

NYC Department of Environmental Protection  
 Bureau of Water & Sewer Operations, Environmental Health & Safety (EHS)

59-17 Junction Boulevard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
 Flushing, New York 11373-5108

## Environmental Health & Safety News for BWSO



**“The average NYC resident used 125.8 gallons of water per day in 2009.”**

Source: DEP Website



BUREAU OF WATER & SEWER OPERATIONS  
 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY DIVISION

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### Water Conservation – A Few Easy Steps to Save Water!

Summertime is here and with it comes warm weather, flowers in bloom, green grass, and an increase in water consumption for our city. On average, New York City (NYC) residents use 126 gallons of water per day, and water consumption typically increases during the summer months. So what can you do to help save water this summer? Here are a few ideas:

- Water grass and plants in the morning and at night, on less windy days. Watering during cooler, calmer parts of the day reduces the amount of moisture lost due to evaporation allowing more absorption with less water.
- Water grass only every 5-7 days. Most people water lawns twice as much as needed.
- Don’t water down your sidewalk or driveway; instead, you can wet or dampen them and then use a broom to sweep them clean.
- Take shorter showers – this saves 5-7 gallons of water a minute.
- Wait until the dishwasher is full before running it. A dishwasher uses 5-15 gallons of water per load.

In addition to offering these “at home” water saving tips, BWSO supports compliance with an important NYC law that is often a “hot” issue during the summer months – illegal opening of fire hydrants.

*Continued on Page 2*

*Did you know the revised DEP Pollution Prevention policy now has a Recycling component?*



**Read about the revised Recycling & Pollution Prevention policy on Page 2.**

### SoHo Fire Reminds Us of the Importance of Electrical Safety



As a BWSO employee, chances are you have seen an Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) auditor walking around your facility, looking under desks and behind closed doors for an electrical safety “no-no”! Although it may seem like an inconvenience, the audits serve two critical functions:

- 1) To ensure BWSO operations are in compliance with all applicable EHS regulations; and
- 2) To ensure the health and safety of all BWSO employees as they carry out their work day tasks.

One particular “audit finding” that was once frequently found during EHS audits, but has significantly improved in recent years, is the use of power strips or surge protectors to power large appliances. According to a Letter of Interpretation issued by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), power strips can be used, but they must be directly plugged into an outlet, must not be... **Continued on Page 3**



**WIN A SUBWAY GIFT CARD!  
 TAKE QUIZ ON PAGE 3**

# Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – It’s the Law!

“New York City generates approximately 50,000 tons of municipal solid waste each day.” – BWSO EHS Staff

New York City (NYC), with its nearly 8.5 million residents, countless number of tourists, and businesses, generates approximately 50,000 tons of municipal solid waste each day; that’s more than 18 million tons each year! Of that, only 16% is recycled and an even smaller percentage is incinerated in waste-to-energy facilities. Believe it or not, the remaining 71% of our City’s waste is ultimately disposed in out-of-state landfills. Pennsylvania (PA) and Virginia (VA) alone accept more than 70% of NYC’s garbage. Current research indicates that landfills presently operating in PA and VA are being stretched to capacity. Solid waste is primarily transported by truck, which further increases the environmental impact of large scale solid waste disposal. The fact of the matter is that we, as responsible New Yorkers, must do more to promote and encourage recycling.

To ensure compliance with recycling laws, the Agency recently expanded its Pollution Prevention policy, now entitled the Recycling & Pollution Prevention policy. This revised policy includes existing NYC recycling requirements, which not only apply to NYC residents, but to NYC institutions and governmental agencies. All employees are required to adhere to the recycling requirements by separating recyclable materials into the designated recycling collection areas within each facility. These collection areas will be established at all DEP facilities within the coming months. In addition to traditional recycling,

there is a myriad of other ways we can all participate in the recycling effort during the work day, such as:

- Use email to communicate and avoid unnecessary printing;
- Use two sided printing and copying as the default setting;
- Reuse file folders, inter-office envelopes and ring binders; and
- Return used laser printer cartridges and toner cartridges to suppliers for refill or refurbishment.

Everyone in the Agency must work together to reduce, reuse and recycle!

For a complete listing of recyclable materials in New York City, please reference attachment A of the Recycling & Pollution Prevention policy or visit: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycwasteless/html/home/home.shtml>



Did you know that consumer waste can take hundreds of years to disappear from the natural environment? It’s eye opening to see the average amount of time that it takes common household items to biodegrade— glass bottles: 1,000,000 years, styrofoam: 5,000 years, aluminum cans: 200-500 years, batteries: 100 years, tin cans: 50-100 years, and rubber boot soles: 50-80 years.

## Water Conservation – A Few Easy Steps to Save Water! Continued from Page 1

In their quest to cool off, city residents often attempt to turn fire hydrants into urban fountains. Although this may seem like an easy solution to beating the summer heat, illegally opening fire hydrants can cause a number of water supply issues. A fire hydrant is capable of discharging the same amount of water per minute as 400 showers running at once! In addition to the sheer volume of water lost, an open hydrant can reduce water supply pressure in critical buildings such as hospitals and can limit the effectiveness of other fire hydrants that may be needed in an emergency situation.

To combat this problem, BWSO Field Operations personnel patrol NYC neighborhoods looking for open hydrants. Upon discovering an illegally opened hydrant, BWSO employees stop the flow and inspect the hydrant for broken parts. If repairs are needed, a work order will be sent to the appropriate Field Operations Repair facility to fix the hydrant and ensure that it is in working order. In certain instances, when there is a potential for public interference, Field Operations personnel work with DEP Police and/or NYPD to ensure that DEP personnel can safely execute their task.

Opening a hydrant without a spray cap can result in fines of up to \$1,000, imprisonment for up to 30 days, or both. City residents who want to legally open hydrants can do so with a pressure reducing spray cap (available at local Fire Stations).

If you see open or leaking fire hydrants, notify 311 immediately!



- Sources:
- [http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/ways\\_to\\_save\\_water/index.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/ways_to_save_water/index.shtml)
  - [http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/drinking\\_water/droughtthist.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/drinking_water/droughtthist.shtml)
  - Article ideas contributed by Bill Eager, Groundwater Operations

**Congratulations to:**  
**Mosholu Pump Station**  
*for achieving a high level of EH&S compliance and for their*  
**OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE\***  
 at their OEHSC EH&S AUDIT  
 \*Based on a comparison of their two most recent audits resulting in a 50% or more reduction of their total findings.

## BWSO Softball Team



Come and support our 2010 softball team. The games are held in Flushing Meadow Park at 6 PM. There are only 5 games left before the play-offs! See below for the upcoming softball games.

Tuesday, July 6	Field 15	MTA
Wednesday, July 14	Field 13	HOSP
Thursday, July 15	Field 15	BWT*
Monday, July 26	Field 13	GPI
Wednesday, July 28	Field 13	MTA*

### BWSO Team Roster

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Jaime Berkeley  | Joe Greco       |
| Dennis Peacock  | Marc Evans      |
| Rafael Castillo | Larry Gallina   |
| Anthony Gioia   | Bill Maggiulli  |
| Mike Esposito   | Virginia Murray |
| Danny Phelan    | Pete Muniz      |
| Sendy Diaz      | Jorge Merced    |
| Eddie Canicatti | Milton Merced   |
| Willie Flores   |                 |



### Straight from the EHS Suggestion Box:

You requested...“Public Relations (PR) training for DEP employees that have direct contact with the general public.” – BWSO Employee

When working out in the streets of New York City, BWSO employees frequently deal with the public. Sometimes those interactions take place during times of stress such as during a water main repair, a service termination or dealing with an irate plumber. Here are some tips on how to defuse the situation:

1. Make sure you identify yourself as a DEP employee and communicate clearly what your role is.
2. Remember, the individual might be angry about the situation, not at you. It’s not personal— remain objective and listen first.
3. If you are asked about specific aspects of the job by the press or general public which might be sensitive or privileged, refer the party to DEP’s Press Office at (718) 595-6600.
4. When dealing with an agitated member of the public, as time permits, take measures to control the situation by remaining calm and respectful, and communicating clearly. Many times, this alone will be enough to defuse the situation.
5. Communicate about how the problem is being addressed.
6. Most importantly, remember that your personal and public safety take priority. If you feel threatened in any way, remove yourself from the situation and contact your Supervisor and/or law enforcement. Remember that verbal abuse is considered violent behavior and should be taken as seriously as a physical threat.
7. Notify your Supervisor of any threats or verbal abuse.

Sources: OSHA and NIOSH websites, “Defusing the Angry Customer”, DR Levine Transportation and Distribution Journal V 33, No 1, 1992.



## Dear BWSO Employees,

For those of you who have attended the 2010 EHS Awareness training, you have had an opportunity to see the new EHS video featuring our Commissioner, Cas Holloway. The video presents a unified EHS vision to all DEP bureaus and employees. The message is that DEP is committed to making employee safety and environmental compliance a priority. It also emphasizes that the success of any good EHS program depends on communication, personal commitment, and education. To support this effort, DEP will continue to develop new feedback and communication tools including EHS surveys and case studies. The Agency is also taking steps to make training and EHS policies more relevant. These efforts depend on getting your feedback; so please do your part and get involved, communicate your concerns and ideas, and stay committed to EHS excellence in all your work tasks!

Sincerely,  
Persis D. Luke, Director, EHS

### UPCOMING TRAINING:

June – July 2010

- 1) EHS Awareness / Hearing Conservation
- 2) HAZWOPER 24 Hr. Chlorine Specialist
- 3) Water Plant Operator C.E.U. Course - Filtration Overview

#### Questions?

Contact Nelson Leon at (718) 595-5544

## SoHo Fire Reminds Us of the Importance of Electrical Safety Continued from Page 1

connected in series to other power strips and are not designed for high power demand appliances such as space heaters, refrigerators and microwaves. Power strips should instead be used for appliances with low-power loads such as computers and audio/visual equipment.

Although this may seem like a minor audit finding, a fire that broke out in the SoHo neighborhood of Manhattan on May 4<sup>th</sup> demonstrates what can happen when a power strip is improperly used. The fire began at approximately 8:37 PM on the top floor of a seven story apartment building. According to the firefighters interviewed, it did not take long before the fire had burned through the roof of the building and filled the top three floors with flames. Fire Marshals have determined that the fire was caused by large appliances plugged into power strips. Larger appliances obviously require a lot of energy to operate and this higher demand can easily cause power cords to overheat, melt or ignite.

In response to the fire, FDNY is urging all New Yorkers never to plug large-draw electrical appliances such as televisions, air conditioners, clothes dryers, etc. into power strips and extension cords. Luckily for BWSO, the OSHA regulations regarding electrical safety are in place to ensure that a fire like the one described here can be prevented in the workplace. So the next time you see an electrical cord or power strip being used improperly, inform your Supervisor or Safety Officer. Remember, prevention is key!

For more information on how electrical safety, go to:  
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/fdny/html/events/2010/050510c.shtml>

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, BWSO EHS auditors, Sheldon Hudson and Karen Marino, conducted a pre-audit walkthrough at one of the Bureau's facilities. EHS reporters were privileged to be able to observe and report what goes on during a routine walkthrough. "A pre-audit walkthrough is performed after an In-house audit and prior to an OEHS audit. It is done essentially to ensure the facility is well prepared for its upcoming OEHS audit," explained Sheldon Hudson.

An EHS reporter asked:

#### What is an In-House audit?

An In-House audit is a scheduled site visit at a facility during which EHS auditors determine the EHS compliance status of a facility and its operations in accordance with various federal, state, and local laws and regulations. There are three major components of an In-House audit— a detailed site walkthrough, paperwork review, and close-out meeting. The EHS auditing team, including Karen Marino, Esther Rodriguez, and me, perform EHS audits at BWSO facilities to identify any potential hazards that may adversely impact the environment or compromise worker safety. During the walkthrough portion of the audit, the auditing team uses an audit tracker— a checklist of compliance items that can be visually evaluated. At the conclusion of the walkthrough, a paperwork review is conducted to examine inspection records, material safety data sheets (MSDS), training records, audiometric testing records, hazardous waste manifests, permits, and other recordkeeping requirements. After the paperwork review, the auditing team conducts a close-out meeting to notify facility personnel of the identified compliance issues, also known as "audit findings." These compliance issues are then written in an audit report which provides detailed information on the audit findings and specific target completion dates. The auditors track the audit findings to ensure they are corrected during the allotted time.

#### What do you do to prepare for an In-House audit?

I begin the auditing process by collecting information about the facility, such as the facility's FDNY permits, EPA ID number, training records, and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) petroleum and chemical bulk storage registrations. It is important to understand the facility's function, what kinds of activities go on, and what hazardous materials are being stored on-site prior to an audit. By familiarizing ourselves with this information, we have a better understanding of what regulations apply to that location.

#### Why are the In-House audits important?

The In-House audits are important because they identify EHS programmatic areas that need improvement, and also help to mitigate workplace and environmental hazards. In addition, conducting these In-House audits helps to ensure that our facilities are in compliance with applicable laws that are designed to protect our work environment and our workers.

EHS reporters observed:

11:00 AM

The EHS auditors arrived at the facility to conduct a pre-audit walkthrough. All parties signed in to the facility.



11:03 AM

Sheldon reviewed the facility's last In-House audit report to familiarize himself with the issues identified at the May 2010 In-House audit.

11:14 AM: The auditors headed out to the facility's yard to ensure that the audit findings observed during the last In-House audit had been addressed, and to identify any additional audit findings that should be corrected before the facility's upcoming OEHS audit.

TAKE THIS QUIZ: SUBMIT CORRECT ANSWERS FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A FREE GIFT CARD

BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR FULL NAME AND WORK ADDRESS. FAX: (718) 595-5541 AND/OR EMAIL: [BWSOEHS\\_suggestions@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:BWSOEHS_suggestions@dep.nyc.gov)

1. According to NYC recycling regulations, which of the following items are not recyclable?

- a) Aluminum foil and wire hangers
- b) Empty aerosol cans
- c) Hardcover books and wax coated paper
- d) Dried out paint cans
- e) All of the above

2. Power strips are useful in connecting many appliances into one source. In order to prevent a fire from occurring, which appliances should not be plugged into a power strip?

- a) Computers and printers
- b) Refrigerators and microwaves
- c) Radios and audio/visual equipment
- d) Desk lamps
- e) All of the above

3. Have you ever let the shower run to get that perfect morning shower temperature? If you let the shower run for 2 minutes before getting in, how much water did you waste?

- a) 3-5 gallons
- b) 10-14 gallons
- c) 5-7 gallons
- d) More than 50 gallons

Answers for April 2010 Newsletter Quiz: 1) B 2) C 3) E





Environmental Health & Safety Division  
Bureau of Water & Sewer Operations  
59-17 Junction Boulevard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Flushing, NY 11373-5108  
Phone: (718) 595-5343  
Fax: (718) 595-5541  
E-mail:  
BWSOEHS\_suggestions@dep.nyc.gov

**James J. Roberts, P.E.**  
BWSO, Deputy Commissioner  
**Persis D. Luke**  
Director, Environmental Health & Safety

**Occupational Health & Safety:**  
Fred Chyke-Okpuzor, Manager  
Fernando Park  
Vyacheslav Repik  
Lal Sarju  
Field Operations—*Manhattan & Queens:*  
Jacqueline Hincapié, Supervisor  
Sandra Knight-Lemons  
Calah Lambertson  
Monika Niedbala  
John Sloane  
Field Operations—*Bklyn, Bx & S.I.:*  
Marc Blaise, Supervisor  
Tarek Ahmed  
Annetta Cameron  
Lovely Desir  
Evette Imarhiagbe  
Glenroy Simpson  
*Health & Safety Summer Intern:*  
Aminul Haque

**Environmental Compliance:**  
Shay McAtamney, Manager  
Harry Singh  
Matthew Dominick  
Nicholas Minunni  
Jane Weber  
Melissa Whitley

**Program Development:**  
Karen Marino, Manager  
Education, Training & Administration:  
Nelson Leon, Supervisor  
Geysa Gonzalez  
Jenny Lai  
Michele Moorgen  
Walley Richards  
Audits & Communications:  
Esther Rodriguez, Supervisor  
Julie Bae  
Sheldon Hudson  
*Program Development Summer Intern:*  
Maya Thomas

**Editors:**

Julie Bae, Karen Marino &  
Persis D. Luke

We'd love to hear  
from you!

E-mail us at:

BWSOEHS\_suggestions@dep.nyc.gov

# A Day in the Life of an EHS Auditor - Sheldon Hudson, BWSO EHS Continued from Page 3

The auditors inspected a storage trailer for adequate aisle clearance.

The auditors checked the dumpster for any suspicious refuse. A degreaser can was found with a small amount of product still inside. The Safety Officer was advised that they should use the product or review the MSDS to ensure proper disposal.

11:20 AM



11:22 AM: While walking past the line of DEP trucks, Sheldon informed the EHS reporters that the trucks are inspected during the In-House audit to ensure that among other things, every CDL truck is equipped with a fire extinguisher.

As the auditors continued to walk around the yard, they noticed a cluttered area that was determined to be a poor housekeeping and/or a potential pest harboring condition.



11:31 AM: The auditors walked towards the outdoor propane cage. Karen Marino recommended removing the weeds growing in front of cage because the FDNY requires that combustible materials including vegetation must be kept a minimum of 10 feet from propane storage areas.

11:40 AM: A downed catch basin bucket was found, stored outside on a spill pad with hydraulic oil still inside the line. The auditors stated that the bucket should be more thoroughly drained and properly stored in the storage rack with a new spill pad underneath it to prevent accidental spillage of the oil.



12:12 PM: The auditors checked the last storage area. Within the storage area, the auditors checked the electrical panel and drums for proper labeling, and to ensure the labels were intact. A safety can labeled with the words "compressor oil" and the gasoline chemical abstract service (CAS) number was found in a flammable cabinet. The Safety Officer informed the auditors that the compressor oil is an oil and gasoline mixture. Since there is no CAS number for the motor oil, the auditors stated it was OK to only have one CAS number on the container.

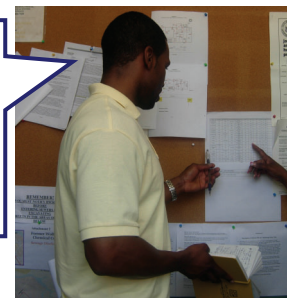
12:24 PM: Back inside the facility, Sheldon performed a visual inspection of the facility to see whether any of the prior In-House recommendations were completed. As Sheldon conducted the visual inspection, Karen reviewed the facility's paperwork with the facility Safety Officer and Borough Manager.

1:00 PM

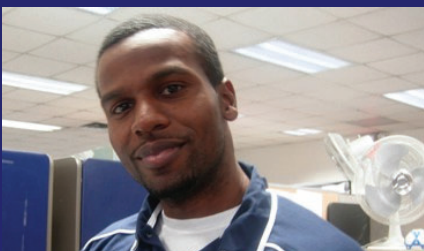


Sheldon exited the facility to inspect the on-site fueling station located in front of the facility. He checked the fill ports for debris and for the required color coding and labels.

1:10 PM: Sheldon re-entered the facility to check the Legacy Table. Sheldon walked throughout the facility to make sure the areas that contain asbestos (according to the Legacy Table) are properly labeled. He informed the Safety Officer of the additional areas where the facility would need to post the red, white, and black "Danger" asbestos signs.



2:30 PM: The EHS auditors concluded their pre-audit walkthrough.



Sheldon Hudson joined the Department of Environmental Protection in December 2007. He is an Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Auditor for BWSO EHS. Sheldon received a Bachelor of Science degree from Tuskegee University and a Master of Science in Environmental, Occupational Health Science from CUNY Hunter College. Prior to working for DEP, Sheldon worked as a Health Inspector at another City agency where he developed inspection skills, and worked to protect the health of the public.