

Special Guest *Commissioner's Corner*



Persis Luke
Assistant Commissioner
Environmental, Health
and Safety

DEP upholds eight core values— all of equal importance— but "Safety" is the one that is near and dear to me. June is "National Safety Month" and our theme for this year is Safety is a State of Mind. The Office of Environmental, Health and Safety (OEHS) along with bureau health and safety offices are excited to be hosting several events that will be educational, fun, and designed to keep safety front and center in our operations.

As a core value at DEP, we put safety first and are committed to creating the safest workplace for everyone involved in our work. I think safety is foundational to all of our work, but the application and specific meaning depends on who you ask. For the watershed maintenance crews that are replacing a chlorine tank, it might mean being confident in their training, following procedures, and being painstakingly focused on the task at hand and surrounding environmental conditions. It also means watching out for other crew members to make sure they are safe as well. For a Supervisor of Water and Sewer Operations, it might mean keeping the construction zone safe by making

sure the traffic work zone is set up correctly and by staying alert to the surrounding conditions. For an inspector, it might mean having the knowledge and confidence in one's ability to assess a situation for potential hazards, or having the skills to handle a difficult situation with a business owner, or other member of the public. For a DEP driver, safety means taking care to minimize distractions, and thinking through the potential consequences of distracted driving or, more simply, just getting home safe at the end of the day. For everyone at DEP, safety means feeling comfortable about saying something when you have a safety concern at work.

Safety policies, systems, training, and compliance support functions are strong at DEP. This is the hard work that your EHS and other support staff do day in and day out—and they are really good at it! We should be proud of where we are as an agency and how we have progressed, but it's also important to remember safety is not only a domain of policies and EHS staff, rather it is all of us, and that includes leadership, management, supervisors, and employees alike that make safety a day-to-day core value.

DEP has an excellent safety record, a strong safety culture, and a caring and knowledgeable workforce. The health of our safe-



ty culture is a direct outcome of how we regard and look out for each other at work, and how our managers, supervisors, and employees work to build trust with each other by engaging each other in problem solving without blame. Ultimately, our success is inextricably tied to upholding all of DEP's core values, including integrity, service, diversity, support, transparency, sustainability, and innovation.

I want to say thank you to all DEP employees who come to work every day and make significant contributions to keep their co-workers and the public safe and protected. I am continually encouraged by your dedication and innovation when it comes to continuous improvement at DEP. I hope you will take some time to think about what safety means to you and please [join us at one of our events!](#)



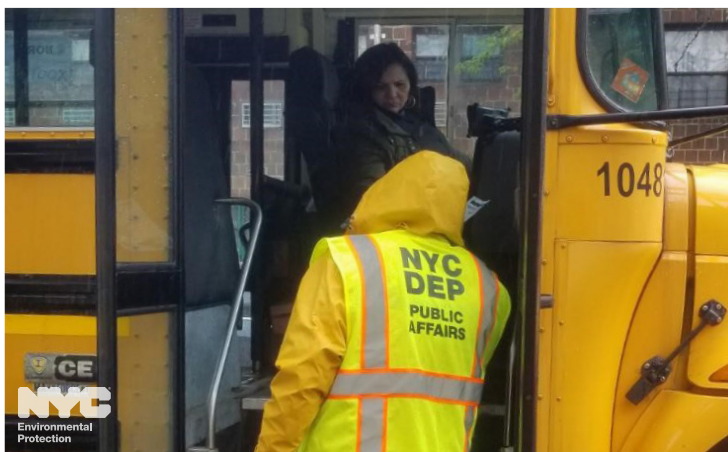
This month, DEP is celebrating our value of safety. If you know someone who embodies this value, please send an email by June 18 to values@dep.nyc.gov, and include the name of who you are nominating, their bureau, and a brief description of how they embody this value.

Newtown Creek Nature Walk Expands



DEP recently joined with the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) to announce that work is underway to expand the Newtown Creek Nature Walk in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. The project will include the construction of an over-water extension connecting the existing section of the walk on the west side of Whale Creek to a new land-based extension on the east side of the Creek that will extend to Kingsland Avenue. Once completed, the expanded Nature Walk—designed by artist **George Trakas** as a commission through DCLA's Percent for Art program—will be accessible to the public from either side of DEP's 53-acre Newtown Creek Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility. The construction, which is being managed by DDC, began this spring and is anticipated to be completed in spring 2021.

Idling Outreach at City Schools



In recognition of May being Asthma Awareness Month, BPAC staff were out all month talking to bus drivers and parents during dismissal times at various elementary schools to inform them of the city's idling rules. Staff were deployed to the following neighborhoods and boroughs: Mott Haven and Hunts Point, Bronx; West and East Harlem, Manhattan; Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn; Rockaway and South Jamaica, Queens; and Stapleton, West Brighton, and St. George, Staten Island. To date, outreach teams have visited 55 schools and will continue to perform visits in communities throughout the five boroughs where childhood asthma rates are noticeably higher.

DEP to March in Pride Parade



DEP's Office of EEO & Diversity Committee invites you to march with the Mayor's Office, and other city agencies and community organizations in this year's NYC Pride March, which commemorates the 50th anniversary of Stonewall and celebrates the progress in LGBTQ+ rights made since then. The march will be held Sunday, June 30, and begin at approximately 12:15 p.m. at Madison Square Park. Please submit your application, due by June 8, via e-mail to DEPDiversityCommittee@dep.nyc.gov. More information regarding the Pride March will be provided once the registration forms are submitted. To request a Reasonable Accommodation to attend these events, please contact Disability Rights Coordinator, **Darlene Martinez** at (718) 595-5742 or via e-mail at dmartinez@dep.nyc.gov. Also, those looking to add some bling to their DEP gear or create a banner for the NYC Pride March are invited to attend the agency's "Bling Out" being held June 21, from 12:30–1:15 p.m., in the 6th floor training room. This event is for employees attending the NYC Pride March on Sunday, June 30. To RSVP, e-mail DEPDiversityCommittee@dep.nyc.gov by June 8.

Welcome Aboard!



On May 28, 18 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Director for Human Resources **Herb Roth**, Director of Planning and Recruitment **Grace Pigott**, HR Specialist **Grace Franco**, and HR Generalist **Conor Bulger**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Hector E. Baldaras with ACCO; **Zineb S. Bouzoubaa** (not pictured), **Douglas Gutierrez**, **Claudia Villar-Leeman**, and **Ke Wei** with Sustainability; **Stacey M. Carswell** with BEDC; **Jonathan J. Cella** with BWS; **Miguel A. Corona Betancourt** and **Jaraya Garcia** with BWSO; **Gary A. DeFreitas**, **David Fernandez**, **Joseph E. Nickolas**, **Joanna A. Pawlina**, **Jasmine C. Smith**, and **Mervin Stephen** with BWT; **Michael F. Innamorato** with BIT; and **Sandra M. Roberto** and **Jiazheng Wu** with BEC.

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