

Bureau of Operations

The Bureau of Operations has undertaken many new initiatives, programs and procedures during the past 12 years. In order to rebuild the New York City Fire Department from both the tragic losses experienced on September 11, 2001, and the unusually high retirement rate of its most senior members, the Department restructured its top uniformed ranks by increasing the number of top Staff Chiefs from 10 to 20 and reinstated the Borough Command structure, enhancing the leadership and management capacity of the Department.

Greater continuity results from working with the most senior and experienced Chiefs on a day-to-day basis at Headquarters and in the field. Strengthening the most experienced and capable uniform contingent has allowed the Department to decentralize command and control operations from Headquarters, facilitating the implementation of critical initiatives, such as a more hands-on approach at the local level and closer interaction with community groups, district service cabinets and community boards.

It is crucial that the FDNY has the most up-to-date information available to ensure the safest, most effective operations. The Fire Department Operation Center (FDOC), a \$17 million, state-of-the-art facility, is the hub of a network centric command. The FDOC is equipped to receive and push information in all three domains: It monitors Fire and EMS communications, reviews video images and searches data bases for vital information. It acts as a conduit and filter for information flow from diverse parts of the emergency response system to the scene of an incident and to the Command Staff and senior management. Critical information is transmitted over phone lines, wireless technology, fiber optics and satellite. Incident Commanders can request information from FDOC.

In order to bring technologically advanced information-sharing tools directly to members in the field, the Command Tactical Unit (CTU) was developed. The CTU functions as the eyes and ears of the Fire Department Operation Center (FDOC) on the scene at fires, supplying real-time operational video and data to the Incident Commander at the scene and to the FDOC for multiple-alarm fires,

structural collapses, hazardous materials incidents and other emergency responses. In the case of a major incident or disaster, the CTU can feed live video to the Department of Homeland Security's National Operations Center in Washington, DC.

The Department has placed two new Mobile Command Centers into service. The Mobile Command Centers have served as the FDNY Command Post at large-scale, long-duration incidents as the central contact point for FDNY and other agencies. These vehicles provide the capability of direct inter-agency communications with other City agencies, as well as State and Federal emergency response agencies.



Using cameras, a network system and satellite dish, the CTU is a refitted ambulance that provides vital information to the Incident Commander.

To further integrate Bureaus within the Department, EMS and Fire personnel continue to participate in a number of full-scale drills--including radiological, biological and chemical release incidents--partnering with NYPD, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Health, Office of Emergency Management and a host of other City,

State and Federal agencies. Similarly, FDNY field personnel have been working closely with military and non-military agencies in a broad array of tabletop exercises focused on large-scale incident response.

The Incident Command System (ICS) has been integrated into the everyday FDNY procedures and practices. The Department heartily endorsed the integration of ICS and established two Incident Management Teams (IMTs), which enable FDNY to deploy highly trained, specialized personnel, who are well-versed in ICS principles and functions. The Department has developed an ICS training program for 3000 Officers, Firefighters and EMS personnel, which began in the Fall of 2003. Working with the U.S. Forestry Service, which has extensive experience using ICS at large, long-duration incidents, the FDNY has one all-hazard IMT of 60 FDNY members.

A comprehensive recall program was established to efficiently mobilize all or any group of firefighting personnel to respond to a large-scale emergency. Detailed guidelines and training materials have been developed. Additionally, the Department has modified its staging procedures to ensure that the Incident Commander can effectively maintain command and control of resources deployed at an incident as it escalates.

A comprehensive mutual-aid program was developed to increase the resource pool available through mutual-aid agreements to mobilize a significant amount of resources in a short time. These agreements formalize operations and legalities, allowing FDNY to

Risk Based Inspection System (RBIS)

RBIS is an enhancement/outgrowth of AFID field inspection. This first-of-its-kind application is on-line in every firehouse and helps the Department focus inspection resources on buildings that pose the greatest fire and life safety risks to Firefighters and the public. It is designed to revolutionize FDNY's fire prevention efforts.

plan, train and operate jointly with other jurisdictions in response to large incidents. These agreements include:

- New York State and Nassau County to provide fire service mutual aid
- NYC/REMSCO (Regional Emergency Medical Services Council) for medical service mutual aid within the City
- New Jersey for medical service mutual aid
- New York State-wide EMS Mobilization Plan with the NYS Department of Health.

FDNY officially implemented a Modified Response plan for fire units that will not use lights and sirens when responding to certain non-fire and non-life-threatening emergencies. As a result, Firefighter and public safety is improved and there are fewer accidents while responding to non-fire, non-life-threatening calls. In addition to increasing public and Firefighter safety, Modified Response has improved the coverage FDNY provides by keeping companies closer to their first-due response areas, making them more readily available for priority assignments, such as fires or other life-threatening emergencies.

To improve Firefighter safety, the FDNY introduced new tracking technology in the form of the Electronic Fireground Accountability System (EFAS), which provides on-scene Commanders with the ability to quickly ascertain which members are transmitting *mayday* or emergency messages. The new technology links Firefighter radios (handie-talkies) with on-scene computers that allow Commanders to rapidly identify members in distress and dispatch teams to rescue/assist them.



FDNY members responded on mutual aid (signal 10, working fire) for Manhasset-Lakeville Fire Department, Nassau County, at Queens Box 6398, 1 Northern Boulevard, November 7, 2010. *photo by Allen Epstein*

To improve training and situational awareness for field units, a new web-based computer Kiosk training system called *Diamond-Plate* was installed in all firehouses and EMS stations. The system provides 24/7 information to give Firefighters and EMS personnel real-time operational updates and contains multimedia training in areas that include operations, safety and counterterrorism.

These are several of the key initiatives that the Bureau of Operations has introduced to keep FDNY members prepared, safe and equipped to respond to any emergency.



Department of Homeland Security Grants Since September 11, 2001

Through federal grant programs, such as the Urban Areas Security Initiative, Port Security Grant and Fire Grants, the FDNY has been awarded more than \$400 million in the past 12 years to increase preparedness to terrorism. The following is a partial list of projects funded through grants.

- Two new-generation fireboats with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) response capabilities (multi-year funding)
- State-of-the-art Fire Department Operation Center (a second site, in Staten Island, will be unveiled in the future)
- Haz-Mat response truck and equipment
- Collapse truck and equipment
- Training, apparatus and equipment to deploy units with specialized capabilities, such as Haz-Mat Tech Units, HazTac Ambulances, Decon Engines and SOC Ladder Support Companies
- EMS apparatus for response to mass casualty incidents (MCIs)
- Hurricane response equipment
- Mass casualty incident (MCI) equipment and training
- Exercise management training
- Incident Command System training for Officers
- Emergency Response to Terrorism Training for all Fire and EMS personnel
- Marine firefighting training for land-based units
- Advanced Haz-Mat training
- Emergency response planning
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) for EMS
- Emergency Mobilization Cache
- Rapid Response patrol boats
- Haz-Mat equipment for Marine Division
- Auxiliary pumping system
- Incident Management Team (IMT) training and resources
- Center for Terrorism and Disaster Preparedness (Fort Totten)

SOC Support Ladder Company members perform simulated confined space entry operations in accordance with the FDNY *Training Bulletin*, Confined Space Entry.

photo by then-Lieutenant Joseph M. Jardin

