

## Unit HAZ Skills That MATter

If the Bureau of Police and Security's Division of Emergency Response and Technical Assessment (DERTA) has one unifying goal, it's protecting New Yorkers from risks that they might not even know about. DERTA's commitment to a quick, thorough response to hazardous materials has made it the go-to source for hazmat and emergency response for other city, state, and federal agencies. Each member of the team is a trained engineer or chemist and their backgrounds complement one another to achieve a wide variety of specialized expertise.

DERTA's hazmat team proactively covers major city events in all five boroughs, including parades, baseball games, New Year's Eve



in Times Square, and the United Nations General Assembly. In addition to their presence at such recognizable venues, though, DERTA also responds to every reported chemical incident—usually through 311—24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, and maintains a ready supply of chemical testing kits, hazmat suits, and a fleet of mobile response units to make this possible. The two most common reports to which they respond are chemical odors and oil spills on

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## Spotlight on Safety

### Confined Space Rescue

*A tribute to the successful rescue on October 13 involving 33 Chilean miners who had been trapped 2,300-feet underground for more than two months.*

One of the three criteria that define a confined space is: "not designed for continuous employee occupancy." In the U.S. alone, close to 100 workers die every year in confined spaces. Sadly, a significant proportion of those are the rescuers themselves.

Many DEP operations involve working in confined spaces. There are two categories of confined spaces—the more hazardous type is a permit required confined space (PRCS) such as a sewer or tank. All PRCS entries require that plans be established for summoning rescue and emergency services. Should an emergency arise, non-entry rescue (e.g. tripod with retrieval device) is the preferred method to allow for the removal of the entrant from a space. This keeps the rescue crew safe

since they do not enter the space. Should an entry rescue be required, only PRCS rescue-trained DEP personnel and/or available PRCS rescue services will be utilized. PRCS rescuers are highly knowledgeable and skilled. Their skills include:

- Performing entries and rescue duties.
- Practice by making a permit space rescue at least once every 12 months;
- Proper use of PPE and rescue equipment;
- Basic first-aid and CPR; and
- Knowledge of hazards and risks.

To learn more about confined space rescue, please click here [🔗](#)

## Commissioner's Corner

This week, we reached a major customer service milestone with the installation of the 500,000th wireless water meter reader. That puts us 60% of the way to installing all 835,000 by January 2012, and we are ahead of schedule. As of today, more than 26,000 users are already taking advantage of AMR online, which is revolutionizing the level of information that we provide our customers so they can make smart decisions about their water use. Congratulations to the entire AMR team, who are going above and beyond to make this program a major success!

DEP's \$11 billion active capital program supports thousands of city jobs, and **Mayor Bloomberg** has made significant efforts to attract a broad range of companies, including minority- and women-owned businesses to bid on City work. Last Wednesday, DEP, with support from Bronx Borough President **Ruben Diaz Jr.** and the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (BOEDC) hosted an outreach event to showcase some of the job opportunities available at DEP. Special thanks to BOEDC President **Marlene Cintron**, Assistant Commissioners **Mary Pazan** and **Mark Lanaghan**, and Deputy ACCO for Contract Compliance **Al Wasserman** for organizing this event—we look forward to hosting others.

Last Friday, I spoke at the first annual conference of the Environmental Contractors Association (ECA)—an organization of the asbestos contractors who do the important work of removing asbestos and other hazardous materials from New York City buildings. Under the leadership of President **Frank Garito**, ECA has worked with DEP over the past several years to develop and implement important reforms that have increased the safety of contractors, first responders, and the public. Environmental Compliance Assistant Commissioner **Mike Gilsenan**, Asbestos Control Program Director **Krish Radhakrishnan** and Deputy Director **Steve Camaione**



lead this effort for DEP, which resulted in new inspection protocols, stronger partnerships with the Department of Buildings and FDNY, and many other reforms. This spring, we followed up with measures that have increased DEP's supervision of the certified asbestos investigator program, and we have now converted the asbestos control program to online filing, which has improved service to our customers and increased our ability to track asbestos work and inspector certification.

Earlier today, I traveled to Washington D.C. with Deputy Commissioner for Sustainability **Carter Strickland** for a series of meetings on the new NYC Green Infrastructure Plan that Mayor Bloomberg released last month. The plan would save \$2.4 billion over the next twenty years, dramatically reduce combined sewer overflows, and provide more open space and better air quality for all New Yorkers. Our next step is to work with the State Department of Environmental Conservation to get the plan approved, and begin to build the green infrastructure that will ultimately improve water quality in New York Harbor—a major goal of PlaNYC. I encourage you to learn more about the plan [🔗](#).

I also want to welcome **Kevin Donnelly** as BEDC's new Assistant Commissioner of our Wastewater Capital Program. Kevin has an extensive background designing and constructing major infrastructure projects and he will work with Deputy Commissioner **Kathryn Mallon** and Assistant Commissioner **Mike Borsykowsky** to deliver our capital projects on-time and on-budget. Good luck!

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. [🔗](#)

## Focus on the Field



Headed by Deputy Commissioner **Kevin McBride**, the Bureau of Police and Security enforces environmental laws and regulations and protects the health and safety of the public and environment. As part of that responsibility, the Division of Emergency Response and Technical Assessment (DERTA) responds to hazardous materials emergencies and maintains a comprehensive database of facilities containing hazardous and toxic materials. **Salman Alzoubaidy** is an Industrial Hygienist with DERTA since 2007 and with DEP since 2003.

There are 8,395 facilities in New York City that store and use hazardous and toxic chemicals, and several of the facili-

ties store up to 300 chemicals of the 3,000 chemicals listed on DEP's Hazardous Substance List. Each facility is required to file each year, submit an inventory form, and provide a material safety data sheet. Salman and his colleagues audit a range of facilities including dry cleaners, funeral homes, paint stores, office buildings, auto repair shops, and hospitals. "It is important that chemicals are properly labeled and safely stored, and that certain chemicals are kept away from each other," notes Salman.

Salman and other members of the DERTA team conduct inspections of facilities on a daily basis to ensure that they are complying with the RTK regulations. Salman also splits his visits checking on Con Edison sites to ensure that transformers are not leaking oil. He describes his visits as helpful, but also may have to cite a facility if he sees any violations at the site.

Protecting the health and safety of New York City's residents and their environment is his priority, more so since Salman and his wife **Suzan** recently welcomed the arrival of **Yousef**, their new baby boy.

**Election Day is November 2.** Be prepared to vote using the new voting machines. Come see a demonstration on Friday, October 22, from noon to 2:00 pm in the Lefrak Cafeteria on the third floor of the high-rise building.

**Then:** This was West Branch Reservoir during August 2010, when the elevation of the reservoir was down 12 feet from the spillway crest. West Branch is used as a balancing/settling reservoir for the Delaware Aqueduct, through which 50% of New York City's water flows daily. West Branch is normally kept one to three feet below spillway elevation. Due to dry weather and a hot summer that increased demand, the elevation of West Branch fell to what you see here.



**Now:** This is West Branch Reservoir at the beginning of October. Due to the combination of cooler weather, reduced demand, and some heavy rain, BWS Operations was able to refill West Branch to within one foot of spill. They try to avoid spilling West Branch and not waste the pristine water from the Catskills.



## Kudos Corner



Way to go Brandy on being selected for Bideawee's 2011 calendar and for making NYC Water your drink of choice to cool off during the dog days of summer. Check out the other winners [here](#) ☺.

**Volunteers Needed** - Join your DEP colleagues and Parks Department staff to help plant 1,000 trees on Saturday, November 6, from 10 am - 2 pm at the Pennsylvania and Fountain Avenue landfill sites. Be a part of this great project to help plant and care for one million new trees across the City's five boroughs over the next decade. To sign-up up as a volunteer, email [John McLaughlin](#) or call at (718) 595-4458, or email [Helen Forgione](#) or call at (718) 595-4481. Volunteers must be signed up by October 29. There will be a safety briefing for all volunteers before entering the site. Click [here](#) for more information ☺.

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the street. "Most incidents don't make the news because they're taken care of then and there," says Hazmat Supervisor **Gabriel Kapur** in reference to the unit's ability to quickly determine the type and toxicity of encountered substances while still in the field.

DERTA also helps administer a key federal government program for the Department of Homeland Security, called BioWatch. Announced in the 2003 State of the Union, BioWatch employs a network of sensors at key locations in the city to monitor for biological attacks, thereby providing early detection and allowing for quick decision making in case of an emergency. Or as Associate Chemist **Afrosa Amin** says about DERTA's wide range of capabilities, "We're the people behind the scenes working to keep New York City safe."

In addition to emergencies, DERTA works with NYC businesses to monitor the use and storage

of hazardous materials under the Right to Know (RTK) Law, which mandates that each business file information about its chemical holdings, including the type and quantity, and that their facilities are equipped with adequate measures to prevent harmful substances from impacting the local community or the water supply. Each year, a report is compiled that details the full findings of this hazardous material management program ☺. And DERTA is no exception to DEP's commitment to improve customer service. Not only does DERTA now allow businesses to file RTK forms online, it welcomes business owners to its office to learn the digital process from staff experts. In combination with paperless inspections, RTK Deputy Director **Steve Awad** hopes to dramatically reduce the number and severity of Notices of Violations. He says, "We want to help our customers get it right the first time."

## Milestones

Congratulations to **Nicholas LaSalle** and **Felix Gonzalez** for 30 years of service each.

Congratulations and best wishes to **Ann Progler** upon her retirement after 46 years of service.

**We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: [newsletter@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:newsletter@dep.nyc.gov).** ☺