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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 18-5
February 1, 2018
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City Teams With Community Volunteers to Prepare for Water Related Emergencies

Volunteers from more than 50 teams will help to ensure that nearly 150,000 catch basins and 110,000 fire hydrants across the five boroughs operate at optimal levels

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Vincent Sapienza today joined NYC Emergency Management (NYCEM) Commissioner Joseph Esposito to announce that the agencies have teamed up to combat water-related emergencies through NYC Emergency Management's Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs). CERTs are groups of dedicated volunteers who help prepare their neighbors and communities for different types of disasters. Through this partnership, teams will provide community support to monitor and respond to water emergencies and assist in various roles. CERT volunteers will help to report suspected water conditions to 311, dig out snow-covered hydrants, clear leaves and other debris from catch basins before and after emergencies, patrol and report open hydrants during heat emergencies and provide preparedness education for rain hazards.

"We join NYC Emergency Management in a shared commitment to empower local communities to be as prepared for emergencies as possible," said **DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. "And we look forward to working with CERT teams to ensure New Yorkers remain informed throughout emergency situations and that our infrastructure performs at optimal levels."

"This new partnership gives NYC CERT volunteers another important role in keeping their communities safe and prepared," said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. "From clearing debris from catch basins before a storm to reporting water conditions quickly to 311, CERT members will now serve as a critical link between their neighborhoods and the Department of Environmental Protection."

The partnership will utilize 1,300 members from 53 teams in each community board across the City. In addition to basic emergency management training, NYC Emergency Management is now conducting training for CERT teams that will enable them to further support the City in the event of emergencies that could potentially impact water and sewer infrastructure.

All CERT members are required to undergo an intensive 10-week training program that raises awareness about emergencies and disasters and provides basic response skills needed for fire safety, light search and rescue, disaster medical operations, and traffic control. During non-emergency times, CERT volunteers work with NYC Emergency Management's Ready New York Program to educate their communities about emergency preparedness and build community disaster networks through the NYC Citizen Corps program.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled

More Information

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lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$20.7 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit <http://nyc.gov/dep>, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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