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Fall Foliage

Schoharie Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEP Issues Hydrant Safety Advisory

As the City experiences extreme heat and humidity this week, Commissioner Christopher O. Ward of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has asked New Yorkers to avoid illegal opening of fire hydrants.

"DEP received 596 reports of illegally opened fire hydrants between Monday and Wednesday of this week," said Commissioner Ward. "Every open hydrant wastes one thousand gallons of precious New York City water per minute. That's over one million gallons per wide-open hydrant in a 24-hour period. We cannot tolerate or afford this kind of waste at any time, but particularly when the City's water supply is suffering from drought conditions."

Mayor Bloomberg declared a Stage I Drought Emergency effective on April 1. Despite recent rains in the City, reservoir levels continue to be well below normal - 88.7% of capacity today while normal is 96.7% for this date - and water levels are beginning to go down again as consumption increases during the hot days of summer.

"Hydrants are for fighting fires, not for having fun," said Commissioner Ward. "Illegally opened hydrants can lower water pressure in the City's neighborhoods and can hinder fire-fighting efforts by reducing the flow of water to fire hoses and pumps. Last summer, low water pressure caused problems at several health care facilities. Also, children can be at serious risk, because the powerful force of a fully flowing hydrant can push a child into oncoming traffic."

To cool off safely, people can contact their local firehouses and request a spray cap that can be attached to a hydrant. Spray caps reduce water flow to 25 gallons a minute and provide a safe way for kids to play and cool off. The Fire Department will provide instructions on how to apply the spray cap.

To report illegally opened hydrants or other water or sewer complaints, people should call the DEP's 24-Hour Help Center: 1-718-DEP-HELP (1-718-337-4357). For more information on water conservation, see the How Can I Save Water? section of DEP's Web site at nyc.gov/dep.

MORE INFORMATION

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