

Ice Rescue Training



Earlier today, DEP water quality experts and police officers plunged into the near-freezing waters of Rondout Reservoir to train for rescues on broken ice. The daylong training underscored some of the more dangerous aspects of protecting New York City's water supply during extreme conditions in the watershed. DEP employees trained for potential scenarios that included falling through thin ice and rescuing an injured co-worker. Click [here](#) to see more photos.

Spotlight on Safety

Near Misses Matter

A near-miss is an event that does not result in an injury, illness or damage, but had the potential to do so. Sometimes called "close calls", near misses should be treated as serious warnings that an accident is likely to occur. Examples include:

- someone nearly struck by a fork lift or falling tool
- major chemical release where no one happened to be present

Just because a disaster was narrowly avoided this time, it does not mean that everyone is safe. Accidents can be prevented by paying close attention to near

misses and taking them seriously. Here's what to do:

- never dismiss a near miss as a lucky break and forget about it
- inform supervisors and bureau EHS staff of the occurrence
- complete the DEP Incident Investigation Reporting form

Cooperating with investigations of near misses offers a unique opportunity to address conditions or systems BEFORE a serious accident or injury occurs. For more information go [here](#) and find the Incident Investigation Report [here](#).

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.

Special Guest Commissioner's Corner

Paul Rush, DEP's Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Water Supply, is a guest commentator this week.

To deliver a continuous supply of high-quality drinking water to New York City, the Bureau of Water Supply (BWS) collects a continuous stream of data to identify and convey the best water from our reservoir system.

Some of the most important data are collected inside 40 closet-size rooms that house hundreds of pieces of equipment for our early warning and remote monitoring systems. These stations—located in the watershed and along distribution mains in the five boroughs—are constantly measuring temperature, pH, turbidity, and other water quality parameters.

The data are relayed in near-real time. Water quality experts from BWS can access a dashboard to closely monitor the data for sudden or gradual changes that might compel operators to convey water from a different depth or a different reservoir.

The system is also equipped with an algorithm that can interpret several water quality parameters simultaneously to detect possible contamination. In fact, a monitoring system was installed temporarily near Madison Square Garden in 2004 to ensure the safety of the GOP National Convention that year.

Monitoring stations in the watershed are located at keypoints, which include facilities where water is leaving or entering a reservoir. The data collected at these sites are also used to ensure compliance with City, state and federal drinking water regulations. Thanks to a \$12 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2008, 14 additional stations were installed at various locations in the City to provide additional monitoring in the distribution system.

A team of 15 scientists and instrumentation specialists are tasked with monitoring the data,

calibrating the equipment, and ensuring proper functioning of the system. Their work is important because even the constant monitoring system needs constant monitoring.

Take one of the monitoring stations at Hillview Reservoir for example. (pictured) Last week, a pump was drawing water from the Catskill Aqueduct nearly 60 feet below ground and running it through the instrumentation. The temperature of the water was 1.9 degrees Celsius. The turbidity was roughly 1 NTU.

But how do we know the little digital displays are correct? That same pump also runs water to a small sink alongside the constant monitoring devices. Water quality experts at this facility take samples from that sink every hour and test them against the results provided by the constant monitoring system. The same care is taken at other sites, such as Shaft 18 and the Catskill-Delaware Ultraviolet Light Disinfection Facility.

The equipment and the data they produce are a reminder that quality and safety are crucial when delivering water to the largest city in the United States. They are also a reminder that our work happens 24 hours a day.

When it detects a particularly important change in water quality, the early warning and remote monitoring system is technologically smart enough to send an automatic phone call to certain BWS staff members—no matter the time of day or night.



Focus on the Field



As a project manager for the Bureau of Engineering, Design and Construction's (BEDC) Wastewater Capital Program, **Selene Wellette** is overseeing several construction projects that are nearing completion and will help to improve the health and cleanliness of the city's local waterways. At the Wards Island Wastewater Treatment Plant, she coordinated the installation of new technology that will further reduce the amount of nitrogen released with the effluent into the Upper East River. High levels of nitrogen can degrade the overall ecology of a waterway, especially in warm weather months. The upgrade allows the Plant to convert the organic nitrogen present in wastewater into inert nitrogen gas and release it harmlessly into the atmosphere, thereby reducing nitrogen discharges by nearly 50 percent.

Importantly, in order to complete this work, significant upgrades to the Plant's electrical, aeration and pumping systems needed to be done first. The substantial capital investment will ensure that the Plant remains in a state of good repair for decades to come. Totalling more than \$500 million and ranging from large to small, Wellette has been working on different projects at the Wards Island facility for nearly a decade.

"It's interesting work and because it protects public health and the environment, it will improve the lives of millions of New Yorkers," said Wellette. "I'm proud to be part of the team that brings these projects to fruition." And, her experience at DEP goes beyond the wastewater field. After graduating from the City College of New York with a degree in engineering and geology, Wellette joined DEP as a geologist and worked on the construction of City Water Tunnel No. 3. In this role, she worked closely with contractors and partner agencies to perform field inspections and quality control tests of the tunnel rock.

"Selene is a talented member of the BEDC team and she stays on top of the myriad of issues that can come up when building large-scale projects in New York City, said **Ken Moriarty**, BEDC Acting Assistant Commissioner. "This allows her to resolve issues in a timely manner and deliver projects to the operating bureaus on-time."

When she's not in the office, Wellette relaxes by painting and visiting the varied museums around the city. She also likes to explore different neighborhoods by foot and bike, and sample the local food offerings. In addition, she especially enjoys visiting the archaeological sites and scenic landscapes of Greece.

March Blood Drive

The Greater New York Blood Program is experiencing a serious shortage due to a fall-off in donations during the frigid month of February. To help ensure that blood will be available to those who need it, DEP is hosting blood drives at the below locations and times.

Lefrak: 3rd Floor Cafeteria, 3/11 – 3/12, 7:45am to 1:30pm; Downsview Region Area: Downsview Fire Hall, 3/11, 9:00am to 2:00pm; Kensico/Highland Regions - Sutton Park Area: Sutton Park-2nd Floor, 3/12, 8:30am to 2:30pm.

Sneak Peek



The DEP Police Academy will soon move into a new building that formerly served as an Army Reserve Center in the upstate City of Kingston. DEP was awarded the 16,658-square-foot building in January. The federal government had declared it as surplus and offered it to other public agencies after the Army moved out in 2011. The building will provide the DEP Police Division with adequate space for its academy, including classrooms, offices, storage areas, and a drill floor for physical training and defensive tactics. Previously, these functions were crammed into a much smaller space on the second floor of the Kingston Laboratory building. DEP expects to celebrate the opening of the new facility in early April.



Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 13 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from First Deputy Commissioner **Steve Lawitts** and Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Alva Braithwaite, **Sheldon Caton** and **Wojciech Choinski** with BCS; **Paul Connors**, **Stan O. Gabriel** and **Diana Ricaurte** with BEDC; **Eva Horvath** and **Hong Wang** with OIT; **Vishawn Chetram** with Budget; **Shameka S. Collins** with Sustainability; **Keith R. Johnson** with BWS; **Francis Ronquillo** with BWT; and **Janice B. Taylor** with BLA.

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