

MANAGING INCIDENT COMMAND

Firefighters, Police Officers, EMTs and others work cooperatively during every hour of every day in our city. The incidents might be small or - in cases such as the Port Mobil explosion on Staten Island and the August 2003 blackout - they may be large and complex. Yet, regardless of scale, it is a testament to the men and women who do their jobs, day after day, that New York City remains the safest big city in the United States. Crime continues to fall and fire fatalities are at their lowest level in nearly 80 years. None of this would be possible without the dedicated efforts of the city's first responders and the men and women who support them.

Of course, this is also a time of great uncertainty. As the events of 9/11 demonstrated, the city now faces threats from outside her borders, from forces beyond her control. In the wake of 9/11, the federal government mandated that cities formalize their response to terrorist attacks and other major emergencies. A National Incident Management System (NIMS) has been established at the federal level and New York's Citywide Incident Management System (CIMS) will become a part of this larger emergency response framework.

CIMS formalizes our response system - the way we respond every day - by creating a management framework designed to better organize the City's response to emergencies and enhance interagency decision-making and communication. It is an important first step in clarifying issues of command and control at emergencies, which delineates how each agency is to carry out its core competencies.

As I have stated previously, rigorous drills and exercises, along with practical experience gained responding to actual incidents, are crucial to the effective implementation of CIMS. CIMS also creates a review panel to analyze multi-agency responses to incidents and make recommendations to enhance emergency response, which I believe is both constructive and essential.

There has been some misperception about the Department's role as outlined in the CIMS matrix, particularly with respect to Hazardous Materials (HazMat) incidents. As Mayor Bloomberg has stated, the Fire Department will continue to operate as they do now at HazMat incidents. Under the new protocol, FDNY members are still charged with the most important responsibility of all - the responsibility to save lives. That is the highest priority under CIMS and it is one of the Department's core competencies. Provided that life safety operations are not interfered with, the NYPD can immediately begin an assessment and investigation, and gather evidence. Then, the Fire Department will take steps to mitigate the hazardous materials condition and perform mass decontamination, if necessary. CIMS puts in writing the common sense approach to joint operation that we have functioned under for years.

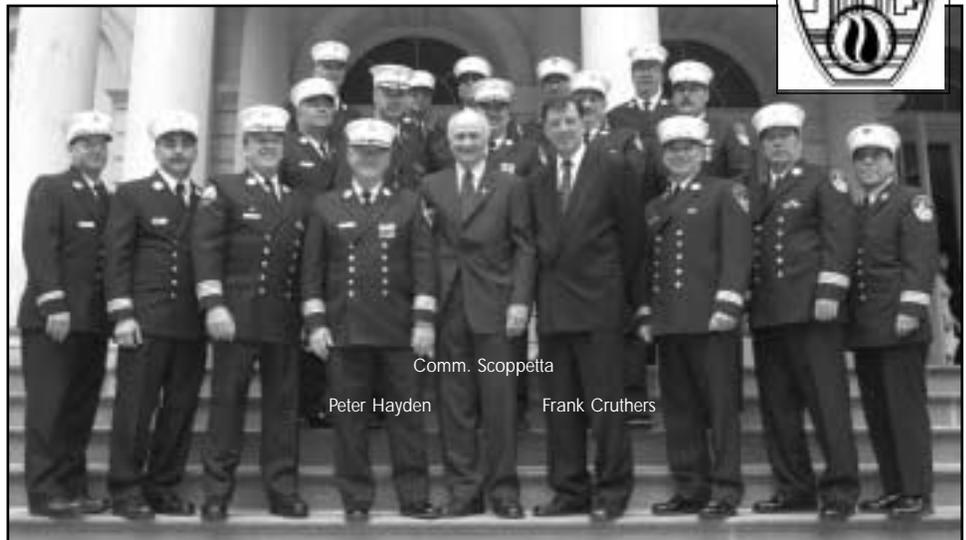
I never cease to be impressed by what I witness virtually every day: the competence, skill and commitment of our Fire and EMS personnel who risk their own lives to save others. I am sure that all of those involved in the planning and execution of CIMS - whether it is the NYPD, DEP, or one of the many city agencies we work with - would agree that New York City is unsurpassed in its emergency response capabilities. And, I am confident that CIMS will enhance the Department's performance of its roles and responsibilities.

CIMS is an important framework upon which all New York City emergency response agencies will build, through the development of procedures, interagency training and drills, post-incident critiques, and the flexibility to refine the system when needed.

The New York City Fire Department continues to rebuild itself through the strength of its members and through the courage of its leaders. I recently promoted Frank Cruthers to First Deputy Commissioner and Peter Hayden to Chief of Department. These two men have more than 70 years of collective experience. In his new role as First Deputy Commissioner, Chief Cruthers will lead the Safety and Inspection Command and focus on the Department's antiterrorism efforts. Chief Hayden, as the 32nd Chief of Department, is now charged with the management of our uniformed and civilian membership as well as Operations, Fire Prevention, Training and Communications. They are both skilled leaders and they have devoted their lives to the Department. The FDNY would not be what it is today without them.



Commissioner's
— Message



Comm. Scoppetta

Peter Hayden

Frank Cruthers

Commissioner Scoppetta appoints Frank Cruthers as 1st Deputy Fire Commissioner and Peter Hayden 32nd Chief of Department on June 28th at City Hall