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**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LAUNCHES 2013  
SUMMER FIRE HYDRANT ABUSE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN**

*HEAT Outreach Program has Helped Reduce Reports of Illegally Opened Hydrants by More Than 50 Percent*

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Carter Strickland today launched the 2013 Hydrant Education Action Team (HEAT) program, a fire hydrant abuse prevention campaign that deploys teams of teens hired through the Department of Youth and Community Development's Summer Youth Employment Program to inform New Yorkers about the dangers of illegally opening fire hydrants. Illegally opened fire hydrants release more than 1,000 gallons of water per minute and can reduce water pressure in neighborhoods making it difficult to fight fires. After six years of successful HEAT outreach campaigns, reports of illegally opened hydrants have fallen by more than 50 percent during June and July. Hydrants can be opened legally if equipped with a City-approved spray cap, which releases only 20 to 25 gallons per minute, ensuring adequate water pressure and reducing the risk that a child could be knocked over and injured by the force of the water. Spray caps can be obtained by an adult 18 or over, free of charge, at local firehouses.

"Our HEAT volunteers provide a great service to their communities by spreading the message that illegally opening a fire hydrant is not just wasteful, it is dangerous," said Commissioner Strickland. "During the hottest days of summer everyone looks for ways to cool off, and fire hydrants can be a great solution - but only if they are operated properly and fitted with an approved spray cap."

"There's no shortage of things to do this summer with all that New York City has to offer, but we want everyone to be safe," said Department of Youth and Community Development Commissioner Jeanne B. Mullgrav. "The young people from DYCD's Summer Youth Employment Program who are part of the Hydrant Education Action Teams are powerful ambassadors to carry that safety message into their communities—educating their neighbors and fellow New Yorkers while learning the professional, leadership and outreach skills that will benefit them long after the summer is over."

"The HEAT program engages youth to become advocates and leaders in their communities, educating residents about the safety and environmental hazards of fire hydrant misuse, and providing them with information on safer, alternative ways to stay cool in the summer," said Johanna Dejesus, Vice President of Youth, Education and Career Development Services for SoBro.

HEAT teams distribute literature, posters, and other informational materials about fire hydrant safety at community events, parades, greenmarkets, churches, and libraries. The outreach campaign will focus on neighborhoods in northern Manhattan and the Bronx that have historically seen high rates of unauthorized fire hydrant use during heat waves. In addition to literature, the teams will distribute reusable water bottles, flyers, visors, and other souvenirs that promote the safe operation of fire hydrants.

Opening a hydrant illegally can result in fines of up to \$1,000, imprisonment for up to 30 days, or both. New Yorkers are urged to report illegally opened fire hydrants to 311 immediately. DEP has additional staff on hand today to respond to reports of illegally opened fire hydrants.

SoBro, a not-for-profit community development corporation, has been serving the South Bronx since 1972. SoBro's programs include adult education and workforce training, real estate and community development, technical and financial assistance for businesses, and an array of programs for youth. For additional information about SoBro, visit [www.sobro.org](http://www.sobro.org).

DYCD supports New York City's afterschool and youth workforce development programs throughout the five boroughs. The agency also oversees funding for anti-poverty programs, such as adult literacy and immigrant services. For more information, please go to [www.nyc.gov/dycd](http://www.nyc.gov/dycd) or follow DYCD on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dep](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/nycwater](https://facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/nycwater](https://twitter.com/nycwater).

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