

'Streams' of Data Get Streamlined

Bureau of Water Supply (BWS) Watershed Water Quality Operations (WWQO) is undertaking an effort to improve efficiency as it strives to provide the most accurate and readily accessible water quality data to manage the water supply. The division has been working to implement a Laboratory Information Management System (STARLIMS) at four laboratory and field locations. The 120 water quality personnel at these locations are responsible for collecting more than 19,000 samples per year from 475 aqueduct, reservoir, stream, wastewater treatment plant and drinking water locations in the 2,000 square mile watershed. Approximately 225,000 field and laboratory analyses are performed on these samples each year for regulatory compliance, water supply operations, support of the city's Filtration



Avoidance Determination, watershed modeling, storm events and other special investigations.

While WWQO's previous data management system met the needs of the division for nearly 25 years, it relies on manual data entry, retrieval and reporting. In addition, it focused on minimal data storage and traditional statisti-

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Spotlight on Safety

Part 1: Workplace Violence Prevention – It's the law.

DEP is committed to providing its employees with a work environment that is safe, secure, and free from violence. In accordance with the New York State Workplace Violence Prevention Act, DEP recently implemented its Workplace Violence Prevention Program, which is designed to assess risks that are present in DEP workplaces and take necessary steps to prevent violence from occurring.

DEP has conducted an initial review of the organization to identify the risk factors that contribute to workplace violence. The DEP Workplace Violence Policy Statement is posted in all work locations where notices to employ-

ees are usually displayed. The policy statement has important information on what to do if there is a violence-related incident at your workplace. Workplace Violence Prevention training is ongoing, and will be targeted to bureaus over the next few months. Be sure to attend this required training.

Watch Spotlight on Safety for upcoming features on the Workplace Violence Prevention Program including definitions of workplace violence, employee rights and responsibilities, how to report an incident, training, conflict resolution, and risk assessment. 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.

Special Guest Commissioner's Corner

Salvatore J. Cassano, FDNY Commissioner, is a guest commentator this week.

Whether fighting fires or decontaminating after a HazMat job, the FDNY depends on New York City water each and every day to protect the public and our members. So we are grateful for our close partnership with DEP, which not only helps us do our job more effectively, but also protects the safety of all New Yorkers.

As temperatures rise each summer, it's natural for city residents to seek ways to stay cool. Yet, although many think opening a fire hydrant is an easy and fun option to beat the heat, they fail to realize that it can put them and their neighbors in extreme danger. Just one open hydrant discharges 1,000 gallons of water per minute. That lowers water pressure to dangerous levels and makes it challenging for us to fight fires effectively.

DEP has been a great partner in helping us spread the word about the dangers of open hydrants. The agency also has been proactive, helping install more than 30,000 locking devices on hydrants to prevent them from being opened easily.

Instead, New Yorkers are encouraged to visit their local firehouse and ask for a sprinkler cap to be installed. These caps dramatically cut down on the amount of water discharged—25 gallons per minute—which allows the public to cool down while maintaining adequate water flow that helps protect them and conserves valuable resources.

Yet the FDNY and DEP do not only work together in the summer months. We have partnered for year-round initiatives that work to better protect the city.

Together, we keep city hydrants in good working order, making sure



they are repaired quickly whenever there's a problem.

A few years ago we developed an electronic reporting system to expedite repairs for out-of-service hydrants. Not only did this improve communication and tracking between our agencies, but it also dramatically reduced turn-around time for repairs. Together, we're now working on finding an even more efficient reporting system.

When hydrants are in need of repair, representatives from DEP do the necessary maintenance, then FDNY members double-check the work. It is this kind of vigilance and attention to detail on the part of our two agencies that ensures the safety of all New York residents and visitors.

And we do not just rely on DEP to help us prepare for the worst – our agencies also work together in emergencies. When the FDNY responds to multiple-alarm fires, representatives from DEP also respond to ensure we have adequate water flow and pressure. That is a great asset to public safety.

We appreciate all the support we receive from everyone at the DEP. There is no doubt that together, the FDNY and DEP are helping keep New York residents and visitors safe. We hope that in the coming years our relationship will only grow and help us better protect the greatest city—with the greatest water supply—in the world.

EHS SURVEY: The deadline to complete the [EHS Survey](#) has been extended to July 21. Please take the time to participate.

Focus on the Field



There are more than 7,400 miles of sewers that convey wastewater to DEP's 14 wastewater treatment plants. While the majority of the public uses the sewers as intended, there are a few bad apples that need DEP oversight. Monitoring and protecting this vital infrastructure from illicit discharges is an incredible challenge.

That's why **Keith Williams**, an Emergency Response Investigator in BWT's Division of Pollution Control & Monitoring, is so important to New York City. Whenever there is a complaint to 311 of potentially illegal discharges to a sewer, Keith responds. Discharges can run the gamut from the dumping of a few quarts of motor oil into a corner catch

basin by an individual to the discharge of bulk chemicals by an industrial business. These can pose a threat to residents and DEP workers, corrode our sewers, impact our wastewater treatment operations, and harm our receiving waters.

Keith performs investigations to identify the sources of such discharges, assess the situation, coordinate remedial action, and commence enforcement actions. Some problems take a lot of investigative work, like the time when Keith responded to a complaint by a Sheepshead Bay resident about raw sewage entering a waterway near her house. Keith and BWT staff worked with city and state agencies to identify the guilty party and abate the discharge. "I was just happy to help," says Keith.

Keith completed his master's degree in Urban Affairs at Queens College. In his spare time, he spends time with his wife, **Valerie Williams**, who is the Assistant Deputy Warden for New York City's Department of Correction. He's also a certified High School Boys and Basketball referee.

Kodak Moment



HEAT PROGRAM IS COOL: Commissioner Cas Holloway was joined by FDNY Battalion Chief **Thomas McCarthy** and DYCD Summer Youth Employment Director **Andre White** in Washington Heights to kick off the Hydrant Education Action Team (HEAT) program. The program, run in partnership with the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBRO), deploys four teams of 10 - 12 students who will be on city streets in Manhattan and the Bronx for seven weeks informing residents that opening fire hydrants without spray caps is illegal, wasteful and dangerous.



Press Box

"The federal government, Barack Obama, proprietor, is moving to drive up New Yorkers' already astronomical water rates by ordering the city to put a hugely expensive, completely unnecessary 90-acre lid on a reservoir. Mr. President, stop the madness. Please." - Daily News editorial [urging the EPA to reconsider its decision to require the construction of a \\$1.6 billion cover over Hillview Reservoir](#)

(**'Streams' of Data Get Streamlined... continued**)

cal analysis. STARLIMS, on the other hand, will provide WWQO with the key features to support modern laboratory and field operations through its advances in data management technology. The STARLIMS system was purchased through a \$1.1 million capital expenditure with annual support and maintenance costs of approximately \$60 thousand per year. The same system is used by the United States Geological Survey Water Quality Laboratory in Denver, Colorado. When implementation is complete, the system will be used by 240 BWS Water Quality Laboratory and Field Operations staff for data management at the water quality monitoring facilities in Kingston, Valhalla, Brewster, Grahamsville and Lefrak. The system will also be accessible to all BWS personnel who need access to water quality data for day to day operations, reporting or research.

For data management personnel, the benefits of the system include increased data security, built-in auditing capabilities and movement away from flat file data storage to a structured query language server. For laboratory and field staff, the system will provide significant improvements in efficiency and accuracy by incorporating automated data capture and reporting and by automatically calculating results. Traceability and overall quality control will also be enhanced by provid-

ing automated chain of custody information and by establishing a link between quality control results and sample results. For the end users, STARLIMS will provide a more efficient mechanism for querying data for water supply operational decisions or for conducting scientific research on DEP's historical water quality database. And finally, STARLIMS has the ability to communicate with other applications such as the Watershed Land Information System and the Operational Support Tool. This will allow WWQO to link water quality information Geographical Information System and operational models to better manage the water supply.

The project is being managed by WWQO's Compliance Data Management Section Chief, **Brian O'Malley**, with oversight from Deputy Chief of WWQO Compliance **James Broderick**, and Chief of Watershed Water Quality Operations **Lori Emery**. When asked about the benefits of the new system, Section Chief of Kingston Water Quality Operations **Kirsten Askildsen** said, "I perform a lot of data queries. I like that I can just pull up the data and see what's available on the fly. Also, the biggest benefit is that laboratory staff do not have to perform data transcription. Eliminating this manual task has been a big time saver and also improves the accuracy of the data."

Milestones

Congratulations to **Rolando Villacres**, BWT, and his wife **Erica** on the birth of their first daughter **Valerie Isabella** on July 7. All are doing well.

OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS - SUIT DRIVE: The deadline for donations is Friday, July 22. For more information please click here [👉](#).

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