

City pumps up testing of at-risk supplies

The city has increased its water testing by 20 percent to ensure it's safe to drink in the wake of increased terror threats over the last month, officials said.

The Department of Environmental Protection normally takes more than 41,500 samples a year and performs 594,000 tests in checks for a wide range of targets, including bacteria and chlorine levels.

But since the Sept. 11 attack on the Twin Towers,

"We've stepped [testing] up so much so, we've had to contract out for different analyses."

D.E.P. CHIEF OF STAFF
CHARLES STURCKEN

the agency has intensified testing on samples taken from streams, reservoirs and aqueducts, said DEP Chief of Staff Charles Sturcken.

"We've stepped that up so much so, we've had to contract out for different analyses," Sturcken said. "In some places where we tested weekly, we're now testing on a daily basis."

Testing at 900 sampling stations in the five boroughs also has been stepped up, Sturcken said. He said the new procedures would be in place for "the long term."

The DEP tests are capable of identifying 89 chemicals or toxins. Experts say any biological toxins which might be in the supply would show up in the battery of tests now being taken.

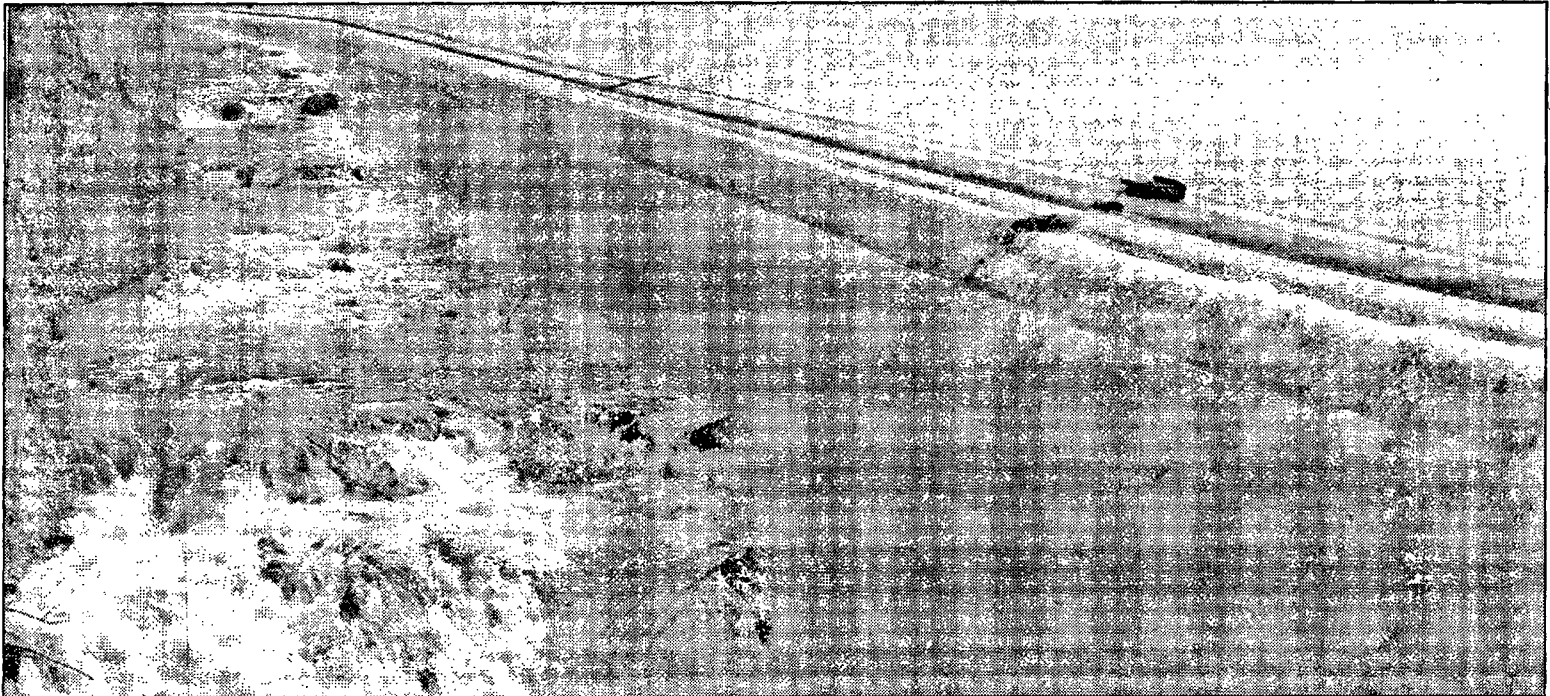
Despite those reassurances, the agency is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to come up with a series of new tests that would pinpoint the introduction of a biological threat in the water supply, Sturcken said.

In addition to increased water sampling, the DEP has 25 boats patrolling reservoirs.

The DEP has also set up a hot line for people who live in the watershed area to call if they see any suspicious activity. The number is (888) H2O-SHED.

Al Guart

WATERED-DOWN SAFETY



LIQUID ASSETS: The lack of security at the city's upstate water system has been criticized by watchdogs.

N.Y. Post: Jim Alcorn

Reservoirs vulnerable to attack: report

By AL GUART

EXCLUSIVE

The sprawling network of reservoirs, dams and pipelines that supplies the city's drinking water contains easy targets for sabotage and contamination, a confidential city report reveals.

The report slams the security of the 2,000-square-mile watershed network as "inadequate" and "vulnerable to a wide array of threats."

"A successful terrorist disruption of the city's upstate water supply system at any of the key locations described in this document could have the potential to cripple the city's ability to operate on a day-to-day basis," warns the report.

Although the report is nearly four years old — it was completed in December 1997 — the city has yet to implement many of its recommendations, law-enforcement sources said.

Environmental lawyer Bobby Kennedy Jr. claims the city never followed through with a plan in 1999 to ratchet up security around the watershed.

Although the number of Department of Environmental Protection cops guarding the city's water-supply sites was increased to 101 officers under the 1999 plan, the security force was well short of the 451 cops and 711 armed guards posted around the watershed during World War II, Kennedy said.

Findings in the report include:

■ A building at one key reservoir had no roof.

■ Gatehouses at several dams were only secured by standard padlocks.

■ Manholes that led directly into reservoirs were uncovered.

■ Alarm systems were primitive and could easily be disarmed.

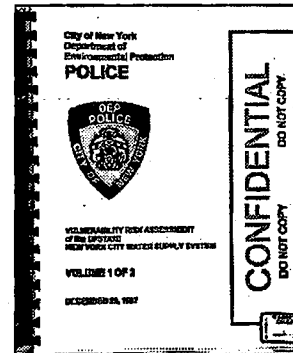
■ Fences did not completely surround some reservoirs and dams.

■ Unprotected air shafts above water tunnels were located in secluded sites.

■ Above-ground pipes connecting two reservoirs were not fenced, had no alarms and were easy to reach from public roads.

The Post has learned that the reservoir building without a roof highlighted in the report had been that way for more than 10 years.

The report also highlighted the distribution system's dependence on computers. In July 1994, a lightning strike caused the computer system to malfunction and discharge hundreds of millions of gallons of stored water. It was several hours before the problem was noticed, the report said.



DAMS DAMNED: The recommendations of this four-year-old report have not been implemented.

The report recommended sweeping changes, including hiring more DEP cops, central station alarm systems, intrusion devices, surveillance cameras, building repairs, floating barricades near dams and fences around shafts and above-ground pipes.

DEP Chief of Staff Charles Sturcken said the city had spent "millions" on better securing watershed facilities in recent years.

In addition to increasing the number of officers patrolling the area, security had been improved through leasing a helicopter service to patrol remote areas of reservoirs and installing new locking mechanisms in some buildings, he said.

"We have been working closely with the FBI, the Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies to improve infrastructure security," Sturcken said.

Experts say it would require massive quantities of any substance to contaminate the billions of gallons of water in the city's reservoirs, but critics claim the city should be doing more to address any possible terror threat.

Hush-hush dossier is terrorist's dream

In the wrong hands, the confidential city report on watershed vulnerability obtained by The Post would be a road map on how to sabotage the city's water supply, according to those familiar with its contents.

The two volumes — marked "Confidential: Do Not Copy" — were prepared in 1997 by city Department of Environmental Protection police after the February 1993 World Trade Center bombing raised concerns about possible further terrorism in and

around the city.

Environmental lawyer Bobby Kennedy Jr. described the report as a blueprint for disabling the system.

"I would be very concerned if it was widely disseminated," he said.

The 125-page first volume detailed hundreds of weaknesses in the watershed, from upstate reservoirs and dams to aqueducts and tunnels in and around the city. It contained photographs of many of the problems.

Key facilities with unlocked gates were named, the locations of large quantities of unguarded hazardous chemicals were revealed and information was disclosed about structures without alarms or surveillance cameras.

Using a system of one to five stars, the report also pinpointed the most critical spots in the system that could throw the city into turmoil if there were major interruptions to the water supply.

The second volume contained detailed engineering sketches of

those weak links.

City officials and police were surprised the report had been obtained by The Post.

On Friday, the city asked a judge to order the report be kept confidential.

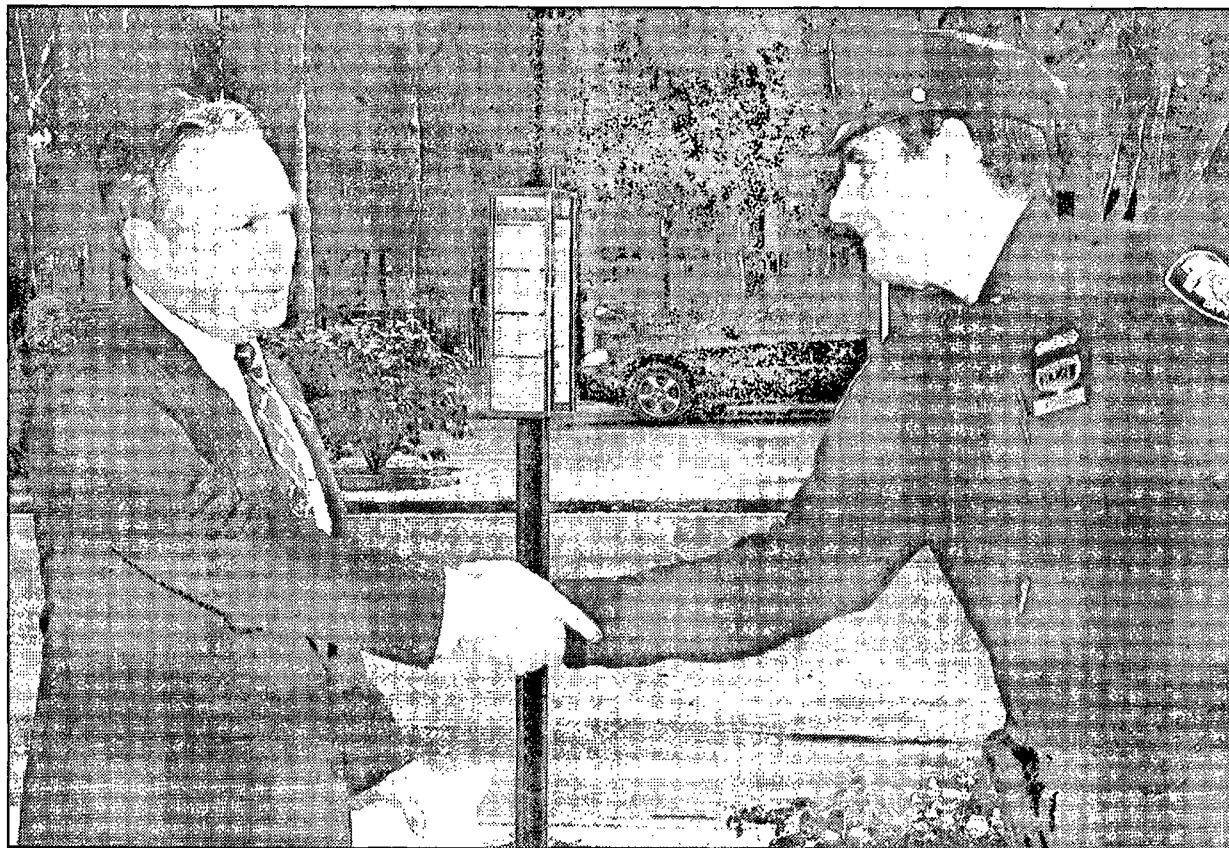
"We have made a motion to seal it," said DEP Chief of Staff Charles Sturcken.

In the interest of national security and the safety of the city's residents, The Post today has opted not to reveal specifics of the report.

Al Guart

RACE FOR CITY HALL

DON'T (DOUBLE)



LONG ARM OF THE LAW: Mayoral candidate Mike Bloomberg greets a Brooklyn cop outside Congregation Mount Sinai yesterday.
Dennis Caruso

Bitter Rev. Al says Green played the 'race card' to beat Ferrer

By MARK STAMEY,
ZACH HABERMAN and
FARRAH WEINSTEIN

The Rev. Al Sharpton had harsh words for mayoral hopeful Mark Green and the Democratic Party yesterday — charging the Democratic nominee did “everything he could to polarize the city.”

“I want to know where the whole Democratic leadership was [during the mayoral runoff],” Sharpton, who’d supported Fernando Ferrer against Green in the runoff, said at a rally at his National Action Network headquarters.

“Wherever they were, stay there — and keep your mouth shut. Don’t be running your mouth off to us.”

Sharpton’s comments came as Green spent a second day taking hits from Ferrer supporters over an attack ad at the end of the race, and a



SHARPTON
Rips Dem bosses.

string of phone calls and fliers urging voters to say no to “Ferrer and Al Sharpton” — which Green’s camp denies knowing about.

But it also came just hours before the bombshell news from the city’s Board of Elections that the unofficial vote totals in the runoff — which Green had narrowly won — had

been overcounted by perhaps as many as 200,000 votes or more.

Surrounding himself with black elected officials in Brooklyn yesterday — just before GOP rival Mike Bloomberg had a private sit-down with Brooklyn Congressman Major Owens — Green strongly denounced the phone calls as “despicable” and “indefensible,” and said he hoped to convince Ferrer supporters to join “our cause.”

Democratic Party leaders worked to try to quell the anger, amid whispers that some Ferrer backers may sit out the general election between Bloomberg and Green — who toned down the edgy swipes they took at each other Friday. Green called Ferrer Friday, but Ferrer didn’t call back.

Ferrer will meet today with some of his most prominent backers — including Sharpton, the

heads of the city’s three biggest unions, and Congressmen Charles Rangel and Gregory Meeks.

Swiping at Democratic party leaders for trying to emphasize the importance of party unity, Sharpton said, “If we’re married to the party, why were you hanging around with hookers all night?”

Sharpton charged Green “decided to play the race card ... The same people who propped you up [are] going to knock you off in November.”

Asked if he could win without Sharpton’s backing, Green quickly said, “Of course,” but also said he’d like to have it.

“I am very confident that I will earn the support of all voters, including black and Latino voters, as I have in the past,” Green said.

Green also insisted, “My campaign had nothing to do with” the Sharpton phone calls and fliers.

Re-tally of 40,000 ballots could give Ferrer runoff win

By MAGGIE HABERMAN

Mark Green’s win of the Democratic mayoral primary runoff over Fernando Ferrer was thrown into question yesterday, as city Board of Elections officials said the unofficial vote tally was off by potentially 40,000 ballots.

It was the latest curve ball in an already unusual mayor’s race thrown into chaos by the World Trade Center disaster, which caused the original Sept. 11 primary to be rescheduled. And it cast a new shadow over the general election.

Board officials insisted they believe the result will hold.

The board will start counting the ballots on the voting machines Wednesday, and expects to be done within 24 hours. They’ll move on to the paper ballots Thursday. Representatives for the candidates will be able to witness the count.

After an acrimonious final week, Green was crowned the winner of Thursday’s runoff with 52 percent of the vote to Ferrer’s 48 percent, in an unofficial count compiled by the Associated Press, which called the race at exactly 10:30 p.m.

That meant Green won by a little under 30,000 votes.

Exit polls that also night showed Green winning, 53 percent to 47 percent.

Board Deputy Executive Director Joseph Gentili, stressing that his office didn’t put together the results reported after Thursday’s runoff, said he thinks the official tally will end up with the same result, because the double-counts seemed to be scattershot throughout the districts.

“As the doubles are pulled out, they should affect each candidate equally — but that’s my opinion,” Gentili said.

He said the unofficial tally — which had turnout around 805,000 — was compared yesterday by

the board with the election officials’ canvas sheets from Thursday, which list everyone who voted and for whom they voted.

Stressing the numbers aren’t official, Gentili said the board put the new tally at 764,750 voters — with Green’s new margin at 21,000, a change of 10,000 votes.

Green campaign spokesman Joe DePlasco said board officials had told them the outcome won’t be affected.

A Ferrer spokesman couldn’t be reached.

But Bronx Democratic County Chairman Roberto Ramirez, a key Ferrer adviser, said he’s concerned it could raise questions about the legitimacy of Green’s nomination.

Even if the results hold, the situation could add new fuel to a rift developing between Green and supporters of Ferrer who believe the public advocate made race a factor in the runoff battle.

For Thursday’s runoff, the board merged some of the city’s election districts onto single voting machines — a standard practice in elections other than general elections.

Gentili said the board sent the AP a list of the districts where machines would be. But apparently votes in possibly hundreds of districts were double-counted.

In several cases, there were votes listed in districts where voting machines weren’t even sent out, he said. Gentili said board officials were scratching their heads the day after the runoff after the incredibly high turnout. The unofficial count indicated more people had voted in the runoff than had in the Sept. 25 primary.

Yet runoffs have always drawn fewer people than the primary. That, in part, prompted officials to start looking at the tally.