NYC Environmental Protection
Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Cas Holloway, Commissioner

WEEKLY PIPELINE

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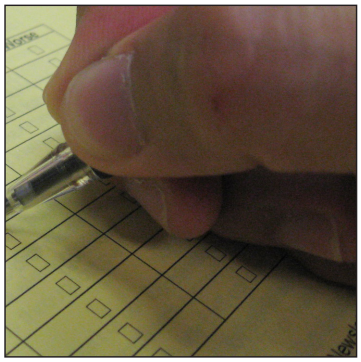
Survey Shows Safety is a Top Priority

By now, you have probably seen the 2010 Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) survey results. The results provide a window into how DEP employees perceive EHS and will help guide the agency in developing new initiatives. Individual EHS Directors are reviewing the results for their bureaus and taking steps to address some of the identified needs regarding EHS training and communication. New communication tools are indicated to provide better and more accurate information about incidents and accidents within bureaus or DEP as a whole. As a result, the Office of Environmental, Health and Safety (OEHS) will be taking the information and talking to field employees in focused discussion groups about ways we might assess and improve employee safety and security at various types of field locations.



A lot of planning went into the survey. As part of the DEP Strategic Plan, an EHS Communications Committee was formed in early 2010 and a wide variety of DEP operations were represented and involved in the goal development and structure of the questionnaire. The group decided early on that the goal of the survey was to gauge how well EHS is integrated in the day-to-

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Spotlight on Safety

Near Misses Are Real Issues: Report and investigate them

Near misses are accidents that almost happen or accidents that happen but do not cause injury or damage. Near misses are also sometimes called "close calls" because the difference between a near miss and an accident could be a fraction of an inch or a split second. Examples might be:

- A hoist dropping a load, but no one was underneath to be harmed.
- An alert employee noticing a loose fitting prior to a chemical transfer.

According to the National Safety Council, 75 percent of all workplace accidents are preceded by one or more near misses. With that startling statistic in mind, treat near misses as serious warnings that an accident is likely to occur.

You can prevent accidents by paying close attention to near misses and taking them seriously. Here's what to do:

- Never dismiss a near miss as just a lucky break and forget about it.
- Report all near misses to your EHS staff right away. The DEP Injury and Illness Incident Reporting form has near miss sections (highlighted in gray) which should be used.
- Cooperate in investigations of near misses. So the next time you think to yourself, "that was a close call!" - tell your supervisor or EHS representative about the experience. We can all work together to create a safer workplace!

To read the full article, click here.

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

Climate change is perhaps the greatest environmental challenge that New York City and other large cities around the world face; and with more of the world's population urbanizing, the role that cities must take to both mitigate and adapt to climate change—by reducing carbon emissions, developing coastal infrastructure to handle sea-level rise, and other measures—will only increase. In fact, 70% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fossil fuels are produced in cities, and as the world's urban centers continue to grow, cities like New York must assume a leadership role in combatting the problem.

Mayor Bloomberg and NYC are doing just that. Last week, the Mayor was in Sao Paulo, Brazil—a city with more than 10 million residents—for the fourth C40 Large Cities Climate Summit that brought mayors from around the world to exchange the latest data, best practices, and new ideas to address climate change. The C40 Climate Leadership Group was founded five years ago to act as a catalyst for worldwide action on climate change where it is needed most—in the world's growing urban centers. I hope you will spend a few minutes learning about C40 and the critical work that New York City—including DEP and many other public and private stakeholders here—is contributing to this effort.

Mayor Bloomberg was appointed chairman of C40 Climate Leadership Group this year, and opened the conference with a stirring call to action that you can read here. I spent two days in Sao Paulo last week and moderated a panel on urban drainage with experts from around the world, including Rotterdam Climate Initiative Program Director **Arnoud Molenaar,** Secretary for the Environment from Sao Paulo **Eduardo Jorge,** Houston's Sustainability Director **Laura Spanjian,** and Rio de Janeiro's President of River Waters **Mauro Duarte.** The focus of the panel

was green infrastructure and its prospects for success in New York City and around the world. Learning about the stormwater challenges other cities face and the different approaches they've taken was eye-opening; but perhaps the most notable take-away from the panel was the similarity of the problems that big, highly impervious cities like New York, Houston, Sao Paulo and others face. You can see my presentation, and learn more about how cities around the world are coping with sea-level rise and drainage issues in an excellent publication by a sub-group of the C40—Connecting Delta Cities—here.

The bottom line is that as much as we at DEP are doing, there is a lot we can learn from cities around the world—a fact that is highlighted in the second initiative of our strategic plan, which commits DEP to engage with utilities, cities, and other stakeholders to adopt and share best practices for serving our nine million customers, and protecting and improving New Yorkers' quality of life. Speaking of best practices, while mayors of the world convened in Sao Paulo, Philadelphia reached a historic agreement with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection that will enable their visionary, $2 billion green infrastructure plan to move forward. Congratulations to Philly's Water Department Commissioner **Howard Neukrug** and the team that has been working for years to make the plan a reality. Learn more about Philadelphia's efforts here.

Focus on the Field

DEP's Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) program has been transformed to offer new and improved safety requirements for nearly 6,000 employees. To offer the best approach with appropriate agency-wide communications, BWSO Supervisor of Program Development **Esther Rodriguez** helped develop the graphs and tabulate the data from the surveys that were administered to all DEP employees last July. It is also part of Esther's daily duties to execute a wide range of activities including providing bureau representation during OEHS assessments, conducting bureau level audits and researching regulations that contribute to DEP's safe work environment.

Esther has worked in conjunction with a group of EHS specialists to make DEP employees aware of the procedures to comply with safety regulations. It is Esther's dynamic nature that helps the program to efficiently move in the right direction. "I conduct in-house EHS audits, am a member of the EHS continuous improvement communications committee, and I also troubleshoot issues that BWSO users may have with the compliance tracking system," said Esther who, in addition to her office duties, spends time in the field ensuring that BWSO's facilities maintain compliance with applicable EHS policies and procedures.

The most challenging part of her job is keeping abreast of new and revised regulations that can apply to DEP's BWSO facilities. In fact, as part of the EHS poster campaign she visited every BWSO staffed facility. "**Jim Roberts, Persis Luke, Karen Marino** and I delivered the posters and had an open dialogue with BWSO employees."

Esther holds a bachelor degree in Business Administration from Baruch College and currently she is pursuing her master's in Urban Affairs at Queens College. Esther has worked for DEP for seven years and, in her spare time, she enjoys reading and spending time with her family.

Kudos Corner

NO "SMALL" FEAT: DEP received the New York City Agency of the Year Award from the Department of Small Business Services in recognition of the work done by Agency Chief Contracting Officer **Mary Pazan** and her staff, especially **Alan Wasserman, Dan Katz, Gene Towba, Rodney Osborne, Ira Elmore** and **Tom Baldwin** to increase the value of the awards to M/WBE vendors in prime and subcontracts. The award was presented at the Fifth Annual Citywide Procurement Fair on May 25, 2011.

The Statewide Operations Challenge was held today at Bolton Landing, New York. Four teams competed, including two from DEP. The results were: #1 Long Island, #2 Owls Head, #3 Tallman Island, #4 Genesee. The teams from Long Island and Owls Head advance to the National Operations Challenge in Los Angeles in October. Good luck to the Owls Head team members: **Jimmy DiTomasso, Dennis Marotto, Maurice Minickene** and **William Sedutto.**

DEP mourns the passing of BCS staff member **Karen Blyden-deCastro** on May 31, 2011.

Kodak Moment

PORT OF CALL – PORT RICHMOND: Deputy Mayor **Stephen Goldsmith** visited the Port Richmond Wastewater Treatment Plant on May 26, 2011. Deputy Commissioner **Vinny Sapienza** and Plant Superintendent **Andy Kittel** gave him a tour of the facility, answered questions about its operations, and put the site into the broader context of wastewater treatment plant operations across the city.

(Survey Shows Safety is a Top Priority… continued)

day lives and activities of DEP employees. According to Assistant Commissioner of Environmental, Health and Safety **Persis Luke,** "We knew that we had significant resources committed to the development of the written EHS program and training, but really needed to understand whether it was being embodied in actual work situations, employee attitudes and beliefs. We also wanted to find out what operational areas employees continue to have concerns about."

The committee partnered with OIT, HRA, Legal Affairs, bureau heads, the Commissioner's Office and union representatives to ensure that we had a survey that was representative, useful, and confidential. A variety of ways to fill out and turn in the survey were provided to ensure that every employee could participate, and that employee confidentiality was protected. Employees with computer access were able to complete the survey online and submit it confidentially. The response to the first annual EHS survey was excellent; 33% of all DEP employees filled out the form and sent it back. All results were aggregated automatically and then analyzed by bureau. Most DEP employees were positive about DEP's EHS program.

The 2010 EHS Survey tells how DEP employees think the agency is doing to foster and demonstrate EHS excellence and continuous improvement, not just how managers or EHS staff perceive the program. An EHS program is only as strong as it is understood and implemented in the field. The survey revealed some very interesting things that might not otherwise have come to light. For example, BWSO employees feel that equipment safety is a strong need, whereas employees in BCS indicate that improved EHS communications is important. This information is important to OEHS and bureau EHS Directors as it will help them understand what is working and what priorities and goals should be set for the coming period.

Event Calendar

DEP JUNE BLOOD DRIVE: Lefrak, 6th floor training room: 6/14-6/16, 8:00 am to 1:30 pm; Sutton Park, 2nd floor: 6/16, 8:30 am to 2:30 pm; Kingston, 51 Albany Avenue: 6/14, 1pm to 6pm. Please click here to see the memo from Commissioner Holloway.

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