

## Safety Doesn't Happen by Accident

In his seven years as Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Environmental, Health and Safety Compliance (OEHS), Gerould McCoy, with his staff, successfully led DEP through its term of supervision under the oversight of a Federal Monitor to build a comprehensive environmental, health and safety (EHS) compliance program that has transformed the way that DEP and its nearly 6,000 employees learn about, think about, and live employee health and safety every day.

Working with every Bureau and office at DEP, Gerould has played a critical role implementing measures to develop, codify, and communicate EHS initiatives, and to incorporate them into the daily work habits of all employees. On September 1, DEP's first-ever State of the Department highlighted the



fact that workplace and construction injuries and illnesses declined 17% and 18.7%, respectively, between Fiscal Year 2009 and 2010, and EHS training classes increased by 4.7% during the same period—performance improvements that Gerould and the entire agency can be proud of.

The foundation for this success is a comprehensive EHS compliance program through which policies in more than 60 subject matter areas (Continued on reverse side)

## Spotlight on Safety

### Don't be overpowered!

An analysis of the July OEHS audit findings reveals that the single largest group of findings was electrical. Of 21 electrical findings, 67% were related to improper use of power strips. This usually means that employees are plugging appliances into them or using power strips in series.

According to a Letter of Interpretation issued by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), power strips can be used, but they must be directly plugged into an outlet, must not be connected in series to other power strips and are not designed for high power demand appliances such as microwaves. Power strips should instead be used for equipment with low-power loads such as computers and audio/visual devices.

Although this may seem like a minor audit finding, a fire that broke out in the SoHo neighborhood of Manhattan on May 4, 2010 demonstrates what can happen when a power strip is improperly used. The fire began

at approximately 8:37 PM on the top floor of a seven-story apartment building. According to the firefighters interviewed, it did not take long before the fire had burned through the roof of the building and filled the top three floors with flames. Fire Marshals have determined that the fire was caused by appliances plugged into power strips. Larger appliances obviously require a lot of energy to operate and this higher demand can easily cause power cords to overheat, melt or ignite.

Regulations regarding electrical safety are in place to ensure that a fire like the one described here can be prevented in the workplace. So the next time you see an electrical cord or power strip being used improperly, inform your Supervisor or Safety Officer. Remember, prevention is key!

For more information on electrical safety tips for home and office click here.

## Commissioner's Corner

This is an important week for Environmental, Health and Safety at DEP. **Persis Luke**—formerly director of EHS for BWSO—will become the new Assistant Commissioner for Environmental Health and Safety, and will report directly to me as we work together to bring the operations-based approach to EHS that she successfully developed within BWSO to the entire agency. As part of this change, current AC **Gerould McCoy** will assume responsibility for EHS audits agency-wide where he will spearhead the transition from compliance-based auditing to a programmatic approach designed to identify and improve environmental health and safety across all of DEP's Operating Bureaus and BEDC. Gerould played a key role guiding DEP through federal probation, and I have asked him to make DEP's EHS auditing program second to none. You can read more about Persis and Gerould in this week's feature, and please join me in welcoming them to their new challenges.

In other EHS news, last week I welcomed 21 new Sewage Treatment Workers (STWs) to their rigorous five-week training and orientation program. BWT Chief of Training and Development **Walter Dobkowski** welcomed the group and stressed the importance of complying with all safety and environmental requirements in the very demanding STW job. During the next five weeks, these new recruits will get hands-on experience in pump-repair, hoisting, welding, and confined space entry (among other tasks)—all skills essential to performing one of the city's most critical jobs. Welcome and good luck!

Wireless meter reading (AMR) went live on Staten Island last week—the last of the five boroughs to do so. Now all DEP water customers with wireless meters can register online to track their water use daily, weekly, or monthly—information that will help them make smart,



informed decisions so they can better manage their bills. Thanks to the entire BCS team for continuing to deliver on one of Mayor Bloomberg's signature initiatives that will revolutionize the way our customers manage their water use. We celebrated this customer service milestone at the house of Staten Island's most famous resident, Borough President **James Molinaro**.

On the fashion front, we partnered with Aveda to set up three Water-On-the-Go fountains at Fashion's Night Out last Friday, where more than 2,800 people (and 13 dogs!) stopped by for a drink of great tasting NYC Water. Special thanks to **Eva Lynch, Johari Jenkins**, the entire communications team, and the field crews in BWSO for their hard work last week and throughout the summer to make Water-On-the-Go a reality. Due to their efforts, more than 78,000 New Yorkers and visitors were able to quench their thirst and learn all the reasons why NYC Water is the best. Water-On-the-Go will continue into the fall, so be sure to check here for locations and times.

Finally, if you are able, please remember to donate blood at DEP's fall blood drive, which runs through Thursday at Lefrak and at multiple locations in the watershed. Blood is always in short supply, and a few minutes of your time can make a tremendous difference in someone's life. I will be giving on Thursday, and you can learn about times and locations on the Event Calendar. I hope we can exceed the 486 pints that DEP contributed last spring!

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



DEP has one of the largest capital construction programs in the region. From building water and sewer infrastructure, to wastewater treatment, environmental and water supply projects, the list can be quite large. Careful planning is required to make sure that every project follows environmental, health and safety procedures (EHS), in order to protect everyone involved in the construction process.

**Heather Belovin**, Director of Environmental, Health and Safety Compliance for BEDC knows what to do when it comes to this territory. She started in this position three years ago, and has been involved in every project since then to make sure EHS safety regulations are in place. Her main concern is that everyone involved in DEP projects has a safe work environment. "There is no normal day for me, which makes it exciting. The work involves ensuring that DEP awards contracts to the safest and most

environmentally compliant contractors and then monitoring their compliance throughout the life of the project," says Belovin.

In addition to managing internal staff, Belovin oversees a consultant team of auditors that regularly audits the projects for EHS compliance. "This helps DEP measure the contractor's performance with a set of metrics that also identifies the areas that need improvement." Belovin also enjoys working with other City agencies such as DOB and FDNY "to help make our construction projects safer for the public and emergency responders."

Belovin says she is proud of the direction the BEDC EHS program has taken in recent years. "Our group has worked hard to update contracts to require more from contractors regarding EHS, and to develop an enforcement and awareness program so they understand its importance. I believe we have done that in a partnering manner that benefits everyone."

In her spare time, Belovin likes to spend time with her family and tries to keep active by biking and playing tennis. She holds a Law Degree from Boston University and various EHS certifications and training certificates.

## Milestones

Congratulations to **Salman Alzoubaidy** from HazMat and his wife **Susan** on the birth of their son **Yousef**, on September 2, 2010. Mother and baby are both doing fine.

## Event Calendar:

### DEP Blood Drive

Lefrak, 6th floor training room: 9/14-9/16, 8am to 1:30pm; Sutton Park, 2nd floor: 9/16, 8:30am to 2pm; Downsville Fire Department: 9/15, 9am to 2pm; Kingston, 51 Albany Avenue: 9/20, 1pm to 6pm; Grahamsville Police Parking Lot: 9/15-9/16, 10am - 3pm.

### Hispanic Heritage Month

#### September 15 – October 15, 2010

In September 1968, Congress authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to proclaim National Hispanic Heritage Week, which was observed during the week that included Sept. 15 and Sept. 16. The observance was expanded in 1988 by Congress to a month-long celebration (Sept. 15 – Oct. 15), effective the following year. America celebrates the culture and traditions of those who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America and the Caribbean. To celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, DEP will have a display of posters, artifacts, puzzles, and recipes in the 3rd Floor Corridor near the Cafeteria entrance.

And make sure to check out the first-ever Latin Media and Entertainment Week from October 4-10. You can learn all about it here [👉](#).

## Kudos Corner



BWSO's Manhattan Borough Manager **Anthony Marchese** threw out the ceremonial first pitch at CitiField on the 9th anniversary of September 11. Along with other first responders, he was honored for his role ensuring that water continued to flow while FDNY personnel extinguished fires at Ground Zero.

DEP's BWSO softball team defeated the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation team in the 2010 NYC Municipal Softball League championship series.

### (Safety Doesn't Happen by Accident... - continued)

have been developed and implemented over the last several years. To date, our nearly 6,000 employees have been trained in approximately 400 different courses to implement EHS policies in the field; a permanent internal compliance office and a toll-free hotline for employees to report concerns and complaints has been established; and our facilities have been made safer through tens of thousands of improvements and corrections that were made as a result of EHS audits.

Now Gerould will use his unique and comprehensive experience to build on his success by leading OEHS's audits division, where he will oversee the transition from compliance-based auditing to a programmatic approach that will seek to quickly identify potential safety and compliance issues and address them throughout the agency—in addition to facility by facility.

**Persis Luke**, who has served as the EHS Director for the Bureau

of Water and Sewer Operations since 2006, and where she has developed a very effective EHS program, will take the reins of OEHS. Persis brings a strong focus on operations to her new position, which will help her as we continue to develop performance metrics for DEP designed to make us the safest, most environmentally conscious, efficient, and cost-effective water and sewer utility in the country.

"Using the employee survey conducted this summer, we will get a better idea of what we do well, where we can improve, and what we haven't thought of yet," Persis said. "Our first responsibility to our employees is that they go home safe every day; and our 9 million customers expect to drink clean water and a welcoming waterfront. A rigorous environmental health and safety program is necessary to achieve these goals, and we'll measure how we're doing—and strive to do it better—every day."

## Did You Know?

...that in the 2010 fiscal year, DEP conducted over 1,400 Environmental, Health and Safety training classes for its employees. In addition to the Hazardous Communication/Right to Know class attended by all DEP employees, topics included EHS Orientation, Hot Work, Confined Space, Boat Safety, Electrical Safety, Excavation and Trenching, Powered Industrial Trucks, Emergency Action Plan, Blood-borne Pathogens and Employee Exposure Plan, Asbestos Awareness, Chemical Bulk Storage/Petroleum Bulk Storage, Cranes and Hoists, Personal Protective Equipment and more.

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