

Commissioner's Corner



Thanks in large part to DEP's forward thinking policies and substantial investments, New York City is fortunate to have a plentiful supply of fresh and

clean drinking water today. However, many factors, including the uncertainty of our changing climate, could restrict our water supply in the future. Additionally,

major repairs to the Delaware Aqueduct in the coming years will require a shutdown of the critical water tunnel for the first time since 1945. Part of our efforts to ensure an adequate supply of water for our more than 9 million customers includes the ambitious goal of reducing daily water consumption in New York City by 50 million gallons (or five percent) by 2021.

repaired leaks in water mains, fire hydrants, standpipes, and a potable water supply line. They also repaired two malfunctioning service water break tank valves. With funding provided by BEPA, the staff also added more efficient and safer hose nozzles. Day-to-day operational protocols also changed so hoses no longer run continuously on the thickeners.

As we work with the public on various initiatives to reduce the demand for water, we are also adjusting our own operations. DEP's 14 in-city wastewater treatment plants use about 7.3 million gallons of water each day. Seeing a tremendous opportunity to lead by example, the Bureau of Environmental Planning & Analysis (BEPA) and the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment (BWT) developed the Commissioner's Water Challenge. In 2014, four wastewater treatment plants worked to reduce their water usage by at least 10 percent over a 12 month period. The Jamaica and Wards Island Plants successfully exceeded these targets. This year, we expanded the challenge to additional plants and the staff at Bowery Bay and Hunts Point achieved tremendous results.

Hunts Point also noted terrific results following infrastructure and operational changes. A belt that does not use spray water replaced an older one in the sludge dewatering building and treatment staff optimized sludge thickener operations. Altogether, the improvements have reduced water consumption by almost one-third, or 120,000 gallons per day.

Looking ahead, we will reissue the challenge to additional wastewater treatment plants this year. If all plants reach the minimum goal, the water savings from the 14 wastewater treatment plants would be the equivalent of retrofitting the bathrooms at 250 schools. The success of the Commissioner's Water Challenge shows that we can significantly reduce demand while simultaneously improving operations. I'd like to thank all the staff in BWT and BEPA that have contributed to the success of the program, particularly our colleagues at the Bowery Bay and Hunts Point Plants.

At Bowery Bay, strategic improvements reduced water consumption by 200,000 gallons per day—or more than ten percent. Plant staff identified and

Spotlight on Safety

Staying Healthy in the New Year

At DEP, health and safety on the job is a top priority, and with the start of the New Year, it is a great time to start considering what we can do to improve our overall health. Many employees spend significant time doing tasks that are sedentary in nature, such as prolonged sitting at desks. Research indicates that people who spend more than four hours per day sitting, regardless of how much moderate to vigorous exercise they regularly get, may be at greater risk for chronic health conditions.

Here are some easy ways to incorporate physical activity while on the job:

- Walk down the hall to speak with a colleague, instead of calling or e-mailing them.

- Plan for alternative work activities during the course of the workday to avoid prolonged sitting time.
- Stand or stretch at your desk when you are doing a task, such as talking on the phone.
- Take advantage of DEP sponsored health and wellness programs or think about starting a lunch time walk.

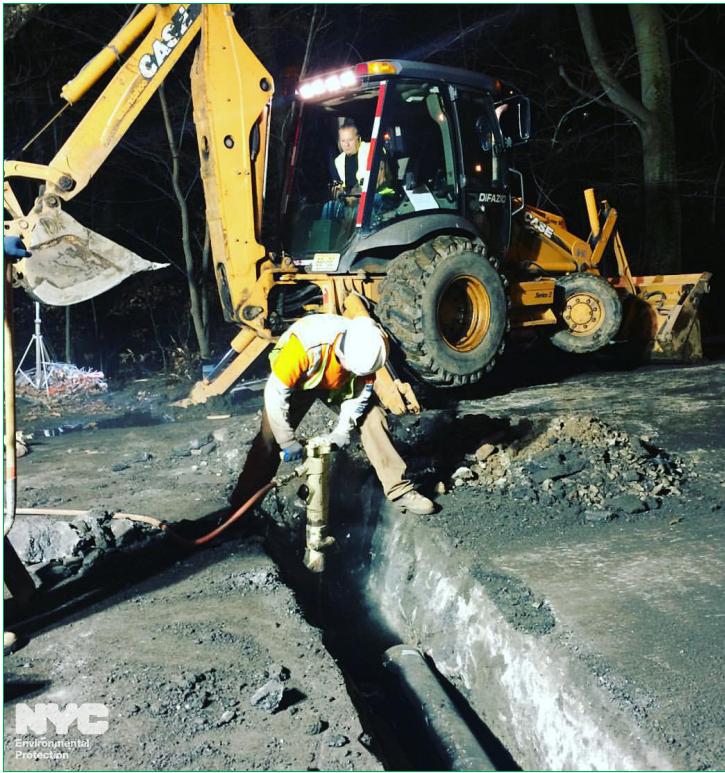
When you are not at work, you don't have to join a health club or purchase expensive equipment to be physically active. The [NYC Department of Health's website](#) offers many free options on how to stay fit in the city.

For more information on physical activity guidelines, visit the [CDC's website](#).



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.

Working 24/7



Last month, the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations (BWSO) worked to help address a water condition on Rockland Avenue and Burton Court on Staten Island. With cold weather approaching and with it the possibility of icy roadway conditions, BWSO coordinated with NYC Parks and installed a catch basin and drainage pipe to divert the water away from the roadway. Thanks to the crews who worked through the night to help ensure public safety while limiting any impact on traffic. Click [here](#) to see more photos.

Upstate Toy Drive - Thank You!



Many thanks to the staff who contributed to the upstate Holiday Toy Drives. Toys were donated to The People's Place of Kingston, Toys for Tots, The Downsville Central School Alumni Associations Santa's Helpers Program, and Sullivan County Head Start. Please click [here](#) to see photos of the toys collected at the various sites. Thank you for helping to make the holidays a little more joyful for your neighbors.

Expansion of Home Water Assistance

Just in time for the holidays, **Mayor de Blasio** and **Commissioner Lloyd** announced that nearly 52,000 low-income homeowners will receive an automatic credit of \$115.89 on their next water bill. Part of the Home Water Assistance Program, the credit was first introduced in 2014 when 12,500 homeowners who qualified for the Federal Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) were enrolled. In 2015, DEP expanded the program to include those who receive a Senior Citizens Homeowners Exemption or a Disabled Homeowners Exemption for property taxes. DEP partnered with the Human Resources Administration and the Department of Finance to identify qualified one- to four-family homeowners that received a HEAP or low-income property tax benefit in 2015. Homeowners do not have to do anything to receive the credit, it will appear on the next water and sewer bill for qualifying customers. DEP proposed these changes to the New York City Water Board, who adopted them as part of the FY 2016 Water and Sewer Rate schedule. To read more click [here](#).

Hope Volunteers 2016

On Monday, January 25, 2016, the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) will conduct its annual Homeless Outreach Population Estimate (HOPE) count as part of an ongoing effort to address the city's chronic street homeless population. DHS is calling on New Yorkers to help canvass parks, subways, and other public spaces, to estimate the number of people who are chronically street homeless. Just one night of your time will help to collect vital information to help homeless people move off the streets and into a more stable, safe environment as they set out on a path for a better life. Volunteers assist from approximately 10pm to 4am. Visit www.nyc.gov/hope to register and learn more.

Welcome Aboard!



Last week, 18 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!

James Werner, Holly Novick, and William Vollmer with BWS; **Jamaur Coleman, Robert Persaud, and Emmanuela Vaught** with BWSO; **Taofeek Banire, Giancarlo Racanelli, Daniel Scharff, Aldo Trincer, Alla Voronovitskaia, and Rong Wang** with CDBG; **Ross McWhinney and Laura Tajima** with Commissioner's Office; **Peter Fetherston and Jian Zhang** with OIT; and **Noreen Gallart and Aneta Kosmaty** with Police & Security.

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