

A State of Preparedness

I believe it is always important to reflect on how far the Department has come since September 11th, so that we can understand the strong position we are in right now as a major contributor to the well-being and public safety of New York City. The investments in technology, equipment, training and overall preparedness allows the FDNY to be much more flexible and adaptable to the current environment of terrorism and complex incidents.

As you will read in this edition of *WNYF*, the FDNY no longer is just a “reactive” fire department, waiting for the bell to ring. By collaborating with many City agencies and external partners, we have dramatically raised our level of involvement to a new standard, while still fulfilling our primary role of fighting fires in a safer, more efficient manner. Through education, intelligence-sharing and improving pre-hospital medical care, the FDNY has become a proactive voice for public safety in New York City, as well as nationally.

By enhancing technology and relying on more data-driven knowledge, we have improved the delivery of services and expanded our performance significantly during the past 12 years. It wasn't easy and required buy-in from all levels of the Department. One of the very first actions we took following 9/11 was to bring in McKinsey & Company, a world-renowned consulting agency. Their experts partnered with uniformed and civilian members of the Department to better determine what went right and wrong, build on the positives, correct the negatives and develop a plan that would make FDNY better prepared for future catastrophic incidents.

In Part I of the resulting document, *Increasing FDNY's Preparedness*, Fire Operations and EMS response on September 11 were dissected. In Part II, the following recommendations were made:

- Increase operational preparedness.
- Improve planning and management.
- Improve communications and technology capabilities.
- Enhance the system for family and member support services.

Much of what you will read in the following pages elaborates on how the Department addressed these recommendations.



Chief of Department Edward S. Kilduff confers with Commissioner Salvatore J. Cassano at Metro North train derailment, north of Spuyten Duyvil train station in the Bronx, December 1, 2013. At right, Chief of Operations James E. Esposito and Chief of Rescue Operations Stephen Geraghty discuss the situation.

photo by Steve Spak

Incidents to Which FDNY Responds

Incidents faced today by FDNY members are multi-faceted and varied. Only a few years ago, some of the functions listed below were never in the mix for FDNY response. Not only has the Department solidified its core competencies, it has diversified and become more specialized to capably handle all challenges.

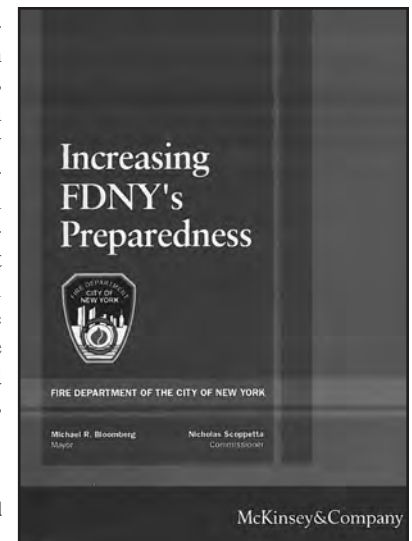
- Structural and non-structural fires.
- Medical emergencies and mass-casualty incidents.
- Gas, electric, steam, water and sewer utility emergencies/disruptions.
- Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, incendiary and explosive terrorist acts.
- Fire prevention, inspection, education, enforcement and evacuation.
- Arson, cause/origin, intelligence, law enforcement and site security relating to fire investigation.
- Search, rescue and recovery during structural collapses.
- Incident response and planning regarding hazardous materials.
- Land, air, rail and water transportation incidents.
- Hurricanes, storms, earthquakes, snow and heat that cause catastrophic weather events.
- Planning and response for special events and dignitary protection.

Following this analysis, in September 2002, the work force was decentralized. The number of Staff Chiefs was increased from 10 to 20. The borough command structure was reinstated, providing more local supervision, with each Staff Chief given a specific assignment to address the rebuilding process.

The Department hired and trained thousands of new Firefighters (see nearby chart) and EMTs, replaced its damaged fleet of apparatus and redefined its mission by training every member in terrorism awareness and the Incident Command System (ICS). FDNY established a *tiered response* matrix (see graphic) by enhancing the Special Operations Command (SOC) and training and equipping dozens of specialized field units to respond to major emergencies, haz-mat events and mass-casualty incidents.

FDNY leadership introduced many technological and equipment enhancements that have made Firefighters safer and more robust today than before September 11, 2001. One such improvement was establishing the Fire Department Operation Center (FDOC) in 2006, which greatly increased the Department's overall situational awareness and coordination capabilities. The FDOC functions as a clearinghouse for all Department activity and becomes a command platform for major incidents. This state-of-the-art, \$17 million communications facility was designed to gather real-time information from local and national sources to support FDNY operations at complex incidents. Critical information and intelligence can be shared with on-scene Incident Commanders and multiple tasks and resources

Increasing FDNY's Preparedness was instrumental in the Fire Department's ability to rebuild and move forward following 9/11.



A Young Department

Rebuilding FDNY following 9/11 reveals that the Department has become very young. These statistics reinforce that everyone must train and everyone must get involved in planning and developing the drills. While the focus may be on the Probationary Firefighter, the only way to improve is to drill and train until the evolution becomes second nature for all.

Uniform Promotions Since 9/11/2001

Chief of Department--6
 Assistant Chief--27
 Deputy Assistant Chief--38
 Deputy Chief--115
 Battalion Chief--417
 Captain--1037
 Lieutenant--2246
 Supervising Fire Marshal--36
 Fire Marshal--212
 Pilot--7
 Marine Engineer--22
 Wiper--31
Total--4194

Firefighter Appointments Between January 2001 and December 2013

2001--719 (October 28, 2001, class was 313.)
 2002--924
 2003--1238
 2004--757
 2005--740
 2006--769
 2007--601
 2008--318
 2009--0
 2010--0
 2011--0
 2012--0
 2013--637

Uniform Retirements, January 2001 to December 2013

2001--531
 2002--1221
 2003--699
 2004--520
 2005--510
 2006--501
 2007--477
 2008--426
 2009--359
 2010--335
 2011--414
 2012--377
 2013--370

HazMat Tiered Response



The Haz-Mat Tiered Response is illustrated above. A tiered response also was developed for Marine Operations.



FDNY's state-of-the-art Fire Department Operation Center, the communications hub that allows FDNY Staff to share critical information and intelligence with on-scene Incident Commanders.

can be managed by Headquarters staff from a secure location. The FDOC also has served as the planning site for the IMT and EMS Status Group during major incidents.

In many ways, the terrible loss we suffered on September 11th acted as a catalyst to be a more resilient agency, responsive to a broader range of emergencies. Our members proved, time and again, that they are up to the challenge. Most of the initiatives that we see today were developed in-house and placed in service as a testament to the Firefighters who were killed at the World Trade Center. The fact that the FDNY is better trained, prepared and equipped for any type of emergency should give every member reason to be proud of his/her role in the FDNY.