

TERRORISM PREPAREDNESS

*A Special Supplement to Viewpoint***Q&A with the Chief***(continued from p. 3)*

and we will continue to do so in the future. We have also participated in numerous city-wide tabletop exercises coordinated by the Office of Emergency Management, including a two-day multi-agency training exercise at the Con Ed. Learning Center.

Has the Department developed new or modified protocols tailored specifically to these new types of threats?

We have developed a newly revised recall procedure, which allows us to perform a partial recall using specific, predetermined packages. This new procedure will ensure that only the necessary number of personnel respond to a given incident. We have also strengthened our capability to implement the particular recall packages by providing improved logistical support to the recalled members.

Fire and EMS Operations have been working with the Office of Medical Affairs to develop a comprehensive Weapons of Mass Destruction Policy and Procedures Manual. A major component of the manual—incident-specific medical management protocols for the most anticipated WMD events—has already been developed and is being distributed to all EMTs and Paramedics in the field. The Department has also developed a new call type for our CAD system that will identify the symptoms of smallpox so we will respond appropriately.

To address the increased potential for “white powder” calls and other such incidents, we have re-activated the inter-agency Hammer Teams, which consist of Police Officers and Firefighters who patrol high-risk locations, equipped with RadAlert detectors so they can also help monitor for radiological incidents.

Through the help of the Terrorism Pre-

paredness Taskforce, our Special Operations Chiefs are working with experts at the National Laboratories of the Department of Energy to discuss strategies and develop protocols for mitigating releases of chemical and biological agents in subways.

What additional steps have been taken to enhance the Fire Department's preparedness?

Our Office of Medical Affairs monitors health advisories released by the City, State and the Centers for Disease control, and distributes these alerts to EMS field providers and other key commanders in the Department when deemed relevant. Most recently, the Office of Medical Affairs has been closely tracking the newly discovered sudden acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) virus to ensure that we are kept up-to-date on recommended response procedures.

IMT Training Helps Officers, Chiefs Confront the Complexities of Large Incidents

By Joseph Pfeifer,
Deputy Assistant Chief of Operations

An FDNY Incident Management Team consisting of 35 officers completed a two-week training course on March 7, and a second team began training on March 24. The purpose of these training sessions was to familiarize the Fire Department's upper management with the procedures for managing major and complex terrorist incidents over prolonged periods of time.

As part of this training, officers were instructed how to utilize the Incident Command System to meet the particular needs

of the City and safeguard its inhabitants in the event of a terrorist attack. Both groups of IMT trainees have participated in a number of different terrorist attack scenarios, each of which last from 4 to 6 hours and take place in different locations across the city. The training has included an airplane crash with a hazardous materials component, a complex elevated subway derailment over a residential area, and a bombing with a secondary explosion at a major Manhattan tourist site.

Numerous Chiefs and officers worked for weeks to prepare for these exercises by developing the scenarios, creating aerial

maps, resource charts and discussing training topics with the instructors from the US Forest Service. The Commissioner took an active role in the training by attending the initial session and observing one of the scenarios, and Mayor Bloomberg recently attended one of the training sessions.

In-house IMTs will dramatically enhance the Department's ability to rapidly mobilize and sustain the management of a large-scale event over a prolonged period of time.

“This is one of the most exciting initiatives taking place at the Fire Department right now,” said Commissioner Scoppetta.

20 Ladder Companies to Receive Specialized Haz-Mat and Rescue Training

By Michael Weinlein, Assistant Chief,
Special Operations Command

Beginning in April, more than 600 firefighters and officers in 20 ladder companies will receive 80 hours of combined training in Haz-Mat and rescue operations. The training, made possible through a federal grant and administered in part by the IAFF, will help enhance the Department's preparedness for chemical and biological incidents, as well as other

specialized rescue operations.

Forty hours of training will be devoted to Haz-Mat tools such as meters, detectors and chemical protective clothing, as well as skills such as incident identification and protocol. The Haz-Mat portion of the training will culminate in a hands-on scenario. An additional forty hours of training will be devoted to rescue operations including confined space, collapse, and trench collapse operations.

It will take the Department approximately 6 months to train all 600 eligible firefighters and officers, who will be taught in groups of 25. Once trained, these 20 ladder companies will add to the Department's cache of incident management resources, as they will help support the 7 Squads and 5 Rescue companies extensively trained in Haz-Mat and rescue operations, as well as the 8 ladder companies recently trained to use Chemical Protective Clothing.