

The Complexities of Training

In an organization as complex and large as the FDNY, different types of training are necessary. This training encompasses administrative functions, as well as operational strategies and tactics. Often, training will focus on operations, such as our new drills for responding to terrorist bus-bombing incidents. But our members also need to be trained in the best ways to keep up with the many other responsibilities that come with the job.

Many of those responsibilities are administrative. The Department currently is enhancing its building inspection procedures, with a new control system developed to standardize the way every Fire Company organizes its Building Inspection and Safety Program (BISP) activities. Prior to this, we also improved the fire prevention training for our members in an effort to increase their ability to handle these important duties as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The new system should make it easier for all Officers to more effectively control a unit's Fire Prevention activities. In June, the Department held classes for the BISP Coordinators in each company. These Lieutenants, as well as their alternates, were brought to the Fire Academy for a day to learn the new system for managing the multiple priorities that must be considered when it comes to building inspections.

The Department also has improved the training in building inspection procedures for all new members coming on the job, as well as for newly promoted Officers. A new curriculum was developed for each rank--from Proby to Deputy Chief--to help members handle their individual responsibilities: whether it's summons procedures training for Probies, administration and problem-solving for Lieutenants and Captains or training in fire and building codes rules and regulations for Battalion and Deputy Chiefs.

To date, 673 Lieutenants, 25 Deputy Chiefs and three Proby classes have received the increased training. The new BISP control system went on-line in late July. There will be an evaluation in September to assess the program's overall effectiveness and identify future training needs for all ranks.



Turning away from the administrative to the operational side of training, in June, we began conducting a series of drills at the Fire Academy to train units for response to a terrorist attack involving a bus bombing. Among the possible scenarios involved in such an incident are multiple vehicle and structure fires, as well as triage incidents and medical treatment for numerous victims. Participants are observed to ensure proper use of radiation-detection meters and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and they are expected to identify potential secondary devices.

Members of the Emergency Medical Service also attend these drills to observe how they can best assist in operations. Eventually, joint Fire/EMS simulated bus-bombing drills will be held. So far, about 15 companies have participated in the drills and the exercises are ongoing.

The FDNY's primary mission is life safety. Whether an event is terrorism or an accident, our members will be on the scene, working to save lives, even if it means facing dangerous conditions themselves. It is crucial that we be prepared no matter what the circumstances. We will continue to provide the training--be it administrative or operational--necessary to best ensure that our members get home to their families and that the public is kept safe from harm.



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photo by FF Raymond Pfeifer
Queens Box 22-8922, Van Wyck Expressway/North Conduit Avenue, March 3, 2008. Overturned 9000-gallon gasoline truck on fire with small pools of fire.



Back Cover

photo by Lieutenant Christopher Phillips, Engine 88
Bronx Box 33-3164, 2089 Washington Avenue/East 180th Street, May 2, 2008.

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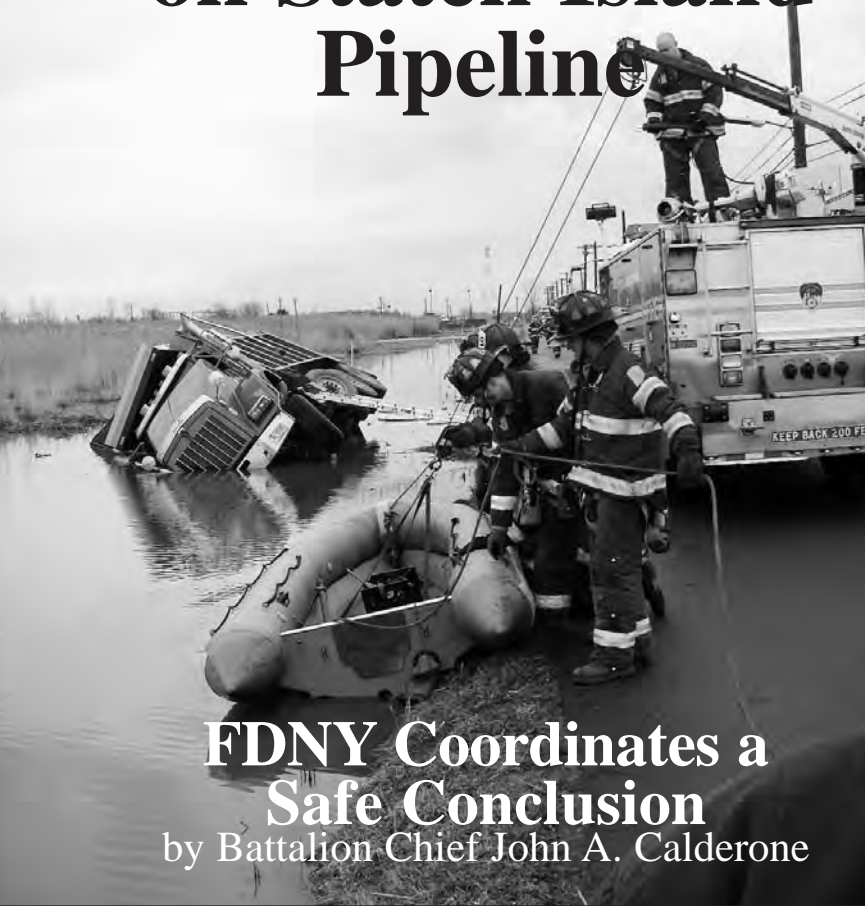
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Dump Truck Lands on Staten Island Pipeline



FDNY Coordinates a Safe Conclusion

by Battalion Chief John A. Calderone

Who could imagine the FDNY responding to a call for a dump truck landing on a natural gas pipeline? That is precisely the scenario faced by FDNY members after the Staten Island Central Office received a telephone call at 0758 hours on January 14, 2008, for an overturned truck at the former GATX facility at 500 Western Avenue, located in a remote corner of the Island. This is a 700-acre facility that originally was opened in 1928 by Gulf Oil Corporation as a tank farm, known as Gulfport. In 1990, the facility was acquired by GATX.

At the height of its operation, there were approximately 100 fuel storage tanks, administrative and support structures, a wharf to accommodate ocean-going tankers, a network of roadways, distribution piping, a yard hydrant system and the facility's own fire department, which operated two apparatus. The facility was shut down and demolished over a period of several years, starting in 2000. Subsequently, the site was purchased by International Speedway Corporation to develop a NASCAR racetrack. As part of that purchase, it was necessary to remediate soil that had become contaminated over the years when the property was used as a fuel storage facility. Although plans for the racetrack were dropped, the site remediation was continuing.

Initially, Engine 158 and Ladder 86 were dispatched. When these units arrived at 0805 hours, they immediately requested that Battalion 22 be assigned. At 0822 hours, Lieutenant Gary Van Pelt, Ladder 86, provided a preliminary report, indicating an overturned dump truck carrying contaminated soil was partially sub-

merged in a marsh and resting on a natural gas pipeline. Based on this report, Battalion Chief John Calderone, Battalion 22, while still responding, requested that Rescue 5, Haz-Mat 1 and Haz-Mat Engine 165 be assigned. The Rescue Battalion and Haz-Mat Battalion also were assigned at this time.

Arriving at the scene, Chief Calderone performed an initial size-up. The incident was located approximately 2500 feet south of the main plant entrance on Western Avenue. The truck, carrying a load of contaminated soil, was in the process of leaving the facility. Based on tire tracks, the right wheels of the dump truck had left the roadway and the truck traveled for approximately 100 feet, tilted on an angle, along an embankment before its left wheels left the roadway. It then entered the water, a moat adjacent to the main plant entrance road, and traveled approximately 50 feet before coming to rest on its side, with some of its load spilled into the water.

There were numerous markers in front of and behind the truck, as well as along its east side, that indicated the presence of multiple pipelines. The closest two pipelines, the ones that eventually were determined as compromised by the truck, were both 12 inches in diameter and carrying natural gas at 700 psi. These were operated by Spectra Energy.

The next pipeline, to the east of the truck, was a 12-inch petroleum pipeline operated by IMTT. The fourth pipeline, also operated by Spectra Energy, was a 30-inch, 700-psi natural gas pipeline that supplied a large area of the Northeast. The last two mentioned pipelines were both 14-inch petroleum pipelines operated by Colonial Pipeline.

There was immediate concern about these pipelines and confusion over how deep they were buried. Plant personnel were telling FDNY units that the pipelines beneath the truck were 36 inches down, but when questioned, could not say down from what. FDNY members received various answers that included from the roadway surface, from the top of the water (which obviously varied) and beneath the dirt (which was beneath the water). It became obvious that the Fire Department would have to determine the depth. Tactical Support Unit 2 was special-called at 0824 hours to the scene for use of their boat.

At this point, Deputy Chief Roger Sakowich, Division 8, arrived at 0840 hours. After being briefed, he assumed command. Chief Calderone was designated as Operations.

The nearest hydrants in either direction were located quite a distance from the incident. Additional engine companies and two



Tactical Support Unit 2 was special-called to the scene for use of their boat so that FDNY could determine the depth of the affected pipelines.

all photos by FFs Mike Hansen, Ladder 79, and Ed Franklin, Engine 156