

# Improve planning and management

Better planning will enhance FDNY's preparedness by identifying and implementing the most effective methods of responding to events of all kinds, before those events occur. Senior staff chiefs and administrators will be able to establish Department-wide priorities and ensure that individuals are working together toward common goals. Better planning and management will also help the Department efficiently address necessary changes in its response systems, procedures, policies and skill sets. As a result, we recommend that the FDNY:

- 1) Enhance its planning and management processes.
- 2) Expand and reorganize its Operational Planning Unit.

## **1) ENHANCE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT PROCESSES**

The key to effective planning is the creation of a formal Annual Plan, consisting of clear objectives, along with initiatives designed to meet those objectives. FDNY should enhance its planning by instituting a formal process to track the performance of the Department and its bureaus, create initiatives, revise them when necessary, track their execution and incorporate them into the Annual Plan. This process of continuous planning will:

- ¶ Enhance the ability of the Department's senior leaders to shape and manage the Department's readiness and efficiency.
- ¶ Improve coordination among FDNY bureaus.
- ¶ Increase the transparency of the objectives, roles, and responsibilities associated with each initiative to all parties involved.

We recommend that the Department form a Planning Oversight Committee (POC) to lead the planning process, supported by the existing Management Analysis and Planning (MAP) group. The POC should be comprised of the Fire Commissioner, Chief of Department, Chiefs of Fire and EMS Operations, and Deputy Commissioners of Administration, Management & Planning, Legal, and Intergovernmental Affairs.

The Planning Oversight Committee should be responsible for approving and overseeing the execution of FDNY's Annual Plan and evaluating, prioritizing and assigning funding for all new initiatives within that plan. It should also review the

status of the Plan throughout the year and discuss and approve amendments, including new or modified initiatives within individual FDNY bureaus, or across multiple bureaus. The POC should meet monthly to discuss the progress of ongoing initiatives, address any roadblocks in the way of major initiatives, and assess the overall performance of the Department and its bureaus. In addition, the POC should hold quarterly meetings to discuss funding for new Department initiatives, and to conduct a comprehensive progress review of all major initiatives and overall Department performance.

The MAP group, which currently prepares reports (e.g., Mayor’s Management Report), analyzes statistics and coordinates initiatives, should support this new planning and management process. The MAP group will probably have to be expanded with additional personnel to perform its new responsibilities. Below, we describe our recommendations for how the POC and the MAP group should work together to: 1) prepare the Annual Plan, 2) track the progress of all FDNY initiatives and 3) approve new initiatives throughout the year.

### **1.1) Preparing the Annual Plan**

The job of coordinating the creation of the Annual Plan should fall to the MAP Group. At the start of each planning cycle, each FDNY bureau should submit the following to MAP:

- ¶ **The bureau’s year-end objectives**, such as specific, measurable improvements in day-to-day operations, enhancement of preparedness to respond to specific types of emergencies, completion of ongoing initiatives and change programs. Each bureau should also submit in writing specific, measurable performance objectives (including a budget) for the next year, whether or not they require approval of any initiative by the POC.
- ¶ **A comprehensive list of internal bureau initiatives** (new and ongoing) in support of achieving these objectives. Each initiative should include a written discussion of how it supports the objectives of the bureau and the Department, how the bureau and/or the Department would benefit from the initiative, and how the impact of each initiative would be evaluated. Each initiative should have a budget and a timeline (past and future) with specific milestones.
- ¶ **A list of ongoing cross-bureau initiatives** in which the particular bureau is involved. This list should describe the commitment the bureau has made to support each initiative and how each initiative would help the bureau achieve its objectives.

- ¶ **A discussion of the bureau’s overall performance** over the preceding 12 months. This should include how well the bureau has performed against specific metrics and milestones agreed on during the previous planning cycle, as well as a comparison between the budget for each initiative undertaken by the bureau and actual expenditures.
- ¶ **A set of quarterly milestones** over the next calendar year for each internal bureau initiative (ongoing and new). These milestones should be expressed in unambiguous metrics (e.g., overtime, accidents, response time) or in terms of clear achievements for each initiative (e.g., complete testing/certification of equipment, a pilot program in progress, a training program designed and ready to be deployed). The MAP group should track the progress of each bureau to meet these milestones.

The MAP group should compile and synthesize the information received from each bureau, along with its own information on the status of cross-bureau initiatives. In addition, the MAP Group should develop an independent perspective on the performance of different bureaus across multiple dimensions, based on pre-defined metrics it should track throughout the year. It should also develop a list of improvement needs and potential future initiatives for discussion by the POC.

The MAP group should consolidate these pieces into a single document that would be presented to the POC. This document should discuss the “State of the Department” and the progress made on an initiative-by-initiative, bureau-by-bureau basis since the last planning cycle. For large multi-year initiatives, the document should review that portion of the initiative that was to be implemented during that particular year. Finally, the document should list all new initiatives the MAP group believes should be launched over the coming year.

The Planning Oversight Committee should use this document to perform a number of tasks:

- ¶ Create and prioritize new initiatives.
- ¶ Resolve conflicts.
- ¶ Ensure that those working on initiatives are accountable to meet their key milestones.
- ¶ Agree upon key performance targets for each bureau in the Department.
- ¶ Develop a proposed Annual Plan for approval by the Chief of Department and the Commissioner.

Once approved, a summary of the plan should be made accessible to all relevant parties. Bureau initiatives should be prioritized and approved (or disapproved) by the POC based on an evaluation of risks, costs and benefits, and priority status vis-à-vis other initiatives in the Department.

### **1.2) Tracking progress of ongoing FDNY initiatives**

Once each quarter, every bureau should provide the MAP group with a status report on all ongoing internal bureau initiatives, and the performance of the bureau according to pre-determined metrics. The MAP group should keep similar metrics for all cross-bureau initiatives. The MAP group should then create a quarterly report for the Planning Oversight Committee on the progress of every major initiative underway.

The POC should consider the issues in the MAP group's report at a quarterly meeting. The MAP group should document all decisions taken by the POC at this meeting, and work to ensure that those decisions are carried out. Also, following the quarterly meeting, each member of the POC should meet with subordinates to review the status (e.g., performance metrics, timing, issues) of key initiatives under his/her supervision.

### **1.3) Approving new initiatives throughout the year**

In addition to the annual and quarterly planning processes, both the Planning Oversight Committee and the MAP group should be involved in an ongoing process to evaluate and approve new initiatives. This process would have five major steps:

- ¶ **Articulate problems or needs.** Each bureau head wishing to undertake an initiative articulates the problem or need to be addressed, in a preliminary initiative form. If the implementation or impact of the initiative has substantial dependencies on other bureaus, or if funding is needed from outside the primary bureau, the initiative continues in this process, otherwise it is handled by the bureau internally.
- ¶ **Define proposed initiatives.** The MAP group works with bureaus to appoint working committees for each proposed initiative (including a working committee leader) with appropriate representation from all

bureaus involved.<sup>32</sup> It is the MAP group's responsibility to prioritize the formation of these working committees. The committees define the proposed initiative in more detail (e.g., people involved, benefits, metrics, cost estimate, implementation plan, timing, deliverables, and resource needs and commitments from different bureaus).

- ¶ **Prepare proposals to the POC.** The MAP Group should have the ability and discretion to ensure that appropriately detailed information on proposed initiatives is provided in writing before they are brought to the POC (e.g., a clear and concrete articulation of their benefits, costs, resource requirements, discussion of their urgency, and a detailed implementation plan).
- ¶ **Obtain approvals from the POC.** The MAP group schedules a discussion of completed proposals at the next available monthly Planning Oversight Committee meeting. There the POC makes the final go, no-go decision and funding is assigned. Decisions that require an increase in FDNY funding should be made quarterly to coincide with the New York City budget process
- ¶ **Add initiatives to the Annual Plan.** The new initiatives approved by the POC are added to the Annual Plan and the MAP group tracks their progress. The working committee is responsible for implementing the initiatives and the Planning Oversight Committee reviews the status of each initiative and ensures it is completed.

## **2) EXPAND AND REORGANIZE OPERATIONAL PLANNING UNIT**

The FDNY Operational Planning Unit currently creates and maintains the Department's standard operating procedures, schedules resources for specific tasks, coordinates special events, and maintains the FDNY relationship with the city Office of Emergency Management (OEM). We recommend that its roles be expanded to include risk assessment, bureau strategy, and management of technical information for Fire and EMS Operations.

To accomplish this, the Operational Planning Unit should be expanded and re-organized into five Sections: Risk Assessment & Operational Strategy, Policies & Plans, Technical, Resources, and Special Events & Major Operations. The unit should be managed by a Chief of Planning and an Assistant Chief of Planning,

<sup>32</sup> In the case of technology related initiatives, the working committee will be a new Technology Steering Committee, discussed in the Communications and Technology section of this report.

who should also be responsible for maintaining inter-agency relationships at the operational level, overseeing the planning staff at the Fire Department Operations Center and participating in after-incident critiques.

The Operational Planning Unit's new responsibilities should include:

1) conducting a comprehensive risk assessment of potential hazards to various city locations; 2) developing and maintaining an FDNY All-Hazards Emergency Response Plan; 3) expanding technical capabilities; and 4) improving inter-agency coordination. It should also continue to perform existing operational support functions.

### **2.1) Conduct a comprehensive risk assessment**

The Risk Assessment & Operational Strategy Section of the Operational Planning Unit should assist Fire and EMS Operations in developing their quarterly status reports and their portion of the Annual Plan. It should also conduct a comprehensive, citywide risk assessment to find and prioritize potential hazards to various city locations.

Part of the risk assessment includes developing an FDNY risk database. This database should include information on hazards that are unique to specific locations, such as the presence of chemicals or radioactive materials. It should also include threats and vulnerabilities such as an increased risk of explosion, a large daytime population, or an increased threat of attack. The Risk Assessment & Operational Strategy Section should define the database fields and collect, document, and update data for the risk database. It should also disseminate it to all relevant and authorized parties within the Department.

The risk database will provide crucial input to the Risk Assessment & Operational Strategy Section as it prioritizes the hazard or threat levels at different locations. In turn, this prioritization effort will support the Department in developing location-specific pre-plans and event-specific annexes that will support FDNY responders at particularly high-risk locations. These pre-plans may include pre-defined staging areas and information on the best means of egress from the locations. In addition, the prioritization effort will help the Department define the type, frequency, and location of training exercises.

Other government agencies may also possess or create a broader, citywide risk database. However, this database may not immediately be made available to the Department. Until it is made available, the Risk Assessment & Operational Strategy Section should seek information on risks and hazards from other local, state and federal agencies for inclusion in the FDNY risk database. These

agencies might include the NYPD, the State Office for Public Security, and the U.S. Department of Energy.

In addition, it should work with the FDNY field divisions to ensure that the information in the CIDS system on hazards present at each location (e.g., vulnerabilities in building design) and standard operating procedures are up to date.

Ideally, the FDNY risk and hazard assessment and analyses should be conducted in close coordination with any citywide risk assessment to ensure that response plans, resources and priorities are aligned and consistent.

### **2.2) Develop and maintain an FDNY All-Hazards Emergency Response Plan**

The Policies & Plans Section should continue to update FDNY Standard Operating Procedures and policies, but its immediate focus should be developing an FDNY All-Hazards Emergency Response Plan, including emergency-specific annexes on matters such as terrorism and chemical and biological attacks.

This plan should be based on existing emergency response plan templates from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other emergency management organizations. It should include large-incident responsibilities organized by ICS functions, instructions for activation of the Fire Department Operations Center, instructions for use of all communication channels, contingency plans for FDNY Headquarters and firehouses, and detailed steps for making any changes or updates to the plan. The plan should be updated regularly based on feedback gained from tabletop exercises, full-scale drills, and actual events.

The Operational Planning Unit should ensure that other parts of the Department (e.g., Special Operations, Communications) have input into the creation of the All-Hazards plan.

### **2.3) Expand technical capabilities**

A technical specialist should be designated to create a new Technical Section. This person should be dedicated to managing information to create maps, organizational charts, and databases to support the Operational Planning Unit.

#### **2.4) Lead inter-agency coordination at the operational level**

The Chief of Planning and the Assistant Chief of Planning should focus much of their time on representing FDNY in inter-agency coordination matters. They should establish ties with federal, state and local emergency management agencies to promote exchange of critical information, and ensure common command and control structures and terminology are used in plans and procedures.

They should represent the FDNY on emergency response or terrorism-related committees and establish ties with other fire departments and emergency services across the country to exchange information. In addition, they should seek to coordinate the development of plans and procedures (e.g., the FDNY All-Hazards Plan and its annexes) with other agencies such as the city's OEM and the NYPD.

#### **2.5) Continue to perform existing operational support functions**

The Resources Section and the Special Events & Major Operations Section of the Operational Planning Unit should continue to operate much as they do today. The Resources Section should continue to manage response capabilities (e.g., determining which units are out of service) and ambulance deployment, with the assistance of the MAP group. The Special Events & Major Operations Section should continue to develop plans for special events and work with other agencies to coordinate activities (e.g., drills and exercises).