

Unlimited leave for city staff sickened at WTC

New York City will grant unlimited sick leave to about 2,000 medics, laborers, engineers and other municipal workers who contracted illnesses from working at Ground Zero in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, according to the mayor's office.

Tuesday's deal with labor union leaders extends the sort of program already in place for cops and firefighters who also got sick while helping to conduct rescue, recovery and cleanup efforts at the site 17 years ago, according to Mayor Bill de Blasio's chief spokesman, Eric Phillips.

The extended program is retroactive — time taken since to deal with a "certified 9/11-related illness will be restored," de Blasio's office said. It applies to current workers.

In a statement, de Blasio said he is happy to be able to provide "unlimited sick leave our brave city workers deserve."

The agreement with District Council 37, the city's largest municipal worker labor union, is expected to serve as the foundation for additional agreements with other unions, de Blasio said.

The bureaucratic procedures are similar to those set up for cops and firefighters.

An emergency medical technician must obtain a certification from an FDNY doctor — akin to the requirement for 9/11-stricken firefighters — and other workers can be certified from the WTC Health Program's Clinical Centers of Excellence.

Eligible workers don't need to exhaust existing leave balances before accessing the unlimited 9/11 time, the mayor's office said.

Henry Garrido, executive director of District Council 37, said the agreement covers employees "who sacrificed profoundly to assist in the rescue and recovery efforts at Ground Zero," granting them "the sick leave they need and deserve."

De Blasio spokesman Raul Contreras estimated the program would cost tens of millions of dollars over the next 15 years. — MATTHEW CHAVES

Town: Single-stream recycling may end

Next Brookhaven operator could pick dual-stream program

BY CARL MACGOWAN
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Brookhaven could disband its single-stream recycling program and return to its old dual-stream system as the town seeks a new company to run its massive processing facility, officials said Tuesday.

Companies bidding to take over the facility in Brookhaven hamlet have been given the option of continuing the town's five-year-old single-stream system — in which residents place glass, paper and other recyclables in a single bin — or switching to dual stream, in which material is placed in separate containers, town Chief of Operations Matt Miner said.

He said several companies have inquired about the town's search for a firm to replace Green Stream Recycling, which announced Monday it would stop operating the Brookhaven facility Oct. 29. Green Stream officials cited collapsing commodities prices stemming from China's decision to curtail purchases of U.S. recyclables.

Bids will be reviewed on Nov. 1, and the town board is expected to immediately approve a new operator, Miner said. The new company will run the town recycling system for at least six months while officials consider long-term options for the program.

"I think there will be bidders for single stream," he said. "It's too early to say. We're single stream now and the bid provides for both. We'll see where it goes."

Brookhaven officials have said Green Stream owes the town about \$1.7 million in unpaid bills and fees. Green Stream is expected to disband because of its financial difficulties.

Green Stream and Brookhaven officials had negotiated a possible settlement for



Brookhaven's plant, which the town says will be used as a storage and transfer facility for next six months.

weeks before talks broke down Monday.

Brookhaven officials have told villages and towns that use the facility that they may opt out of the program. Smithtown is considering other recycling providers, and Southold may do the same.

Huntington officials said their last delivery to the Brookhaven plant will be on Wednesday and they plan to hire a company to process recyclables for the next two months. They expect to hire a new recycling vendor next month and switch to a dual-stream program next year.

"By producing a better curbside product, we will improve the quality of our marketable recyclables and receive more favorable pricing," Supervisor Chad Lupinacci said in an email.

The mayors of Bellport and Patchogue, which also use the

Brookhaven facility, said they have few other options and may stick with the town program.

"We're not going to run around and figure out who else to use. We're going to work with the town," Patchogue Mayor Paul Pontieri said. "Unfortunately, we have nowhere to go with it. The town has to come up with a plan."

A possible switch back to dual-stream recycling is one of several changes anticipated by Brookhaven officials.

The 75,000-square-foot recycling plant will primarily be used as a storage and transfer facility for the next six months while equipment is inspected and the facility is cleaned, Miner said. The new recycling operator and private carters will have to find other facilities to process and sell recyclables, he said.

Carters hired by Brookhaven will continue picking up curbside recycling bins while town

officials review the program, he said.

Green Stream had completed a \$7 million upgrade of the recycling plant in 2013 as the town prepared to launch its single-stream program. At the time, Brookhaven officials had hoped to expand the program islandwide.

Adrienne Esposito, executive director of Farmingdale-based Citizens Campaign for the Environment, said Brookhaven's struggles point to flaws in Long Island recycling programs. She called for improved education to help residents learn what should and should not be placed in recycling bins.

"Single stream is not working like some had hoped," she said. "Dual stream is a more effective way of recycling. If we have to go back, we should go back to that."

With Deon J. Hampton and Sophia Chang