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## OVERVIEW YEAR 2009

### **ROCKLAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

The Division of Environmental Health regulates and enforces activities affecting public health and the environment in accordance with State and local laws. Environmental Public Health Programs address the concerns of housing, food and recreation, water supply, indoor air quality, mosquito control and other matters covered under the New York State and Rockland County Sanitary Codes. Environmental Conservation Programs address environmental issues regulated by New York State Environmental Conservation Law and the County Sanitary Code. These include hazardous materials, air pollution and water pollution.

The Division is made up of fifty-eight (58) staff positions and is led by the Director of Environmental Public Health, with direction of the Environmental Public Health and Conservation Programs led by the Associate Public Health Engineer. This Division includes ten (10) positions that provide clerical support. The Division maintains twenty-four (24) hour coverage for emergency response. Staff are involved in training and drilling for possible bio-terrorism incidents and the Indian Point power plant disaster plan. This Division also provides staff coverage for weekend Household Hazardous Waste events.

The Division has been moving towards universal computerization. Almost all programs now have their data stored in an electronic format. Progress has been made in linking this data through computerized mapping software. This process will allow the Division to identify facilities that are regulated by more than one program so that information can be exchanged between Bureaus, inspection routes can be created to increase productivity of field inspections and to determine what information is available in response to Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Total</u>
Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Requests .....	290

### **AIR POLLUTION CONTROL:**

The Bureau of Air Pollution Control is responsible for maintaining safe and clean air for the people of Rockland County. This stewardship is administered through Article XII (Air Pollution Control) of the Rockland County Sanitary Code and Title 6 of the Environmental Conservation Law (6 NYCRR). The activities of the Bureau are divided into four categories: permit review, source inspections, complaint investigations and sampling.

In 2009 the Bureau saw a decrease of fifty percent in application submittals for Permits to Construct processes that emit contaminants to the outdoor air. This decrease in applications allowed for a twenty percent increase in field inspections of permitted sources. There was a sixteen percent increase in Certificates to Operate (CO) air pollution sources due to the requirement of renewing these permits every five years.

The Bureau attended monthly public meetings with regard to the Tappan Zee Bridge / New York State Thruway expansion project. The Authority is using the meetings as a way of disseminating information regarding possible scenarios for the project and taking comment from the public.

From the advent of the new County Law, which limits idling of internal combustion engines, the Bureau has seen a significant increase in complaints against idling vehicles. Letters have been written and signs have been posted in several areas to warn individuals of this Law that limits idling to three minutes.

In conjunction with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) an Ambient Air Monitoring station in Rockland County became operational. The station was used to monitor ozone and particulates in the ambient air. The equipment is operated remotely by the NYSDEC with occasional visits by the Bureau. The data from the monitor, as expected, demonstrates a significant correlation with surrounding monitoring station data.

In 2009 there were seven (7) Air Quality Health advisories in the Region: six (6) for ozone and one (1) for small particulates. The Bureau was involved with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) in disseminating information regarding health advisories and with NYSDEC regarding forecasts during an event.

There is one (1) technical position within this Bureau.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Permits Issued:</b>	
• <b>Construction</b> .....	<b>26</b>
• <b>Operation</b> .....	<b>224</b>
• <b>Open Burning</b> .....	<b>79</b>
<b>Inspections:</b>	
• <b>Emission Points</b> .....	<b>245</b>
• <b>Open Burning</b> .....	<b>35</b>
• <b>Complaints</b> .....	<b>56</b>

**FOOD AND RECREATION:**

The Bureau of Food and Recreation is responsible for enforcing New York State and Rockland County Sanitary Code regulations related to the proper and safe operation of many programs. Staff monitor food service establishments that include restaurants, delis, school cafeterias and luncheonettes. Catering and hot dog trucks, food vending machines and the food stands at street fairs and carnivals are also regulated. Bureau staff regularly conduct a five-hour Food Safety Class that is required of all food service managers. The Bureau is responsible for public swimming pools, bathing beaches, children’s camps and day care centers with food service. Duties include conducting routine inspections, responding to complaints from the public and the investigation of reports of illness or injury associated with these establishments.

All Bureau staff are certified as Food Service Inspection Officers by the NYSDOH to ensure consistent inspections. The training consists of joint inspections performed under a supervising staff member and completion of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) reviews at full service food establishments. All documents are forwarded to the State for review and approval prior to certification.

There are six (6) technical and two (2) clerical positions within this Bureau, with engineering support from the Bureau of Water Supply.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Permits Issued</u>	<u>Inspections</u>
<b>Food Service Establishments</b> .....	<b>1,220</b>	<b>2,543</b>
<b>Bathing Facilities</b> .....	<b>94</b>	<b>262</b>
<b>Children’s Camp</b> .....	<b>60</b>	<b>132</b>

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Food Service Establishments:</b>	
• <b>Illness/Incident Investigations</b> .....	28
• <b>Plan Review</b> .....	54
<b>Food Safety Course Attendees</b> .....	400
<b>Complaints:</b>	
• <b>Food Service Establishments</b> .....	134
• <b>Bathing Facilities</b> .....	6
• <b>Children’s Camps</b> .....	1
<b>Day Care Center with Food Service Inspections</b> .....	18
<b>Field Visits (All Programs)</b> .....	296

**HOUSING:**

The Housing Bureau enforces regulations pertaining to the New York State Sanitary Code, the Rockland County Sanitary Code and the Public Health Law of the State of New York. This involves the investigation of complaints concerning housing violations in rental units, routine inspections of permitted rooming houses and pre-rental inspections conducted on behalf of clients of the Department of Social Services (DSS). In 2009 the Bureau saw a large increase in illegal rooming houses, conversions of single apartments into multiple apartments, occupancy of basements and attics, overcrowded apartments and an increase in the number of DSS inspection requests, presumably in response to the poor economy.

The Housing Bureau continued a housing survey at one of the larger apartment complexes in the County. Violations are being found in almost every apartment. While some violations are caused by the tenants, the vast majority of them are not. We are working with the owners to get the violations corrected, and have initiated many enforcement actions to ensure the problems are corrected in a timely manner.

Other Housing Bureau responsibilities include rodent and rabies control, public health nuisance abatement and the regulation of septic and chemical collection vehicles. In addition, staff collect water samples at private and public water supplies. We also regulate and permit temporary residences (hotels/motels), rooming houses, mobile home parks and campgrounds. Free Rabies Clinics are run three (3) times a year. This allows residents a cost-effective way of keeping rabies vaccinations up to date for family pets.

The Healthy Neighborhood Program educates and assists residents in the prevention of lead poisoning, asthma, fire safety and carbon monoxide poisoning. We have received a very positive response from the public over the years and will continue the Healthy Neighborhood Program with a new multi-year grant.

There are fourteen (14) technical and two (2) clerical positions within this Bureau.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Septic/Chemical Vehicles Permitted</b> .....	215
<b>Public Water Samples Collected</b> .....	1,520
<b>Private Water Samples Collected</b> .....	156
<b>Animal Bites/Rabies:</b>	
• <b>Specimens Sent For Testing</b> .....	61
• <b>Specimens Positive</b> .....	3
• <b>Persons Receiving Shots</b> .....	29

**Activity** **Total**  
**Healthy Neighborhood Program:**

- **Interviews Conducted/Revisits Made**..... 351
- **Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Detectors Distributed**..... 134

<b><u>Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Complaints</u></b>	<b><u>Inspections</u></b>
<b>Complaints Received:</b> .....	<b>2,163</b>	
• <b>Sewage</b> .....	<b>64</b>	<b>284</b>
• <b>Housing</b> .....	<b>749</b>	<b>3,581</b>
• <b>Nuisance</b> .....	<b>183</b>	<b>722</b>
• <b>Rodents</b> .....	<b>77</b>	<b>509</b>
<b>Rabies Investigation</b> .....	<b>299</b>	<b>325</b>
<b>DSS Referrals</b> .....	<b>735</b>	<b>1,864</b>
<b>Healthy Neighborhood</b> .....	<b>52</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>Stormwater/DEC Referrals</b> .....	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>

<b><u>Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Permits Issued</u></b>	<b><u>Inspections</u></b>
<b>Rooming Houses</b> .....	<b>86</b>	<b>303</b>
<b>(T/R) Hotel/Motel</b> .....	<b>31</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Mobile Home Park</b> .....	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Septic/Chemical Vehicle</b> .....	<b>215</b>	<b>0</b>

**MOSQUITO CONTROL:**

The Bureau of Mosquito Control is a comprehensive surveillance and control program designed to identify the presence of mosquito borne diseases and to reduce the risk of human transmission. Surveillance is accomplished through collection and testing of adult mosquitoes.

The objective of the Bureau is to reduce the mosquito population at the larval stage such that adult mosquito control can be avoided. One way this is done is through the identification and treatment of mosquito breeding sites and catch basins throughout the County. In an attempt to minimize pesticide use, biological control in the form of fish is employed in areas that remain wet most of the year. Facilities such as inactive swimming pools and tire storage areas have been identified and are inspected as they have a high mosquito breeding potential. This program continues to educate the owners and operators in proper maintenance to eliminate these possible sources of mosquitoes. Mosquito dunks and fish are given out to assist homeowners in mosquito control on their properties where stagnant water cannot be eliminated. When education and assistance fails, enforcement is undertaken to eliminate containerized breeding habitat on private and public properties.

In order to operate in an efficient manner, this program relies heavily on computerized mapping software to assign work to staff. The ability to track our vehicles assures that locations are visited by field staff, as well as provides a record of treatment for legal purposes.

During 2009, the Bureau began to recover costs for treatments at privately owned retention basins through the implementation of fee for service program. 2009 also saw increased enforcement of Article 19, specifically as it relates to construction of structures that could provide mosquito-breeding habitat.

During the off season Mosquito control staff assist other Department based programs with both fieldwork and GIS data management. A wide range of projects were completed including mapping of sewer lines, manholes and pump stations as well as public water supply features. Field work included septic system inspections, water

sample collection, inspections of indoor swimming pools for permit renewal, routine food service inspections and inspections to determine compliance with the CPR Law at food service establishment.

There are five (5) technical and one (1) clerical year-round position within this Bureau with engineering support from the Bureau of Water Pollution. There are an additional twelve (12) temporary positions employed during the summer months.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>On Record</u>	<u>Inspections</u>	<u>Treatments</u>
Breeding Sites .....	1,194.....	5,520.....	3,147
Catch Basins.....	44,858.....	35,385.....	35,040

<u>Activity</u>	<u>On Record</u>	<u>Inspections</u>
Permitted Pools.....	204.....	62
Private Pools .....	12,026.....	234
Tire Facilities .....	374.....	292

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Total</u>
Fish Release Sites.....	367
Mosquito Pools:	
• Submitted.....	611
• Positive .....	16
Fish Giveaway Participants.....	99
Mosquito Dunk Giveaway Participants .....	313
Complaints Received.....	344

**PETROLEUM BULK STORAGE:**

The Bureau of Hazardous Materials administers a program that prevents, identifies, and corrects potential or real incidences of soil and water contamination. The Bureau maintains clean water and soils, and an environment free of hazardous materials, by responding to spills and hazardous materials incidents, investigating complaints, and enforcing regulations pertaining to federal underground tank regulation 40 CFR 280, the Rockland County Sanitary Code’s Article X (Petroleum Bulk Storage), and NYSDEC’s Title 6 of the Environmental Conservation Law (6 NYCRR Parts 612, 613, 614). Our mission is to “protect county soil and waters so as to protect the public health and environment for the people...”

The Rockland County Department of Health is one of only five (5) local Health Departments statewide to be delegated the authority by NYSDEC to enforce the NYS Petroleum Bulk Storage Regulations. These regulations are intended to protect soil and water resources through enforcement of provisions which include: registration of existing petroleum storage tanks; proper installation of new tanks; removal of outdated tanks; periodic tank and piping tightness testing; facility inspections; reporting and remediation of tank failures and petroleum spills; and investigation and remediation of petroleum contaminated soil and water. Every federal, state, county or regulated petroleum tank is inspected at least once every 3 years, prior to facility re-registration, and every facility is brought into compliance with any violations uncovered during the inspections. Our annual educational Outreach event, which presented updated compliance requirements, was held in March and was attended by over 100 people.

In addition to Petroleum Bulk Storage work, Bureau staff respond to hazardous materials spills; maintain a database to track cleanup progress on those spill events; investigate soil, groundwater and surface water related complaints; respond to chemical emergencies; track contamination cleanups, including ground water recovery or soil treatment; and participate in environmental health assessments at hazardous waste and voluntary cleanup

sites. Responsibility for the monthly inspections of five Solid Waste Transfer facilities was transferred to the Flow Control program in 2009.

There are five (5) technical and one (1) clerical position within this Bureau.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Dormant Facilities Registered</b> .....	<b>684</b>
<b>Active Facilities Registered</b> .....	<b>283</b>
<b>Petroleum Bulk Storage Inspections</b> .....	<b>117</b>
<b>Active Tanks Registered</b> .....	<b>1,011</b>
<b>Tank Tests</b> .....	<b>391</b>
<b>Tank Removals</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>New Tank Installations</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Complaints Investigated</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Spills Investigated</b> .....	<b>275</b>
<b>Emergency Responses</b> .....	<b>51</b>

**SPECIAL SERVICES:**

The Bureau of Special Services administers a broad scope of regulatory and educational programs including: flow control of solid waste and recycling; hauler permitting; primary prevention of lead poisoning in children; commercial tanning facilities; mitigation of noise pollution, mold and indoor air pollutants and hazardous materials found in the home; and oversight of the County’s Household Hazardous Waste program. Management of these programs is achieved through education and enforcement pursuant to the New York State Public Health Law, Rockland County Local Law #2 of 2008 and the Rockland County Sanitary Code.

In 2009, the Bureau devoted a tremendous amount of time and resources towards planning and development of a comprehensive program to enforce flow control of solid waste and recycling in Rockland County. During the year, three additional staff persons were hired to enforce Local Law # 2 of 2008. Bureau staff continues to work in our existing recycling program, source separation. Work in both of these programs continues cooperatively with the Rockland County Solid Waste Management Authority (SWMA).

The County’s Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) program has entered its fifteenth year under management by both the SWMA and the Health Department. This facility provides an outlet for the environmentally responsible disposal of all types of household hazardous waste for Rockland residents and small business owners. Efforts dedicated to this program continue to grow along with the success of the program. This year we saw a 10% increase in residential participation from 2008.

Mold and indoor air quality continue to be areas of great concern for residents, prompting regular response to requests for assistance and education associated with these issues. Informational and technical assistance is provided to residents regarding environmental noise pollution, radon and asbestos.

The Bureau works vigorously on the mitigation of lead based paint hazards in property where children have been poisoned by lead. Work in primary prevention of lead poisoning continues through our partnership with Rockland County Section 8 to perform pre-rental lead risk assessments and conduct routine lead risk assessment for Section 8 properties when referred.

Other programs managed by this Bureau include the SHARPS program and tanning. There are six (6) technical and one (1) clerical position within the Bureau.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Tanning Permits Issued</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Radon Requests</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>Noise Complaints Investigated</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Lead:</b>	
• <b>Non-Elevated Blood Lead Level Complaints/Inquiries</b> .....	<b>197</b>
• <b>Primary Prevention Inspections</b> .....	<b>30</b>
• <b>Elevated Blood Lead Level (EBLL) Inspections</b> .....	<b>125</b>
<b>Mold:</b>	
• <b>Complaints/Inquiries</b> .....	<b>304</b>
• <b>Investigations</b> .....	<b>172</b>
<b>HHW:</b>	
• <b>Weekend Collections</b> .....	<b>10</b>
• <b>Residential Participants</b> .....	<b>16,960</b>
• <b>Small Business Participants</b> .....	<b>321</b>
<b>Source Separation:</b>	
• <b>Complaints/Inquiries</b> .....	<b>327</b>
• <b>Inspections</b> .....	<b>581</b>
<b>Flow Control Inquires</b> .....	<b>414</b>
<b>Solid Waste Facility Inspections</b> .....	<b>49</b>
<b>Sharps Brochure Requests</b> .....	<b>427</b>

**TOBACCO AND BODY ART:**

The Bureau of Tobacco and Body Art administers regulatory and educational programs designed to prevent the sale of tobacco products to minors, minimize exposure to excessive levels of second-hand smoke and minimize the risk of infection inherent in tattooing and piercing procedures. This is accomplished through education and enforcement pursuant to the New York State Public Health Law and the Rockland County Sanitary Code.

As in the past, the Bureau devoted a tremendous amount of time and resources to preventing minors from gaining access to tobacco products through enforcement of the Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act (ATUPA). The County offers a NYSDOH Certified Training program for Tobacco Retail Vendors to assist in education and the prevention of tobacco sales to minors. Enforcement of Clean Indoor Air Act (CIAA) through complaint investigation continues to help minimize exposure to second-hand smoke by preventing smoking in public areas including restaurants, workplaces and residential common areas.

During the past year, new body art regulations were implemented. Body art establishments as well as individual practitioners were issued annual permits upon compliance with the regulations.

There is one (1) technical position within the Bureau, with field support from other Environmental Health staff.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Body Art Facility Permits</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Practitioner Permits</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>ATUPA:</b>	
• <b>Compliance Checks</b> .....	<b>875</b>
• <b>Violations</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Smoking Restrictions Complaints/Inquiries</b> .....	<b>329</b>

**WATER POLLUTION CONTROL:**

The Water Pollution Control Bureau regulates all phases of waste-water disposal in the County. Engineering plans are reviewed and approved for the installation of sewer main extensions. Plans for individual sewage disposal systems (SDS) are reviewed and approved after an initial field investigation to assess site conditions. The installations are inspected to ensure proper construction and homeowners are given a Certificate of Approval, which includes a drawing of the septic system with measurements so that the system can be located in the future for maintenance purposes. Water pollution complaints are investigated and municipal water pollution control plants are inspected regularly.

New York State Realty Subdivision Laws (Public Health Law and Environmental Conservation Law) requires that subdivisions of 5 lots or more obtain Health Department approval. If a property is subdivided into less than 5 lots, but additional lots are created by subdivision within a three-year period so that the total number of lots is equal to or greater than 5, Health Department approval is then needed.

The Bureau has also been delegated the authority to approve all sewer extensions by the NYSDEC. In addition, the Bureau also approves “private” collection systems found in such places as condominium complexes and office parks.

The Bureau also oversees the investigation of construction related stormwater management complaints in cooperation with the NYSDEC. Technical support is provided to the Bureau of Mosquito Control in the review of stormwater management plans.

There is one (1) technical position within this Bureau, with field support from the Bureau of Housing.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Subdivisions Approved</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>NYSDEC Plan Approvals</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>SDS Soil Tests Witnessed</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>SDS Plans Reviewed</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>SDS Repair Plans Reviewed</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>SDS Inspections</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Complaints Investigated</b> .....	<b>160</b>

**WATER SUPPLY:**

The Bureau of Water Supply enforces New York State and Rockland County Sanitary Code regulations to assure safe drinking water for residents of Rockland County. This mandate is accomplished through water quality analyses of public and private water supplies; inspections of public water supply facilities; review of water supply operator certifications; review of plans for modifications to public water supply systems; tracking of water supply interruptions to ensure appropriate remedial action and notification; and investigation of complaints. This Bureau also conducts hydrogeological assessments to address protection and maintenance of potable water resources. In 2009 the Bureau conducted and completed a study in collaboration with the Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory and United Water New York focused on trying to understand the processes by which arsenic is transported, and sometimes concentrated in the County’s ground water. Additionally, the Bureau reviews applications for aquatic weed control, conducts special studies on the water quality from other sources consumed by the public and provides engineering assistance to the Bureau of Food and Recreation by reviewing plans for new or modified construction of public swimming pools.

Our geologist provides technical assistance to the Petroleum Bulk Storage Program in the review and oversight of environmental investigations conducted under the regulatory jurisdiction of the NYSDEC or the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

We are in the final year of a comprehensive five-year evaluation of Rockland’s water resources being conducted under a cooperative agreement between Rockland County, the United States Geologic Survey (USGS) and NYSDEC. The USGS presented a summary of the study results during a recent meeting with the Water Supply Bureau and the County Executive. The formal report is undergoing final review and will be published within the next few months. It is anticipated that the outcome of this study will help determine the availability and limitations of water resources in Rockland County, thus allowing better management of this resource to meet both current and future demands.

The Water Supply Bureau is also responsible for management of data generated by and enforcement of the Rockland County Private Well Testing Law. As a result of growing community awareness of the law and of the potential penalties associated with non-compliance, the overall level of voluntary compliance has increased. Our staff continues to work in cooperation with Housing Bureau staff to identify rental properties that may be using private wells that require testing pursuant to the Private Well Testing Law. Furthermore, we work to ensure that all new water supplies and resource evaluation wells are properly installed pursuant to NYS and Rockland County standards, and that unused wells are properly decommissioned. We are currently working on revisions to Article II of the Rockland County Sanitary Code that will address geothermal well construction and permitting requirements more explicitly.

There are four (4) technical positions within this Bureau, with additional field support from the Bureau of Housing for collection of water samples.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Registered</u>	<u>Inspected</u>
<b>Community Water Supplies</b> .....	<b>36</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Non-Transient Water Supplies</b> .....	<b>14</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Non-Community Water Supplies</b> .....	<b>33</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Total</u>	
<b>Plan Reviews:</b>		
• <b>Water Supply</b> .....	<b>43</b>	
• <b>Backflow Prevention</b> .....	<b>146</b>	
• <b>Swimming Pools</b> .....	<b>107</b>	
<b>Operator Certifications Reviewed</b> .....	<b>5</b>	
<b>Well Permits Issued</b> .....	<b>115</b>	
<b>Private Well Testing Law:</b>		
• <b>Results Received</b> .....	<b>153</b>	
• <b>Results Exceeding Standards</b> .....	<b>90</b>	

<u>Program</u>	<u>Legal Actions Taken</u>	<u>Fines Collected</u>	<u>Fees Collected</u>
Administration (FOIL).....	0.....	0.....	595.....
Air Pollution.....	0.....	0.....	75,745.....
Food & Recreation.....	37.....	49,613.....	397,625.....
Housing.....	73.....	42,283.....	101,242.....
Mosquito Control.....	42.....	12,763.....	101,303.....
Petroleum Bulk Storage.....	22.....	32,850.....	56,575.....
Special Services.....	0.....	300.....	107,740.....
Tobacco & Body Art.....	24.....	13,815.....	6,040.....
Water Pollution.....	4.....	0.....	25,330.....
Water Supply.....	6.....	2,000.....	86,339.....
<b>TOTAL ALL PROGRAMS .....</b>	<b>208.....</b>	<b>\$ 153,624.....</b>	<b>\$ 958,534.....</b>