

Increased Investigations and Education Underscore FDNY's Commitment to Public Safety

By Ronald R. Spadafora,
Deputy Assistant Chief

The FDNY has once again bolstered its inspection and enforcement efforts to enhance the safety of all New Yorkers in places of public assembly. The recent tragic events that occurred in Chicago and Rhode Island demonstrate all too well the need for constant vigilance by all members of the Fire Department. In the weeks following those tragedies, the Department has taken numerous steps to increase inspections and enhance overall awareness of fire safety requirements.

On Friday, February 21, field units were ordered to perform surveillance on active social club vacancies throughout the city to insure compliance. Subsequently, on Thursday, February 27, the FDNY established two additional Licensed

Places of Public Assembly (LPPA) Night Team units, comprised of Captains and Lieutenants.

The following Friday, February 28, field units were once again sent out to perform surveillance on all active social club vacancies and active cabaret vacancies. The enhanced surveillance activity during these two weekends alone produced nearly 400 inspections and the issuance of 6 vacate orders, 29 summonses, 41 violation orders and 9 NOV's.

That same weekend administrative companies performed educational inspection visits at every designated cabaret and social club in the Bureau of Fire Prevention's cabaret and social club accounts database list—which accounts for more than 350 occupancies. The Department's objective was to deliver a six-page document to the owner, man-

ager, or responsible person-in-charge at every location indicated on the list.

The document, signed by the Fire Commissioner and the Chief of the Department, re-emphasized the fire safety requirements for social clubs and cabarets as mandated by the FDNY and the New York City Administrative Code. The requirements for businesses operating as cabarets or social clubs include: fire guards; exits and emergency lighting; fire alarms; sprinkler systems; portable fire extinguishers; special effects and pyrotechnics; and paperwork.

It is imperative that every member of the Department becomes familiar with the contents of this document for their own edification and conveyance to the public. You can find a copy of the document on FDNY's Intranet site by going to www.fdnyc.org.

Phase One of FDNY's New Communications System Successfully Deployed to the Field

By Peter Hayden,
Assistant Chief of Operations

As McKinsey and Company worked with the Fire Department to analyze our response to the World Trade Center on 9/11, it quickly became clear that fireground communications is extremely important. A main portion of the McKinsey study, therefore, focused on establishing a new communications system that would adequately address the needs of our first responders.

Following these recommendations, the Fire Department set out to improve its communications system by switching from our old VHF Saber and MX330 handie talkies to the new UHF Motorola XTS3500R—a more powerful handie talkie that features an Emergency Alert Button.

The Department further enhanced this new system by deploying 45 watt Post radios capable of establishing a Command Channel in many difficult communications environments. Captain Mike Stein

(Ret.) created the prototype of this powerful radio, which was later manufactured by Altec Radio Corporation. These Post radios are presently deployed in selected Battalions around the City.

Vehicular Repeaters have also been installed in Battalion vehicles to amplify signals sent out in high rise fire situations. The vehicular cross-band repeater links two separate radios—a high-wattage UHF and lower-wattage VHF radio—and helps facilitate communications between the lobby command post and the upper floors of a high rise building.

Radio designers at Motorola, together with FDNY members, are also currently testing the proposed "SmartMic," a remote speaker/microphone which offers easy access to many of

the handie-talkie's key features, including channel selection, volume control, and the emergency alert button.

FDNY Operations has been closely tracking the progress of our new communications system, which was deployed to the field in early February. Throughout the weeks following the rollout of the new system, we have been collecting feedback and working tirelessly so these radios may perform to their maximum potential. Your feedback and input are extremely important, as it will help shape the future development of our communications system and its ability to best serve the needs of our members.

