

# WORKER SAFETY, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DEP's mission to supply, deliver, and treat one billion gallons of water or more every day is a complex business. Our operations require extensive, ongoing, and targeted training to perform safely and in compliance with the many state and federal regulations that establish standards for water quality, clean air, worker safety, and other aspects of DEP's daily work. That's why we administer a consistent, efficient, and comprehensive Environmental Health and Safety program throughout DEP.

**Our goal is to run the safest operations and capital program in the country with the best environmental compliance record of any large water and wastewater utility.** Above all, this means we must foster a culture of safety and compliance, reward success and innovation, and recognize and achieve continuous improvement.

We will work hard to meet this goal and will hold ourselves accountable for the results. Our operations must be safe for our nearly 6,000 employees, nearly 90 contractors working on 175 contracts at more than 65 sites in the five boroughs and the city's watershed, and the nine million New Yorkers we serve. And compliance with the environmental, health, and safety rules that govern our operations must be a top priority for the scientists who conduct 500,000 water quality tests every year; the operators who handle wastewater treatment chemicals; the engineers and workers on our construction sites; the crews that repair our water mains; the sewage treatment workers who treat over 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater each day; and everyone else who has a role in fulfilling DEP's mission.

DEP's Environmental, Health and Safety, or EHS, program is pursuing four strategies to achieve the agency's mission.



EHS standards have evolved over the years and now include rigorous guidelines for the use of personal protective equipment such as goggles, gloves, and lab coats. DEP holds workshops and outreach meetings throughout the year to keep its nearly 6,000 employees current on safety practices.

## **21 Measure EHS performance and demand success.**

To know whether DEP is operating safely and in a way that protects the environment, we will launch a new agency-level audit program to measure performance and foster an environment of root cause identification, system improvement, and management accountability. To accurately measure and assess our performance, we will establish safety and compliance metrics and targets in each of our operations, administration, and capital divisions, and for our construction contractors.

## **22 Integrate EHS compliance into every aspect of DEP operations and construction.**

Our employees, consultants, and contractors must think about safety from the moment they arrive at work until the moment they leave for the day. To strengthen EHS awareness, we will continue to publish “Safety Spotlight” in the *Weekly Pipeline, EHS Matters*, a safety newsletter that focuses on case studies, conduct an annual agency-wide EHS survey, and implement the EHS Matters Employee Recognition program.

## **23 Ensure effective EHS training and education for all employees.**

Effective EHS education means that employees not only retain important information, but also learn how to think about safety as it applies to their jobs. DEP will make training more accessible to all employees through increased computer-based training where appropriate; this will reduce travel time and allow individuals to complete training sessions at their personal work stations instead of in a single location. We will also increase opportunities for hands-on training specific to operational proficiency and safety, standardize EHS program training to provide a consistent message to all employees, and provide professional development opportunities for EHS training staff.

## **24 Encourage open, frequent, and candid communication about EHS issues.**

Open communication is essential to identify and address safety and compliance issues. We will encourage DEP employees and contractors to report unsafe conditions and potential compliance violations. If employees feel that reporting an issue could lead to retaliation or problems in the workplace, they are likely to let unsafe conditions persist rather than address them. We will provide multiple outlets to report safety and compliance issues, including anonymous reporting. And we will encourage open communication about health and safety issues by recognizing employees who identify and correct unsafe conditions.

### **CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION EHS PROGRAM**

**Contractor safety is of paramount importance to DEP. Through our Contractor Selection and Management Policy we hire the safest and most environmentally compliant contractors. DEP’s EHS team works extensively with contractors to embed EHS into every aspect of the project life cycle, from design to project completion.**

**DEP achieves success in construction safety through clear contract requirements for contractors and construction managers. We require daily and weekly compliance inspections and hold contractors responsible for identifying the risks or potentially hazardous tasks associated with their projects. A project-specific Health and Safety Plan (HASP) must be developed before construction work begins.**

**DEP has an aggressive inspection program to monitor and audit all of our project sites. Our EHS team has conducted a total of 14,000 inspections of its construction projects over the past six years. In addition, we host meetings and conduct outreach programs for internal and external project managers to ensure maximum accountability. When inspection results and performance indicators do not meet our expectations, DEP requires contractors to implement effective corrective action plans.**