

Commissioner's Corner



Vincent Sapienza
Commissioner

New York remains the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States and our municipal response will serve as a planning guide for localities across the country as the virus continues to spread. DEP's critical missions of ensuring a reliable supply of high quality water and

collecting and treating wastewater are essential parts of a public health strategy and as such those operations must continue uninterrupted. However, as our public health officials role out updated guidelines and procedures, we immediately work to tailor them to the unique needs of DEP and implement them as quickly as is possible, with the number one priority always being the health and safety of our 6,000 employees.

In order to protect employees and ensure continuity of our core operations, we have had success instituting teleworking, staggered shifts and limiting contact with the public. We have also been distributing NYC hand sanitizer throughout the agency. Following new directives from the NYS Department of Health, we have begun distributing face masks to all essential employees and temperatures are being taken before shifts begin for those that may have been exposed to the virus. We have also adjusted routines and staffing at our critical facilities to minimize any opportunity for the virus to spread. Finally, when we do learn of an employee who has tested positive for the virus, we follow all public health guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting the work area. As these changes and policies are being implemented across dozens of different facilities and a myriad number of job responsibilities, please contact your bureau administrator if you have any questions or concerns.

health laboratories and assisting in the construction of the temporary field hospital in Central Park. I expect new opportunities will present themselves in the days ahead and we will be in touch with bureau leadership as we seek out assistance for these critical tasks.

As I mentioned last week we recently lost one of our own, **Robert Moody, Jr.** from the Bureau of Customer Services, to this terrible disease. Robert was a Mail Room supervisor and so many of us knew him as a friendly face in the hallways at Lefrak. Many more of us have friends and family members who are fighting the virus as we speak. Please remember that the City's Employee Assistance Program is available to those who need support. EAP has been an invaluable resource to DEP by offering free confidential phone, video, or text sessions with licensed mental health professionals. For more information visit nyc.gov/eap, call 212-306-7660 or email eap@olr.nyc.gov. Another important resource is DEP's **Jonathan Glotzer**, the Director of the Office of Staff Support and Assistance. He can be reached at 718-595-3424 or jglotzer@dep.nyc.gov. Find additional assistance [here](#).

In addition, many of our colleagues have contributed to the citywide response to the pandemic including supporting the work taking place at our public



Spotlight on Safety

EHS Insights



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There is emerging and frequently changing news about how COVID-19 is transmitted and the guidance we receive from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) has been adaptive. DEP is doing its best to stay abreast of and to equip employees with safe work practices and protective equipment as needed.

Effective this week, two new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are now in place:

1. Temperature monitoring

Any DEP employee exposed to COVID-19 will participate in a DEP temperature monitoring program as recommended by NYS Department

of Health. For many locations, this will include all essential employees.

2. Face mask/face covering SOP

Face masks will be made available to all essential DEP employees.

Both of the above SOPs will be implemented and administered by your bureau. It is important to note, that face masks are in very short supply and the health care community takes priority. DEP will make masks (N95s or surgical type) available out of existing stockpiles and will continue sourcing activities throughout the pandemic. With that said, if face masks cannot be made available, employees should use cloth-based face protection as described in the [NYC DOHMH FAQ](#). You can view the SOPs and other COVID-19 information by visiting the [OEHS Source page](#). If you have questions about the SOPs or safe pandemic work practices, please reach out to your Bureau EHS Staff or DEP OEHS at ehs@dep.nyc.gov.

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 [EHS EMPLOYEE CONCERNS](#). HELP IS ON THE WAY.

Arrival of Spring 2020



Although the first day of spring arrived for everyone on March 19, flowers and trees bloom in the city a few weeks ahead of those in the watershed. Happy Spring everyone!

Trout Fishing Season Begins



To mark the start of trout-fishing season on April 1, DEP is encouraging anglers to enjoy world-class fishing on its upstate reservoirs and dozens of properties throughout the Catskills and Hudson Valley that include frontage along creeks and streams. The DEP [fishing brochure](#) has helpful information for anglers about permitting, fishing locations and more. Anglers can also find fishing areas by using the [RecMapper](#), an interactive map created by DEP to help outdoor enthusiasts pinpoint access at more than 400 recreation units across the watershed. Angler maps that show the water depths within each reservoir, as well as other recreation information, are also available at nyc.gov/dep/recreation. Fishing on all city-owned reservoirs and lakes, along with some recreation units along streams and creeks, requires a free DEP Access Permit. An access permit can be obtained through DEP's [online permitting system](#). Those with questions about permitting may also email recreation@dep.nyc.gov or call (800) 575-LAND.

Make Your Own Mask



Many DEP employees are doing their part to slow the spread, however people still need to venture out for groceries and other essential items. The Centers for Disease Control is now recommending that all Americans cover their face when they are in public. U.S. Surgeon General **Dr. Jerome Adams** recently shared a video demonstrating [how Americans can make a face covering at home](#) with a bandana, scarf or old T-shirt. By making your own face covering, you are helping to save medical masks for essential frontline workers who need them most.

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