

Protecting NYC Source Water



DEP recently began a forestry project alongside Ashokan Reservoir that aims to limit the impact of the emerald ash borer, an invasive beetle native to Asia, by removing some 2,000 ash trees from land just north of the reservoir. The project will also enhance public safety by removing infested trees that could fall, and it will promote forest regeneration by thinning the canopy and allowing sunlight to reach the forest floor. Projects to manage and improve forests around New York City's reservoirs are important for water quality because healthy trees prevent erosion and serve as a natural filter. Find more information on this and other DEP forestry projects [here](#) and additional photos [here](#).

Spotlight on Safety

Falls are among the most common causes of serious work related injuries and deaths. Therefore, it is important that workplaces are setup to prevent employees from falling from overhead platforms and elevated work stations. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that fall protection be provided at elevations of four feet in general industry workplaces, and six feet in the construction industry. Fall protection must also be provided when working over dangerous equipment and machinery, regardless of the fall distance. DEP facilities and capital construction sites are audited regularly to ensure that proper fall protection measures are in

place. To prevent employees from being injured from falls:

- Provide a guard rail and toe-board around every elevated open sided platform, floor or runway.
- Regardless of height, if a worker can fall into or onto dangerous machines or equipment (such as a vat or a conveyor belt) provide guardrails and toe-boards to minimize the fall hazard.
- Include safety harnesses and lines, safety nets, stair railings and hand rails as needed.

For additional information please visit OSHA's website on [Fall Protection](#).

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. 🙌

Commissioner's Corner

In my first Commissioner's Corner message I'd like to thank all of you for the warm welcome I have received upon my return to DEP. While many things have changed over the last five years, it is abundantly clear to me that the workforce is still composed of proud New Yorkers who care deeply about public service, protection of the environment and public health, and the well-being of the DEP community.

Over the next few weeks I will be visiting DEP facilities throughout the five boroughs and across the watersheds and I look forward to getting reacquainted with those of you I have worked with before and meeting others for the first time. I am also eager to hear about the important work you are doing on behalf of the more than 9 million customers who rely upon our services every single day.

I have known **Mayor de Blasio** for more than 20 years and I can tell you that he is deeply committed to our mission to protect the environment and public health. From providing a reliable supply of high quality drinking water, to collecting and treating wastewater,

to reducing air, noise and hazardous materials pollution, the Mayor appreciates the critical work that DEP's nearly 6,000 employees do every day. He understands the value of our world class drinking water and wastewater systems and supports our collaboration with local community leaders to extend our critical services to underserved neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs.

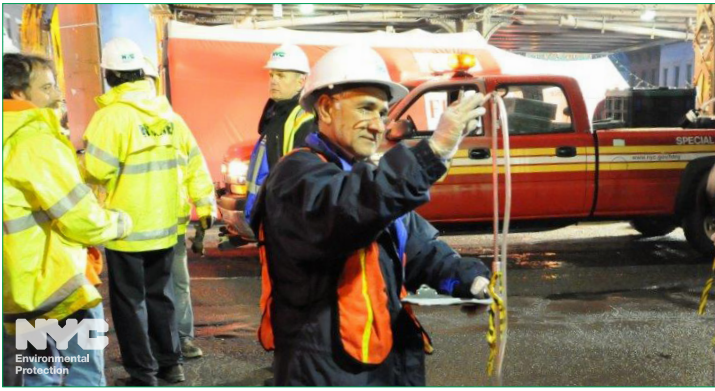
The Mayor recognizes that more sustainable practices will improve public health and the environment, and can also deliver real savings and efficiencies for our ratepayers and open new doors to good paying green jobs for residents. From our work to capture and reuse biogas at the wastewater treatment plants, to the near completion of one of the city's largest solar installations, to being a world leader in green infrastructure and resiliency, DEP will play a central role in making New York the most sustainable big city in the world.

We've got a lot to do and I look forward to working with all of you to make DEP the premier drinking water and wastewater utility in the nation.



Photo Credit: Rob Bennett for the Office of Mayor Bill de Blasio

Focus on the Field



Shortly after last week's deadly explosion in East Harlem, DEP's Asbestos Lab, part of the Bureau of Environmental Compliance (BEC), was dispatched to the scene, to ensure that the air was free of asbestos and that any asbestos-containing material was properly handled. Among those assigned to monitor the air at the site was Industrial Hygienist **Ahmad Soloki**. With nearly a quarter century of experience under his belt, it was not Soloki's first time responding to an emergency. He was also part of the team responsible for monitoring the air for asbestos in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Hurricane Sandy, and several other building collapses. Fortunately, in the case of the East Harlem explosion, airborne asbestos fibers have not been detected after several days of monitoring.

Soloki was born in Iran and in the late 1970s moved to the Philippines to attend college. After graduation, he moved to New York City and earned a master's degree in Civil Environmental Engineering from City College. Soloki began his career with DEP in 1989 as an air pollution inspector. In 2000 he transferred to Hazmat, and worked as an inspector in DEP's Community Right-to-Know Division. Soloki now splits his time between DEP's Asbestos and HazMat Labs, doing everything from analyzing water samples for lead and other metals, testing bulk samples for asbestos content, monitoring the air at emergencies, and analyzing oil samples for sulfur

to ensure compliance with DEP boiler regulations.

His activities require extensive training and experience. Since 2001, Soloki has traveled to asbestos testing training courses in Chicago on two occasions and he must renew his air monitoring certification annually. Asked about his role at the explosion in East Harlem, Soloki replied, "We are there to ensure there is no asbestos in the air and to protect the health and safety of the community."

In addition to monitoring the air for asbestos at emergencies, DEP's Asbestos Lab also supports the Asbestos Control Program in responding to community concerns about proper handling of asbestos-containing materials and enforcement of the city's Asbestos Rules. "Any reports of suspected asbestos exposure are a top priority for us," said **Michael Gilsenan**, Assistant Commissioner for BEC. "We are fortunate to have dedicated professionals like Ahmad who are willing to respond at a moment's notice to protect the 8.4 million people we serve."

Soloki is married with a son and daughter, both of whom are college graduates living and working in New York City. His son was recently married and his daughter continues to pursue higher education. In his spare time, Soloki enjoys reading, shopping with his wife and traveling. He recently returned from a trip to Dubai and Iran, and last summer he traveled to Europe.

Kudos Corner



WORLD'S LARGEST ULTRAVIOLET DISINFECTION FACILITY WINS 2013 'BEST OF THE BEST PROJECTS AWARD'

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection's Catskill-Delaware Ultraviolet Disinfection Facility, the largest ultraviolet water treatment facility in the world, was selected by Engineering News-Record as a 2013 "Best of the Best Projects."... the facility includes several firsts, including the installation of equipment—record-setting in size—and demonstrates an exemplary field application of ultraviolet technology. View the entire Water Online article [here](#).

Press Box

BABY SEAL WASHES ASHORE AT BROOKLYN CREEK, ENJOYS SUN FOR COUPLE OF HOURS

"An adorable baby seal was found along the Newtown Creek Nature Walk in Greenpoint on Sunday afternoon, sunning itself briefly before getting back into the water. ...Kimberly Durham with the Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation said the seal was in good shape. 'There were no injuries and no concern,' she said. 'The animal appeared to be alert and aware. We have had these juvenile harp seals go up creek.'" – View the entire Daily News article [here](#)

Extra, Extra!



A small leak can waste water and result in high water bills. As part of EPA's Fix a Leak Week, DEP is hosting a series of public outreach events to educate New Yorkers about the high cost of residential water leaks. Click the photo to see a

new public service announcement DEP created to share with our Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube followers.

For those of you wishing to view the video outside of the office, you can [watch it here](#) on our YouTube Channel.

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