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**NEW YORK CITY TO BE RECOGNIZED WITH WATER UTILITY
EMPLOYEE SAFETY AWARD BY AMERICAN WATER WORKS
ASSOCIATION**

*Department of Environmental Protection's Focus on Employee Health and Safety has led to a 38
Percent Decrease in Recordable Injuries since 2010*

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Carter Strickland announced today the City will receive the 2013 "Wendell R. LaDue Utility Safety Award" from the American Water Works Association (AWWA). The award, for metropolitan-size utilities, recognizes the organization that has established health program best practices and maintained a top safety record over the previous five years. DEP has driven down recordable injuries by 38 percent since 2010 and this is the second time in the past three years that New York City has been recognized with the top award.

"Collecting, delivering, and treating more than one billion gallons of water every day is a complex business and the safety of our nearly 6,000 employees and hundreds of contractors and consultants who maintain our critical infrastructure is our top priority," said DEP Commissioner Strickland. "This award recognizes DEP's successful training and education programs, robust inspections and audits of work-sites, and performance and accountability measures that are helping drive down injuries and move us closer to our goal of running the safest operations and capital program in the country."

"Employees are the lifeblood of any organization, especially when it comes to the critical work that water providers do every day," said AWWA Executive Director David LaFrance. "Their safety is incredibly important not just from an organizational perspective but also from a community perspective. I congratulate NYC DEP on winning this award and on their commitment to this important issue."

In order to provide clean drinking water to more than nine million New Yorkers and collect and treat more than one billion gallons of wastewater every day, DEP maintains more than 600 facilities throughout the five boroughs and the upstate watershed and has a robust capital program with more than \$14 billion in investments planned over the next ten years. The sheer size of this undertaking requires a consistent, efficient, and comprehensive Environmental, Health, and Safety Program that encourages DEP employees, consultants, and contractors to think about safety from the moment they arrive at work until the moment they leave for the day.

DEP's Environmental, Health, and Safety initiatives and achievements have included:

- Regular Employee Health and Safety audits of every facility determine: 1) if it conforms to published standards and codes; 2) possible consequences associated with the facilities activities; 3) whether employees are performing work tasks in accordance with regulations and standards, and 4) whether corrective actions and the implementation of best management practices improve working conditions.
- Establishment of a hands-on water and sewer training facility with all the features of a city street including sewers, catch basins, water mains, and fire hydrants. Maintenance and repair staff begin their DEP careers at the training facility where they receive operational and safety training on equipment used in all four phases of the apprenticeship program: water repair, sewer repair, sewer maintenance, and water maintenance. For example, apprentices learn how to repair and replace fire hydrants, safely operate truck hoists, compressors, jackhammers, and pipe saws, and receive hands-on training on forklift use and proper on-site preparations for emergency work zones. This facility is also used for continuing education of DEP's experienced workforce.
- Open lines of anonymous communication are maintained to identify and address safety and compliance issues including employee surveys, a hotline, email, or through one of DEP's approximately 50 safety officers.
- With one of the largest capital programs in the region DEP works closely with contractors to embed Employee Health and Safety into every aspect of the projects and over the last six years more than 14,000 inspections have been conducted to ensure compliance. Skanska USA Civil and partner Tully Construction Company, the lead construction contractors at DEP's Croton Water Filtration Plant, have been awarded merit safety recognition by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Program for their work on the project. The Voluntary Protection Program recognizes employers and employees who demonstrate exemplary achievement in the prevention and control of occupational safety and health hazards while developing, implementing, and continuously improving safety and health management systems. Honored companies also maintain injury and illness rates well below the national Bureau of Labor Statistics' averages. The Croton Water Filtration Plant is the first New York City agency project to receive OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program recognition for safety.
- A "Spotlight on Safety" column runs in the weekly DEP newsletter and a bi-monthly case study is published which focuses on an actual near miss or accident and the steps DEP has taken to investigate, the findings and root cause of the accident, and corrective actions and lessons learned.

Ensuring Worker Safety and Public Health are key components of *Strategy 2011-2014*, a comprehensive strategic plan that outlines 100 distinct initiatives to help ensure that DEP is the safest, most efficient, cost-effective and transparent water utility in the nation.

Founded in 1881, AWWA is an international, nonprofit, scientific and educational society committed to the safety and improvement of water quality and supply. Focusing its work in four strategic areas, Knowledge Creation and Exchange, Leadership and Advocacy, Member

Engagement and Development, and Organizational Stewardship, AWWA unites the full spectrum of the water community to advance water management, education and science and to advocate for smart water policies.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including over eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including nearly 1,000 in the upstate watershed. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/nycwater](https://www.facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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