



## IMPROVING OUR PREPAREDNESS

Since the World Trade Center attacks, this Fire Department has not wavered from its commitment to prepare all members for the full spectrum of threats and risks now directed at our city. New York City is and will continue to be a target for terrorists. It remains our responsibility to do everything we can to prepare ourselves for the possibility of another attack or catastrophe. Our latest major preparedness initiative involves formal training in the Incident Command System. By using a standard set of organizational and management procedures, the Incident Command System provides a framework to handle any incident, regardless of size, scope or type. This means that if you are the first arriving officer at the scene, you must know how to lay the groundwork for the rest of the incident's response and management, including appropriate measures to ensure the safety of members. Originally developed during the 1970s in response to a series of major wildfires that raged through southern California, we have already operated under about two-thirds of the system. Now we want to fully implement our ICS training initiatives. Using money received from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, training begins this month for all officers in Fire Operations and EMS Command. We believe in ICS. We are going to live by it. We think it's the best way to respond to any major catastrophe.

Yet the ICS program is merely the latest among several new and significant training initiatives in the FDNY. Recently, our two Incident Management Teams completed field training out west with the U.S. Forest Service, following weeks of classroom training and simulated exercises designed to prepare them for managing large-scale incidents. (The IMT training program for our personnel was tailored specifically for operations in an urban environment.) We have also provided advanced Haz Mat training to 21 ladder companies so that they will be able to support our dedicated Haz Mat companies and other SOC units. In addition, we will soon train four engine companies to the level

of Haz Mat Technician, with 80 hours of training equal to what our Squad and Rescue members have. Our staff chiefs continue to apply the lessons they learned at our FDNY Officers Management Institute, which we developed with Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (a second group of deputy fire chiefs and EMS chiefs are now enrolled in this ongoing program). We are also beginning a partnership with West Point's Combating Terrorism Center (see more regarding this on page 4 of this issue).

As the largest and most respected firefighting organization in the world, it's sometimes easy to assume we have a monopoly on expertise. Unfortunately, we don't. It's important that we continue opening our eyes and ears to the experiences of those around us. In that vein, we recently welcomed Russian President Vladimir Putin to Randall's Island, where he watched some training drills we held with Russian firefighters. Putin speaks little English and I speak even less Russian, but he was able to convey the great respect that his country has for what we do. In fact, we hope to send some of our members to Russia for a reciprocal visit and training session. We have also been holding discussions with Israeli emergency responders, who respond to suicide bombings and other major emergencies on an almost daily basis. These opportunities for training and information sharing are vital to better understanding the new and potentially dangerous situations our members must prepare for.

So far, the equipment, procedures and initiatives adopted since 9/11 have improved our ability to respond more effectively and more safely. Our new radio communications system clearly is a vast improvement; radiation detectors on every apparatus provide for safer operations; more members trained to handle Haz Mat incidents expands our capability in this critical area; a new recall plan is in effect; and a decentralized Borough Command system gives us more senior chief officers available on a daily basis to manage field operations and respond in the event of a major incident or multiple incidents.

Recent major incidents have put to the test some of the changes we've implemented since 9/11. Specifically, the August blackout required a coordinated and effective response beginning with management at the top. Chief of Operations



**Commissioner's Message**

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*Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor, City of New York*  
*Nicholas Scoppetta, NYC Fire Commissioner*

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Sal Cassano ran citywide operations from our Fire Operations Center at HQ, with the assistance from Borough Commanders who supervised and monitored situations in their respective areas. This was a perfect example of implementing a new strategy developed after September 11, i.e., managing a large incident or multiple incidents from FOC. Chief Cassano first ramped up levels of manpower and equipment to handle a possible increase in activity levels - both for Fire and EMS. This decision proved critical. In the 24-hour period that followed, EMS handled roughly double the number of calls and the number of structural fires was more than four times the norm. With an NYPD liaison present at FOC, Chief Cassano was quickly able to inquire - and get answers - regarding the possibility of fire activity due to possible civil unrest. (It turned out there was little looting, but having the answers allowed him to manage resources accordingly.) As a result, we were able to demonstrate a high level of interagency coordination between the

FDNY and NYPD. Ultimately, the men and women in the field - treating patients and responding to dozens of structural fires, elevator emergencies, etc. - were the real heroes who performed admirably and went above and beyond in many other ways.

A terrific job was done by everyone, and in terms of managing the incident we were aided greatly by the changes we have advanced in the last two years. We will continue to seek better equipment, training and procedures that will allow you to be better prepared - and better protected - as you perform the selfless and dedicated work of making this city a safer place for all who live and work here.



## FDNY HONORS ITS FALLEN

After a two-year absence, the FDNY gathered October 12 at the Firemen's Monument on 100th Street and Riverside Drive to honor the members who had died within the past year. More than 6,000 members of the Department attended the solemn ceremony, which also recognized all 1,126 members during the history of the FDNY who have given their lives protecting New York City. Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Commissioner Scoppetta and Chief of Department Frank Cruthers addressed the crowd, thanking the active members for their selfless service and remembering those who made the Supreme Sacrifice.

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**J**AMES O'SHEA, of Ladder 127, suffered a fatal heart attack September 27 after fighting a fire in Kew Gardens Hills. The fire was later deemed incendiary and an arrest has been made. Firefighter O'Shea's death was the first line-of-duty death since September 11, 2001. He spent the past 17 years in the Department working at busy houses in Brooklyn and Queens. He was known for taking rookie firefighters under his wing, for learning the techniques of his trade and then passing that knowledge on to others. At a time when we value experience in our department, the loss of a veteran is especially profound.





## VIEW

POINT  
NOVEMBER 2003  
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**FDNY:**

**A 137 YEAR HISTORY**

**OF COMMITMENT,**

**COURAGE**

**&**

**COMPASSION**