

Hydrant Repair Driven on 'Crews' Control



Maintaining more than 109,000 fire hydrants in good working condition is the goal of BWSO. Hydrants save lives when a fire breaks out in the city, flush the local distribution system to improve water quality, and drain the system prior to maintenance or repair work on a water main.

Earlier this month Pipeline followed a crew to document how BWSO employees go about fixing hydrants throughout the five boroughs. On September 5, Construction Laborers **Orazio Bonocore** and **Ishmael Khan** from the Queens Repair yard, along with Supervisor

(Continued on reverse side)

Spotlight on Safety


When are Hazardous Waste Containers Really Empty?

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976 amended the Solid Waste Disposal Act, and among its goals is to protect human health and the environment from the potential hazards of waste disposal. It also aims to minimize waste generation and ensure that hazardous waste material is managed in an environmentally sound manner. Under RCRA, hazardous waste is strictly regulated from the time it is generated until its final disposal, sometimes referred to as “cradle to grave”.

After hazardous waste has been removed, its containers are considered “legally empty” or “RCRA empty” if they meet the following standards:

- All waste has been removed that can be removed by pouring, pumping, or by means of suction; and

- No more than one inch, equivalent to 2.5 centimeters, of residue remains on the bottom of the container or inner liner (commonly referred to as the “one-inch rule”); or
- No more than 3% by weight of total capacity of the container remains in the container or inner liner if the container is less than or equal to 119 gallons in size; or
- No more than 0.3% by weight of the total capacity of the container remains in the container, or inner liner if the container is greater than 119 gallons in size.

Stricter standards exist for acute hazardous materials. For the complete set of standards according to the classification type of hazardous material, please refer to 40 CFR 261.7 (b) (3) and 40 CFR 261.7 (b) (1). Additional information: EPA.gov, Haz-Waste Mgmt Rev 1 .

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. 

Commissioner's Corner

Each year, DEP staff attends the New York Water and Environment Association's (NYWEA's) Watershed Science and Technical Conference. This annual event provides the opportunity for our staff to discuss the scientific and policy underpinnings of the remarkable work we do every day. Nearly 20 members of our staff gave presentations at the two-day conference on such topics as water quality modeling, forest and stream management, wastewater treatment, turbidity mitigation, youth education and engagement, green infrastructure, water supply protection, and recreational opportunities in the watershed. I thank NYWEA for providing a venue for local, state, and federal officials, community partners, and environmental groups to discuss these issues.

My presentation focused on the evolution of our watershed protection program, from the expansion of the water supply to the Croton watershed in the 19th century to the development of the Catskill system reservoirs and programs to move streamside latrines, promote proper disposal of draft animals, and clear reservoir bottoms to reduce organic content in source water. In 1993 when EPA first granted the City a Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD) allowing us to have an unfiltered water supply, DEP developed a comprehensive watershed protection program. Over the past 20 years, we have invested more than \$1.5 billion to acquire land, enhance the vibrancy of streams and forests, upgrade and construct wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, work with farmers to construct systems to protect stream quality, and encourage compatible farming practices and economic development within the watershed. Our programs will continue to evolve to meet new challenges, including targeted acquisitions in flood-prone areas, flood mitigation programs, and stream restoration. We must continuously assess all challenges to water quality, and ensure that our programs have a strong scientific basis and are effectively addressing today's issues—not yesterday's.

One element that will not change is our commitment to working with local partners to ensure the economic sustainability of watershed communities, where our water supply



infrastructure is a vital part of the regional economy. In addition to employing nearly 1,000 staff in our watersheds—totaling more than \$50 million in annual payroll—DEP has expanded recreational activity in the watershed for residents and to bolster tourism. More than 80,000 watershed acres are currently open for recreation, along with 33,000 reservoir acres for boating. This includes 46,000 acres that are Public Access Areas, meaning they do not require access permits. 2012 saw more than 11,000 boats in the watershed, and more than 1,800 acres were available for bowhunting at the Ashokan and Neversink reservoirs.

These efforts were rewarded last week, as Deputy Commissioner **Paul Rush** received the 2012 New York State Conservation Council's (NYSCC) Professional Conservationist Award for outstanding conservationists who have worked long and hard for the natural environment. He was feted at the NYSCC Awards Banquet held on September 14, accompanied by his wife Eliane and twin boys Sean and Daniel. Paul was selected from a list of candidates throughout New York State, and received several letters of support from such organizations as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Fish & Wildlife Management Board, and the Office of Natural Resources. Paul was presented with a plaque by NYSCC President Charles Parker and gave a grateful and appreciative speech to accept this award. The honor reflects not just Paul's dedication to the protection of the NYC watershed, but the tireless efforts of all DEP staff to protect the health and integrity of our invaluable natural resources. Congratulations to Paul, and to everyone at DEP.

Focus on the Field

While the summer may bring vacations and a slower pace of work for some New Yorkers, for BWSO Laborer **Ed Ramos** it is the busiest time of year. Ed works out of the Manhattan Repair Yard as part of a hydrant repair crew, and all summer long he patrols the island from Battery Park to Inwood looking for illegally opened hydrants. He ensures that legally opened hydrants are equipped with spray caps, and he may install a magnetic custodian lock—which prevents the hydrant from being opened by the public—on hydrants that are repeatedly opened illegally.

Aside from hydrant patrol, Ed's crew also repairs and replaces hydrants that are damaged or leaking. Before leaving the yard each morning they make sure the truck is loaded with the proper tools for whatever jobs may come up, including spare top sections of breakaway hydrants, so they can replace any that may have been damaged by wayward cars.

Ed's favorite part of working in the field is getting to interact with the public. "You meet all kinds of people, and the diversity is great," he said. One time, a passerby even



offered to help fix a hydrant, but Ed politely declined.

Sometimes, especially in tourist spots like Times Square, people will ask him for directions. "We are there for the public. Aside from fixing fire hydrants, we are also public servants. It's all about helping people however you can."

Ed takes pride in his work and the 16 years he has spent at DEP, and has attended Career Day at his daughters' school in hard hat and vest to teach students about the city's water system. He spends his time off with his two daughters and his wife, Frances, and also enjoys playing chess, scrabble, and handball.

Did You Know



Photo by Jeff Myers

...that Central Park has a fountain celebrating the 1842 opening of the Croton Aqueduct? Located in the area known as Bethesda Terrace at 72nd Street, the Angel of the Waters fountain was unveiled in 1873 to commemorate the Aqueduct and the fresh water it carried from Westchester County to New York City. At twenty-six feet high and ninety-six feet in diameter it is one of the largest fountains in New York. Angel of the Waters was created by sculptor Emma Stebbins (1815-1882), the first woman to receive a commission for a major public work in New York City. Stebbins compared the healing powers of Bethesda, the biblical pool, to that of the pure Croton water that cascaded from the fountain and brought health to the people of New York City. The lily in the angel's hand represents purity while the four figures below represent Peace, Health, Purity, and Temperance.

(Hydrant Repair Driven on 'Crews' Control... continued)



Brendan Quigley, were on 70th Street and 35th Avenue in Woodside to investigate a malfunctioning hydrant that had been reported two days earlier by FDNY.

After arriving at the location, the crew first used the trucks and safety cones to create a safe work zone, and then checked to ensure that the hydrant gate valve was in the closed position so that there would be no water flowing to the hydrant during the repair. They then removed the bonnet and yoke plate and found that the shear pin was broken and the spindle that connects to the main valve, and controls the flow of water leaving the hydrant, was missing.

Using tongs, Bonocore and Khan made several attempts to retrieve the damaged spindle from the bottom of the hydrant barrel. After these attempts failed, supervisor Quigley instructed the crew to place the caps back on the hydrant nozzles and open the gate valve and allow the water pressure

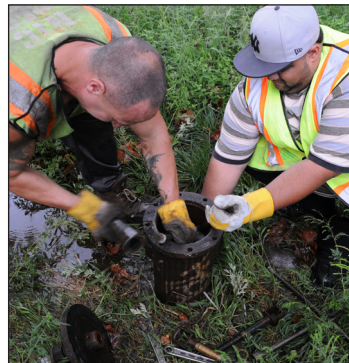
to dislodge the damaged spindle. This approach proved successful and the crew also retrieved the spring and washers.

Once the gate valve was closed again, the crew installed a new spindle, spring, washer and shear pin to reconnect the spindle to the main valve rod. The crew re-installed the drip rod into the drip cup using a crossbar to connect it securely to the spindle. Next they re-installed the bonnet and yoke plate and tested the hydrant to ensure it was operating properly with normal pressure and volume. The crew then removed the out of service ring and broke down the safe work zone.

Although this hydrant was repaired rapidly and efficiently in approximately 30 minutes, other repairs can become time consuming and difficult depending on the type of hydrant and the nature of the damage. On this day the crew had eight hydrant repair tickets to complete during the eight hour shift so they quickly moved on to the next assignment. "The hydrant repair crews make every effort to repair the hydrants, but if they are unable to do so they will excavate and replace the old hydrant with a new one in order to ensure proper fire protection," Quigley said.

The total number of hydrants by boroughs is:

Manhattan	13,244
Bronx	14,994
Brooklyn	31,340
Queens	33,740
Staten Island	15,899



DEP SEPTEMBER BLOOD DRIVE: Grahamsville: 9/26 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Grahamsville Parking Lot. Please click [📧](#) to see the email from the Commissioner and [👤](#) for the list of blood drive captains.

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