

One Bryant Park

By Deputy Chief Nicholas Corrado

The Bank of America Tower at One Bryant Park is a 1,200-foot skyscraper in the Midtown area of Manhattan. It is located on Sixth Avenue, between 42nd and 43rd Streets, opposite Bryant Park, with an aka address of 1111 6th Avenue. The tower's architectural spire is 255 feet tall, which currently makes this structure the fourth tallest in New York City. The building itself is 55 stories high and contains 2,100,000 square feet of office space, nine different stairways and a total of 11 elevator banks. Serving all floors are the A and B stairs, neither of which is a fire tower. Fifty elevator cars serve the offices and two lead to the New York City subway's mezzanine below ground, servicing the 42nd Street/Bryant Park/Fifth Avenue station.

Fires in commercial high-rise buildings are complex operations and challenging for all ranks. It's important for Officers to transmit a 10-76 signal, even for small fires. Officers must anticipate smoke travel via voids, ducts, elevator shafts and stairways. Small fires may require extensive search operations. Determining the location of fire can be delayed due to large floor areas. Accessing floors above the fire area can be delayed because of locked elevator lobbies.

It is critical to prioritize and ensure that several important initial tactics and procedures are carried out, including:

1. **Identifying fire floor, attack stair and evacuation stair.** Many of these buildings have numerous stairways that service several below-grade levels, including sub-cellars and parking garages.
2. **Elevators.** The control and use of appropriate elevator banks are crucial to access the fire area. A lower bank of elevators that do not service the fire area may be the proper elevator to use. The presence of access stairs also must be considered when choosing the appropriate elevator.
3. **Identifying the Fire Safety Director (FSD).** The FSD should make initial announcements, informing occupants of the emergency and need to evacuate or remain in place. It's important for the FSD to inform evacuating occupants to stay clear of the attack stairway. The FSD should remain at the fire command station for the duration of the incident.
4. **Identifying a building engineer.** The building engineer will help determine the location and status of the HVAC system. He also will help answer questions about oth-



Photo 1—The Bank of America Tower at One Bryant Park, in midtown Manhattan, stands 1,200 feet tall, with 55 stories and 2,100,000 square feet of office space.

er building systems. The engineer should remain at the fire command station for the duration of the incident.

5. **Referencing Building Information Card (BIC) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP).** The BIC can help determine the number of stairways, elevator banks and presence of fire towers and access stairs. The EAP will provide floor plans.
6. **Establishing Sectors and developing a communication plan.** Chief Officers proceeding to upper floors to establish Sectors or Groups must not leave the lobby without obtaining information from the Incident Commander (IC). Information, such as location of Sector, identity of units in that Sector and safest route to the location, should be included. Chief Officers should ensure that units operating in their Sectors are communicating directly to Sector Supervisors.

Members are all aware of the importance of communications. Responding Chiefs must report in with Post radios. In-building repeaters also can help with communications. A repeater radio system is available for use at One Bryant Park (see photo). This kind of system receives a signal on one frequency and simultaneously re-transmits it on another frequency



Photo 2—One Bryant Park features a repeater radio system to enhance communications within the building. For members to use their handie-talkies with this system, the radio repeater is programmed to FDNY frequencies, using channels 11 or 12.

in the same UHF wavelength band. To allow members to use their handie-talkies (HTs) with this system, the radio repeater is programmed to FDNY frequencies, using channels 11 or 12. This system initially could be used by the first-arriving truck Officer, per the *Communications Manual*, chapter 13, and then by Chief Officers as a Command Channel.

Since systems are different for different buildings, units must become familiar with systems in their response areas. The system in One Bryant Park, located at the fire command station, has a panel for each channel. The borough dispatcher, as well as all units on the scene, must be notified of the use of a building repeater. This system is activated by using a 1620 key. Turn the key to the Firefighter Service position. The repeater handset in the lobby works similarly to the Department handset on FDNY apparatus. The member operating the repeater in the lobby can hear audio from a speaker in the panel. A knob on the panel controls the volume. Though the repeater is a beneficial tool, members must be aware of its limitations. Unlike our HT simplex channels, most repeater systems are not designed for numerous simultaneous communications. When more than two members attempt to transmit simultaneously, the system will render itself inoperable. ■

About the Author



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