



FIRE DEPARTMENT • CITY OF NEW YORK
Supplement No. 59 to Department Order No. 73
November 1, 2012



**2.1.1 THANK YOU FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT
 IN RESPONSE TO HURRICANE SANDY**

Hurricane Sandy was an unprecedented storm which is continuing to tax our Department at every level. From preparation and planning, to the response during the storm, to the ongoing search and rescue operations and the impending recovery effort and debris removal, this storm has put every one of our members to the test like no storm ever has before.

But what the last several days have proven once again is that no matter the situation or the danger, members of this Department always rise to meet and overcome the challenges placed before them.

Before the storm, Incident Action Plans were created; our Incident Management Team was activated; and hundreds of additional members and special units were put in place to address the expected problems, particularly in flood zones. Firefighters and EMS personnel pre-emptively helped evacuate hospitals, nursing homes, special needs patients and homebound elderly.

Early on during the storm, in midtown Manhattan, a crane 90 stories high threatened to collapse to the street below. Instead of panic on the streets, FDNY members conducted a quick, orderly evacuation of thousands of people in 28 buildings potentially in danger if the damaged crane fell.

As storm conditions worsened Monday evening, call volume increased dramatically throughout the city. By midnight, record-setting numbers of calls for help were received by fire and EMS dispatchers.

Night led to the most serious incidents as the predicted tidal surge flooded hundreds of roadways and homes and plunged large portions of our city into darkness. Thousands of calls were handled by our fire and EMS dispatchers, and units continued to respond. More than 500 people trapped by the floodwaters were rescued by firefighters operating Swift Water boats. Nearly two dozen major fires broke out – including the conflagration that completely destroyed 111 homes and seriously damaged 20 others in Breezy Point, Queens. The conditions endured during these operations – waist deep, flowing ocean water and hurricane force winds – were unprecedented.

During several hospital evacuations, members carried critically ill patients and newborn babies in incubators out of harm's way – down as many as 16 flights of stairs - transporting them to safety.

Through the entire storm, the FDNY once again set the standard for emergency response. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed by the people we serve, and by those around the world. At a press conference regarding the storm damage on Tuesday, President Obama observed, "We've seen incredibly brave firefighters in Queens, waist deep in water battling infernos and rescuing people in boats."

For years now, we have stressed a culture of safety and placed greater emphasis on training than ever before in our Department's proud history. On a night where every single response placed you in grave danger, you responded and operated safely in the most hazardous conditions imaginable.

Many of our members – hundreds, in fact – have been involved in these tireless efforts while their own homes, and their families, have been impacted by the storm. Those members have been putting others before themselves in the most selfless, dedicated way.

We will get through this disaster – together.

We are incredibly proud of how every member of the Department has performed. As the recovery and clean-up efforts continue, we know you will continue to perform in the outstanding manner you have throughout this extraordinary and unprecedented natural disaster.

Thank you for all of your incredible efforts, stay safe, and God Bless.

By Order of: **Salvatore J. Cassano**, *Fire Commissioner*
Edward S. Kilduff, *Chief of Department*