



Environmental Protection

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Carter Strickland, Commissioner

WEEKLY

PIPELINE

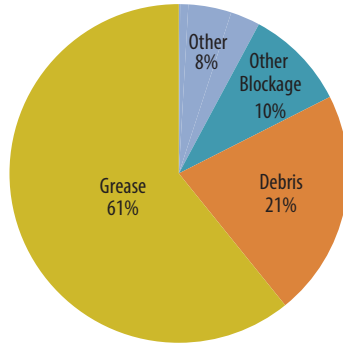
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DEP Gets Tough on Grease

Grease, depending on how it is handled, can either “gum up the works” by clogging sewer lines, or be turned “into gold” when used to produce biodiesel fuel. As a byproduct of cooking, grease comes from meat, fats, lard, oil, shortening, butter, food scraps, sauces, and dairy products that if washed down the drain, sticks to the inside of sewer pipes. Over time, grease not only leads to blocked sewer lines, it accounts for more than 60 percent of all sewer backups in New York City. If handled appropriately, recycled restaurant grease, also known as yellow grease, is an easily refined material used in the inexpensive production of biodiesel fuel.

On October 18, DEP and the New York City Business Integrity Commission (BIC) launched a comprehensive joint effort to combat the mishandling of grease and prevent costly problems for homeowners



and businesses. The interagency effort combines targeted enforcement with stepped up education outreach. DEP regulates the disposal of grease at restaurants, and its inspectors routinely find sewer pipes clogged with hardened grease, while BIC oversees the commercial waste hauling industry and has witnessed an increase in the unlicensed hauling of yellow grease.

(Continued on reverse side)

Spotlight on Safety

OSHA's Top 10 Safety Violations for 2012



OSHA has released its top 10 most frequently cited workplace violations for 2012 and fall protection is near the top of the list for the second consecutive year. OSHA publishes this list to alert

employers to frequently cited violations so that steps can be taken to recognize and address them in a proactive manner. Don't wait for OSHA or PESH to point it out! Several of these top 10 are also high risk activities that DEP has identified within Operations and Capital Construction. These include fall protection, lockout/tagout, electrical safety, ladder safety and machine guarding. Through the process of EHS education, development of safe work plans and procedures, job hazard assessments, and periodic audits, DEP has established programs and controls to minimize and prevent violations, or worse...injuries.

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

As the Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts continue in earnest and we deploy staff to assist where we can, we have not lost sight of the important work that you all do every day. To that end I'd like to share with you the 2012 State of the Sewers Report. The Report, which was released yesterday, demonstrates that our rigorous inspection, analysis and cleaning programs have produced tangible improvements to the level of sewer service city-wide. DEP staff have always been dedicated to keeping the system running well, even if it requires working in extreme weather such as Hurricane Sandy, but by employing advanced analytics and a risk-management based approach we are now targeting our resources at specific problematic locations and thereby ensuring that the work we do produces the greatest results.

In order to pinpoint the areas in our 7,500 miles of sewers that would benefit the most from proactive interventions like increased cleaning, BWSO analysts combined 311 call data and our existing Geographic Information System (GIS) to create digital maps with a color coded distribution of confirmed sewer backups. Clusters of confirmed backups were then closely inspected by the Capacity, Management, Operations and Maintenance (CMOM) unit to identify the underlying factors and primary causes of the backups. Once a cause was identified a remediation plan was developed for that particular area that could include degreasing, regular cleaning and repair or replacement of the sewer line. Since the program began, grease buildup in the pipes from commercial and residential properties has been found to be the primary cause of blockages 61% of the time. Analysts also compare the maps over time to see which areas have shown improvement or may need regular, targeted maintenance. This work has resulted in some impressive city-wide statistical trends over the last five years, including:

- Sewer backup complaints have decreased 36%.
- Confirmed sewer backups have decreased 37%.
- Sewer segments with recurring backups have decreased 38%.
- Miles of sewer lines cleaned has increased 116%.



- Defective catch basin complaints have decreased 32%.

Congratulations to all the staff, BWSO and BWT, who contributed to these impressive results and to those who analyzed the data and compiled the report—it demonstrates our commitment to being the safest, most-effective, cost-efficient and transparent water utility in the nation.

I'd also like to encourage everyone to take a moment and visit the Hurricane Sandy Relief Registry here or under “Projects” on SharePoint and donate anything you can to help our colleagues who were affected by the storm. If you have any questions about the Relief Registry, please email employeeedrequest@dep.nyc.gov. We are also collecting essential items such as batteries, socks and cleaning supplies at reception areas at Lefrak headquarters, all wastewater treatment plants and BWSO yards and at 10 upstate facilities. If you'd like to, you can also set aside a specified amount of money from your paychecks to aid in disaster relief efforts through the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. Employees who wish to participate may specify a one-time deduction from a single paycheck, or a recurring amount to be deducted from their paycheck over the next two months. These tax-deductible deductions will begin with the paychecks and direct deposits issued on November 23, 2012. To enroll in this program log into the NYCAPS employee self-service page and click on the Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund link. For more information call (718) 595-3541.

Finally, I'd like to wish you all a happy, healthy and safe Thanksgiving.

Focus on the Field

BWSO staff routinely responds to emergency conditions around the five boroughs, including street collapses, water main breaks, flooding conditions, steam pipe explosions and fires. Whenever the FDNY is confronted with a fire that is two alarms or greater, BWSO crews respond to ensure that all DEP assets are supplying the necessary support, such as adequate water pressure. Despite having worked at DEP for 28 years, BWSO Emergency Manager **Tom Votta** never could have imagined the impact of Hurricane Sandy on Breezy Point, Queens.

As Hurricane Sandy made land-fall on October 29th, multiple fires were reported in Breezy Point and Votta immediately dispatched a crew led by **Bruce Mak** to the area to support the FDNY. Votta began to head to the area himself but recalls the trip was not an easy one. "All the lights were out and I saw flooded cars that had been abandoned on the road by fleeing owners." Adding to the surreal circumstances Votta remembers, "I even had to navigate around a boat that was washed up onto the roadway and marooned on a lane that is meant for cars and trucks."

Votta, Mak and the DEP crews coordinated the response by maneuvering between two sites on the same block. As Votta recalls, "it was important to make sure that



the firefighters were hooked up to the hydrants off of the 20-inch water main on Rockaway Point Boulevard." Votta and the DEP crews supported the FDNY for over 12 hours during the height of the Hurricane and the storm surge.

"Tom Votta has been an invaluable member of the BWSO team for many years and the work he did during Hurricane Sandy exemplifies not only the dedication and commitment we all strive for here at DEP, but of all the city workers who are willing to go the extra mile in order to serve the people of New York," said BWSO Deputy Commissioner **Jim Roberts**.

When he's not responding to emergencies Votta enjoys spending time with his family and is especially proud of his son, who is on track to earn an electrical engineering degree.



SPECIAL NEEDS RELIEF REGISTRY

FOR DEP EMPLOYEES AFFECTED BY HURRICANE SANDY

The Relief Registry works like any other online registry. It lists items or services specifically requested by employees in need. If you see something you wish to help out with, just let us know and we will coordinate the donation.


If you were affected by Hurricane Sandy and wish to request a specific item or service, we encourage you to use the Relief Registry. You can also email your request to EmployeeNeedRequest@dep.nyc.gov or call the Hurricane Sandy employee hotline at (718) 595-3135.

VISIT THE RELIEF REGISTRY ON THE PORTAL TODAY.



Press Box


Staten Island Advance: Herculean effort from DEP workers stops raw sewage from flowing into Staten Island homes during Sandy

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. – As if Hurricane Sandy wasn't destructive enough, imagine if 80 million gallons of wastewater with raw sewage had flowed onto streets, backed up into homes and businesses and spilled out into New York Harbor. Thanks to the heroics of officials from the city Department of Environmental Protection who kept the Oakwood Beach Wastewater Treatment Plant running for about a day and a half as Hurricane Sandy pummeled Staten Island, that environmental nightmare didn't happen—despite the fact that on a typical day the flow to that facility is just over 26 million gallons. The plant serves about 244,918 people, nearly half of the population on Staten Island. 

(DEP Gets Tough on Grease... continued)



A joint task force of BIC enforcement agents and DEP inspectors was created to target areas with the highest concentration of yellow grease production. In 2011, nearly 8.3 million gallons of yellow grease and 1.8 million gallons of brown grease were collected by licensed haulers in the City, but this is also an attractive market for illegal haulers. If caught, unlicensed haulers will be issued a fine by BIC and instructed to apply for a City-issued license to operate.

On the education front, DEP created an instructional video  for the restaurant industry as part of a broader effort to improve the way New York City serves businesses and educates operators on proper grease disposal. The three-minute online video—developed by Inform NYC and produced by NYC Media—explains what businesses need to know about their grease interceptor, including proper installation and maintenance. Every business that produces and disposes of fats, oil and grease must have an interceptor system to prevent the discharge of grease into the City's sewer system. When water is discharged after washing dishes and equipment, the greasy water passes through

the interceptor which separates the fats, oil and grease from the wastewater. The grease then floats to the top of the interceptor and accumulates until it is manually removed. The wastewater continues to flow through the interceptor, into a discharge pipe, and then to the City's sewer system. DEP field staff routinely visit the hospitality industry to ensure interceptors are correctly sized, properly installed, maintained, and operating effectively. If an interceptor is too small, inspectors will order the business owner or operator to install the proper unit in accordance with the New York City Building Code. **Charlie Sturcken**, DEP's Director of Economic Development, welcomed the launch of the video on grease traps since it builds on the agency's outreach efforts. "For the past several years, the agency has participated in 25 outreach events and workshops in the five boroughs that target food service establishments in locations that are affected by grease in the sewer infrastructure. The presentations have been conducted in Russian, Chinese, and Spanish enabling us to extend our reach to every food service establishment in New York City."

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