

Mobile Command Centers

by Battalion Chief John A. Calderone

The Department recently placed two new Mobile Command Centers into service. Each vehicle cost approximately \$570,000. Both apparatus are 2004 Freightliner MT55 chassis with Utilimaster body work. The interior and communications components were outfitted by LDV, a manufacturer specializing in mobile command posts. Both apparatus were purchased with donated funds.

Mobile Command Center 1 is located with Engine 233, Ladder 176 and Field Communications Unit 1 at 25 Rockaway Avenue in Brooklyn. It replaced the former Mobile Command Center, a tractor-trailer built in 1995. This new vehicle was purchased with funds donated by the Leary Firefighters Foundation.

Mobile Command Center 2 is located with Engine 93, Ladder 45 and Battalion 13 at 515 West 181st Street in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan. This apparatus was funded by Councilwoman Madeline Provenzano and the FDNY Fire Safety Education Fund.

These two vehicles are not identical, but the differences are minor. Each is almost 40 feet in length and 12½ feet in height. Most FDNY apparatus are 10½ feet or less in height. This height poses an additional problem for chauffeurs, because the vehicle cannot negotiate many low bridges and some el structures that most FDNY apparatus can traverse.

Each apparatus is equipped with a camera mounted on a 42-foot pneumatic mast that can provide a 360-degree view of the scene around the vehicle. Additionally, each vehicle is equipped with four surveillance cameras, two 40-inch, flat-panel, LCD monitors, a 16-channel digital video recorder, a 40-channel audio recorder for radio and telephone traffic, two 12 kW generators and a 6000-watt pneumatic light tower. There are also state-of-the-art radios, which facilitate interoperability between FDNY and other agencies. The vehicles have the capability to access a video link from NYPD Aviation units, as well as the ability to transmit video and data to the Fire Department Operations Center (FDOC) at FDNY Headquarters.



Mobile Command Center 1 serves as an FDNY Command Post at large-scale, long-duration incidents.



The conference area of the Mobile Command Center is located at the rear of the vehicle.

At the front of each vehicle is a six-position command and control center. A small kitchen and toilet area are located at the center, while a conference room is located at the rear of the vehicles.

The Mobile Command Centers will serve 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. A mobile command center also can be special-called by the Incident Commander when required. Finally, they will be used as the on-scene Command Post at large-scale events involving large numbers of people.



The heart and soul of the FDNY Mobile Command Center--looking forward into the Operations area.

all photos by Battalion Chief John A. Calderone

About the Author...

Battalion Chief John A. Calderone has served the FDNY since 1973. Currently, he is working in Battalion 22. He holds a degree in Fire Protection from New York City Community College and has written extensively on the subject of fire apparatus. He is a regular contributor to WNYF.

