

Command and Control at Large-Scale Subway Incidents

By Deputy Chief Nicholas Corrado

Chief Officers must anticipate large-scale incidents in the New York City subway system exposing more than one station, including emergency exits. Sectoring the incident as soon as possible will help with coordination. An example of initial sectoring at an incident involving two stations and one emergency exit will require one Sector for each station, one for the emergency exit, staging and triage. The Transit Liaison Officer (TLO) could be considered as another Sector, too. Triage and Transfer Point (TTP) or safe area of refuge (SAF), removal group, technical rescue group, treatment and haz-mat group are among other Sectors or groups that may be established. The span of control can be exceeded easily at a large-scale incident.

Power removal and communication are two important initial considerations at every subway incident. Because radio communication in the underground subway system of NYC can be difficult, each of these initial Sector Supervisors must remain aboveground in order to maintain appropriate communication with Command. The Sector Supervisor will be required to choose the appropriate communication equipment to communicate with units operating underground in that Sector; e.g., repeater, sound-powered phone, etc.

The TLO is a valuable resource. This member will be able to supply information to the Incident Commander (IC), such as locations of incident and stalled trains, estimated number of civilians aboard trains and status of fans. Primary communications with the TLO are via 800 MHz or cell phone.

The subway operational guide—developed largely in part by Assistant Chief Paul Cresci, Chief of Safety (now retired)—is a tremendous tool to help the IC manage an incident in the subway. Chief Officers should become accustomed to reading the guide and have it readily available, as it provides track identification, direction of travel, train line, location of emergency exits and fan plants and other critical information. When requesting power removal, it is necessary to transmit the location, train line, direction and track letter and/or number to the borough dispatcher. When the borough dispatcher confirms power removal, it is also critical that the parameters of



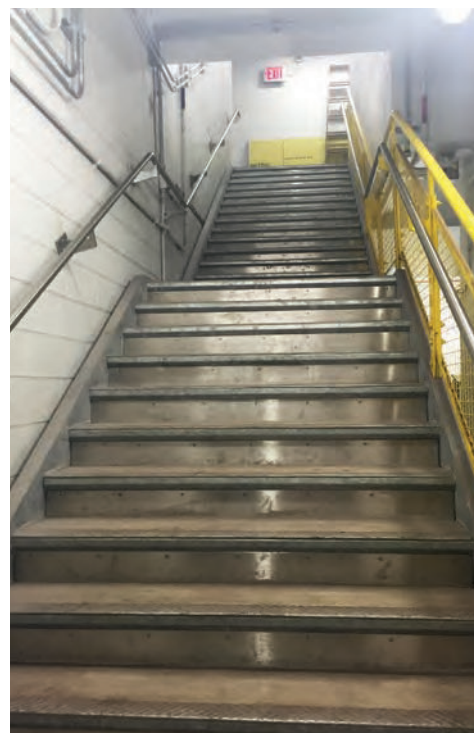
Door for emergency exit.

removal be verified.

The new 2nd Avenue subway line (Q) in Manhattan—running from 63rd to 96th Streets—and future subway lines will not be constructed with emergency exits between stations. Each station has a fireproof refuge area with stairs leading to street level for commuters to use for evacuation. This new line also provides street-level emergency control rooms for each station. These control rooms provide communication with the track level, camera feeds, alarm panels and station drawings. ■

References

1. "Repeater System Use in the Subway," by then-Deputy Chief Paul Cresci, in the 1st/2006 issue of *WNYF*.
2. "Engine Company Transit Tactics," by Lieu-



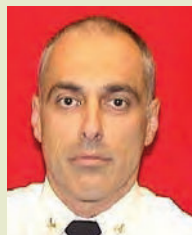
Stairs leading to street level for evacuation of commuters.



Directions to fireproof refuge area.

tenant Robert A. Wilson, in this issue of *WNYF*.

3. "FDNY Vehicle Repeater Systems," by Deputy Chiefs Peter J. Hart and John Mooney, in the 4th/2007 issue of *WNYF*.
4. "Sound-Powered Telephones," by Deputy Chief Peter J. Hart (retired), in the 2nd/2009 issue of *WNYF*.



About the Author

Deputy Chief Nicholas Corrado has served the FDNY since 1991. He is assigned to Division 3. He has written several articles for *WNYF*, including authoring the Mega-High-Rise Buildings in Manhattan column.