

# V.I.E.W.S.

VIEWES & INFORMATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL & WORKPLACE SAFETY



## Training At Its Best

*By Ken O'Connor  
Police Division EH&S Coordinator*

**In today's world**, training is one of the most essential components of modern law enforcement. Training empowers police officers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to become effective police professionals. Training enhances information sharing and improves safety.

The State of New York Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) Bureau of Municipal Police Training Council (BMPTC) mandates 510 hours of recruit training in order to certify entry level police officers. This training includes courses in law, police science, social science, firearms, and tactics. The New York City Department of Environmental Protection Police Academy far exceeds this requirement and consists of over 1000 hours of entry level training. In addition to the state mandated curriculum, the NYC DEP Police Academy includes 300 hours of environmental enforcement training and 170 hours of infrastructure protection training. Recent and future graduates of the police academy will now graduate with 40 hours of hazardous material technician training, which was formerly offered as an in-service training elective.

The training curriculum is demanding with a drop out rate of about 10 %. Training includes subjects such as: the administration of justice, storm water prevention, NYC rules and regulations, police procedures, community relations, and supervised field training. The Environmental Police Academy has implemented an Infrastructure Awareness Program to familiarize recruits with the vast area



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and diverse facilities of the New York City Water Supply. Basic training also includes physical fitness standards, driver training, and defensive tactics training. The Police Division is very proud of the fact that we have 30 police officers who are NYS DCJS certified Police Instructors.

Policing anywhere is a diverse profession, but a DEP police officer must be a jack of all trades. The officer needs to know a lot about policing, the rules of evidence, the use of force, and the laws of arrest, and they must also know enough about science and engineering to know what is a problem and what can wait until Monday.

DEP police officers maintain surveillance 24 hours per day seven days per week.

Just when you think you have had “just about enough” training in your area of expertise, think for a moment about the extensive training required of a DEP police officer. In addition to agency required courses, DEP police officers must meet Federal and State training requirements as well. Auditors and regulators insure that DEP police officers are trained to an effective standard. While many employees must meet yearly training requirements that may amount to two or three days of training, each member of the Police Division accumulates an annual average of 80 hours of in-service training per police officer of required training.

Despite the rigorous training each officer receives, some of our courses are actually a lot of fun (don’t tell anyone though!). One of the most intense training opportunities is a self defense class called Armament Systems and Procedures training (ASP). “ASP?” An ASP is a collapsible baton used as a defensive tactical weapon.



The training in the use of ASP begins with two hours of classroom instruction. The instruction includes important lessons such as the law and use of force continuums, but other important lessons are included as well such as how to get the darn device out of the holster without hurting yourself and how not to get sued if you use it. The classroom training is followed by six hours of intensive hands on practical training which is when the fun begins! The practical training includes multiple attack scenarios geared towards defense if attacked by one or more assailants. Essentially, these training scenarios orchestrate attacks

when the assailant tries to remove your weapon in what is called a “red man suit.” The assailant is a “perpetrator,” whose body is completely covered with dense foam protection. The assailant will attempt to disarm you or knock you down or otherwise attack you as you attempt to defend yourself with your ASP. Controlled, full strikes are made to specific areas of the body, while other parts of the body are avoided. You fail the practicum if you lose your weapon, intentionally or unintentionally repeatedly strike the perpetrator in an unauthorized area, or use an unauthorized technique. The officer must keep in mind at all times that the ASP is a *defensive* weapon. The point of using the ASP is not to injure the suspect, but rather to protect yourself. As you can see in the photos on this and the preceding page, this is full contact training, which must be executed properly. And while it may seem like fun, the ASP is a serious and essential defensive weapon that must be mastered if it is to be successfully deployed.

After six hours of rigorous ASP instruction, sitting in a classroom doesn’t seem like such a bad thing after all, does it?

# HOLIDAY HEALTH AND SAFETY

*Seena Sweet  
OEHSC H&S Trainer*

As the Holiday Season approaches, people concentrate on the cheerful and festive moments. However, we should also remember that many hazards and risks might be encountered during this season. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, each year, hospital emergency rooms treat about 12,500 people for falls, cuts, shocks, and burns due to incidents involving faulty holiday lights, dried-out holiday trees and other holiday decorations. Trees are involved in about 300 fires annually, resulting in 10 deaths, 30 injuries and an average of about \$10 million in property damage and loss. In addition, there are more than 13,000 candle-related fires each year, which result in 140 deaths and \$205 million in property loss.

So, here are a few safety tips from The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and The National Safety Council (NSC) to ensure that you, your family, friends, and co-workers enjoy a safe holiday.

## Trees:

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for a "Fire Resistant" label, which indicates the tree is more resistant to burning.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green; needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers.

When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Heated rooms tend to dry live trees out rapidly, so be sure to keep the stand filled with water.

## Lights:

- Use only lights that have been tested for safety by a testing laboratory, such as UL or ETL. Use only lights that have plugs containing fuses.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Throw out damaged sets. Always replace burned-out bulbs promptly with the same wattage bulbs.
- If using an extension cord, make sure it is rated for the intended use.
- *Never* use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.
- Protect outdoor lights by securely fastening to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect the lights from wind damage. Use only insulated staples (not nails or tacks) to hold strings in place. Or, run strings of lights through hooks (available at hardware stores).



- Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.
- Never pull or tug on outdoor lights when removing them. This could cause stress on the connections that could create a fire hazard. Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to protect against electric shock. Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold. GFCIs can also be installed permanently to household circuits by a qualified electrician.

## Candles and Other Decorations:

- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles out of reach of children and pets.

- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid sharp or breakable decorations, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children who could swallow or inhale small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.
- To avoid eye and skin irritation, wear gloves when decorating with spun glass "angel hair." A common substitute is non-flammable cotton. Both angel hair and cotton snow are flame retardant when used alone. However, if artificial snow is sprayed onto them, the dried combination will burn rapidly. To avoid lung irritation, follow container directions carefully while decorating with artificial snow sprays.

## Fireplaces:

- Use care with "fire salts," which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that, if eaten, can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting. Keep them away from children. Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. Wrappings often contain metallic materials that can ignite suddenly and be toxic if burned.
- Place a screen around your fireplace to prevent sparks from igniting nearby flammable materials.

## Toys and Gifts:

Be sure anything you give children is too big to get caught in the throat, nose, or ears. Avoid toys with small parts that can be pulled or broken off. Consider age differences and the chances that younger children will want to play with older kids' toys.

## Older adults:

Select gifts for older adults that are not heavy or awkward to handle. Make sure the gift does not require assembly and can be easily opened and closed. Choose books with large type to make reading easier.

### **Plants:**

Many plants are toxic and cause severe stomach problems. Check with the NYC Poison Control Center (toll-free national number 800-222-1222) and your local plant nursery before purchasing.

Plants that are particularly dangerous include mistletoe (berries are fatal to children and adults), Poinsettia, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry, amaryllis, and plants containing berries. Keep plants up high and out of reach of children and pets.

### **Food and Cooking:**

Wash hands, utensils, sink, and anything else that has come in contact with raw poultry. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers in covered shallow containers (less than two inches deep) within two hours after cooking. Date the leftovers for future use.

If you have questions concerning holiday turkey preparation and

cooking, call the *USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline* at 1-800-535-4555.

### **Alcohol, Parties, and Driving:**

Use designated drivers to drive other guests home after holiday parties.

### **Stress:**

- Allow enough time to shop rather than hurry through stores and parking lots.
- When shopping, make several trips out to the car to drop off packages rather than trying to carry too many items.
- Take time out for yourself. Relax, read, or enjoy your favorite hobby at your own pace.
- To avoid pickpockets and theft, do not display or keep large amounts of cash in your wallet.
- Keep all packages in the trunk of your car.

**OEHS WISHES YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A  
SAFE AND HEALTHY HOLIDAY SEASON.**



## **NELSON LEON, BWSO**

FROM COLLEGE INTERN  
TO EH&S TRAINING COORDINATOR

Nelson joined DEP's Bureau of Water & Sewer Operations (BWSO) in 1998 as a college intern. He then left DEP for other assignments, returning in the summer of 2000 as a college intern in the same division, but a different unit within BWSO's Engineering Division. He served there as a database programmer using computer programs such as Visual Basic and Access to track capital projects. Nelson remained in the Engineering Unit for two years, until 2002 when he joined the EH&S Training Unit at its inception, and played a pivotal role in developing a comprehensive training management system for the entire Bureau. He currently serves as the EH&S Training Coordinator. In 2002, when the BWSO EH&S unit was created the Division required a good administrator. Nelson had just then graduated Queens College with a degree in Accounting and Information Systems and decided to stay with DEP to serve in this new role.

As BWSO's EH&S Training Coordinator, Nelson's duties include finding contractors to teach EH&S courses, scheduling classes, tracking attendance, and producing detailed training reports. Nelson is also the Web Campus Administrator for the Bureau and he manages the Action Item Tracking Table (AIT), which tracks all Bureau compliance audit findings. When working with the AIT, he closes all resolved audit items conducted internally by BWSO and OEHS. Nelson is also a member of the DEP's EH&S Training Coordination Committee.

"The EH&S program at BWSO has come a long way since its inception in 2002," Nelson reports. "I can remember a time even before the unit was created when we did not conduct any H&S classes. Since then the program has really grown and it continues to expand as need is registered and met. Tracking and training issues grow along with classes and registration and certification. I welcome the challenges that come with this expansion. One challenge I just completed was the migration of our bureau's EH&S training tracking system to Web Campus, which I managed. Some days are quite hectic, but when everybody receives credit for the training they need to work safely and healthy, I'm gratified."

"I know that my work as Training Coordinator is integral to the health and safety of all employees, and I am happy to contribute to the EH&S unit's efforts to promote a culture of safe and effective work practices in BWSO and throughout DEP as a whole."