in work areas where chemicals are used or stored and when handling chemical materials. Safety shoes are required for protection against injury from heavy falling objects, crushing by rolling objects, and laceration or penetration by sharp objects. Chemically resistant, steel-toed or shanked foot guards/shoes, slip resistant soles, and waders are some examples of this type of protective device.

(c) Head Protection. Helmets are designed to protect the head from impact and penetration by falling/flying objects and from limited electrical shock and burn. Operators of heavy equipment and forklifts at warehouses, for example, need special head gear.

(d) Body and Hand Protection. Cotton lab coats are worn to protect clothing from becoming soiled and to provide limited protection against minor splashes of chemicals.

There are many types of gloves available to protect against a wide variety of hazards. The nature of the hazard and the operation involved will determine the selection gloves. It is essential that employees use gloves specifically designed for the hazards and tasks found in their workplace. The variety of potential occupational hand injuries makes selecting the right pair of gloves challenging.



(e) Respiratory Protection. Appropriate respiratory protection is worn to provide protection from breathing air contaminated with harmful dusts or gases. Respirators are required for working in hazardous atmospheres. There are many types of respirator, and it is important that employees get the right to fit the right hazard. Employees who are required to wear Respiratory Protection must wear a NIOSH certified respirators.

(f) Hearing Protection. Devices such as ear plugs, canal caps, and earmuffs are needed in noisy environments. They are worn to protect against noise from heavy equipment and other sources. Heavy protective hearing devices must be available to all employees exposed to noise levels at or above the 85 Dba Time-Weighted Average (TWA).

Respiratory and hearing protection assessments are typically done through industrial hygiene monitoring programs.

Pierre M. Saint Louis
Associate Safety & Health Coordinator

Serious About Safety, Eyes on Environmental Awareness, and Dedicated Service Awards



Award Winners (l to r): James Rossi (BWSO), Winifred Lanham (EH&S), Commissioner Lloyd, James Pynn (BWT), William Quinlan (BWS)

Please join me in thanking the following individuals for their contributions to making DEP a better place to work – whether through their contributions to health and safety improvements or environmental compliance, or through their dedication to improving service by this agency to the public. Their efforts have been recognized by their colleagues, and for these actions, they will be receiving an award from the New York City Water Board.

The November 2005 Awardees

SERIOUS ABOUT SAFETY AWARD

William Quinlan, West of Hudson Operations, Bureau of Water Supply

Mr. Quinlan was designated to track the abatement of environmental health and safety audit items for the Ashokan/Schoharie Section of West of Hudson Operations, and in so doing, he has consistently applied lessons learned to prevent future findings and to ensure compliance and the health and safety of his co-workers. Mr. Quinlan has implemented inspection schedules for Health and Safety equipment, established a “Safety Office” to keep needed health and safety equipment in stock and in proper working order, developed a pre-use checklist for the Section’s emergency utility truck, and served as a liaison with vendors of health and safety services. In all that he does, Mr. Quinlan takes a proactive, rather than a reactive, stance towards his responsibilities.

EYES ON ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AWARD

James Rossi, State Island Bluebelt Division, Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations

Mr. Rossi is Field Manager for the Staten Island Bluebelt program. An oil spill occurred at Mill Pond in the Richmond Creek Bluebelt in August. Immediately upon inspecting the spill himself, Mr. Rossi notified the EH&S Compliance Office for guidance and also contacted our State and federal regulators to inform them of the spill. His prompt action and cooperative approach resulted in a thorough clean-up effort that protected the environmentally sensitive Bluebelt and prevented the oil from reaching the surrounding harbor water bodies.

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Dedicated to Service Award

Additionally, I am pleased to announce two winners for the inaugural “**Dedicated to Service**” Award. This Award is intended to highlight individuals whose work exhibits a continued dedication to excellence in customer service and responsiveness to the general public.

James Pynn, Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, Bureau of Wastewater Treatment

As superintendent of the Newtown Creek plant, Mr. Pynn has been a critical liaison with the surrounding Greenpoint community regarding operations and construction activity. Mr. Pynn regularly goes “above and beyond” to make sure that community issues and concerns are well heard and, whenever possible, incorporated into construction planning, while keeping in mind operations, budget and schedule requirements. Mr. Pynn is the quintessential dedicated employee who cares not only about successfully running the City’s largest wastewater treatment facility while under a massive construction program, but also about being a good neighbor. His energy, dedication and responsiveness make Mr. Pynn an ideal candidate for the inaugural “Dedicated to Service” Award.

Winifred Lanham, Environmental Health and Safety Officer, Bidwell Engineering (Construction Management, Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade)

As EH&S Officer for the Joint Venture managing construction for the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade, Ms. Lanham is responsible for the removal of hazardous materials and contaminated soil, lead, and asbestos discovered during construction. Ms. Lanham advocated that DEP should be exempt from paying the Annual Hazardous Waste Program Fee to the State, since the Newtown Creek project is mandated by a Consent Order with the State Department of Environmental Conservation. Her diligence and persistence in reviewing this issue will save the City more than \$700,000 on this project alone, as well as additional cost-savings for other mandated capital projects as well. Ms. Lanham’s dedication to serving the City and our ratepayers has been exceptional, and makes her the first non-DEP employee to receive one of these awards.

Congratulations to these four individuals.

For more information about these awards (including nomination forms for additional recipients), please check the Commissioner’s page on Pipeline, the agency’s intranet site.

Emily Lloyd
Commissioner

(“Training,” continued from page 1)

One of my goals as Director of EHS Training is to get to know each bureau and their training programs and needs. I know much work has been done in this area, and further enhancement could only add to the existing training modules within our agency. Staying current with information as well as seeking input from individual bureaus and employees is imperative to the success of the program. Learning should be a consistent experience at DEP to help keep employees motivated and safe.

In conclusion, I’d like to stress that there is an intrinsic dynamic that goes on in each training session. It occurs between the instructor and the audience. The more interaction that occurs between the two, the better the class will be for both parties. It’s a two way street. I look forward to working with all of you here at DEP as time goes on.

To learn more about the Office of Environmental, Health & Safety Compliance, please visit Pipeline or contact us directly for information.