The Department has further increased its ability to deal with hazardous material incidents. In June, Commissioner Scoppetta announced the addition of three new Hazardous Materials Technician (HazTech) Engine Companies to the ten-kilometer radius of Manhattan, Engine 165 in Staten Island, and Engine 274 in Queens.

"The deployment of these three HazTech Engine Companies further demonstrates the commitment the Fire Department has to providing the people of New York with the best protection against the new threats we face," said Chief of Department Frank Cruthers during the announcement at Engine 44.

"They will also enhance and decentralize the Department's response to multiple incidents involving hazardous materials and life safety operations."

The companies will still assume primary fire duties in their respective response areas, but will also be available to respond to HazMat incidents citywide, further increasing the capability of the Department to respond to such incidents. The new HazTech Companies will respond as additional units on HazMat incidents in order to get field experience before being placed in-service as a primary responder.

The Department currently maintains a tiered response system for HazMat incidents, with different companies equipped to respond to a variety of incidents involving hazardous materials. At the very top are the Specialists of the FDNY's HazMat 1 Company. Training for HazMat 1 is a continual process, with all members completing a minimum of 530 hours of instruction and drills for a variety of HazMat incidents, from radiation leaks to chemical warfare.

The Department's seven Squads, five Rescue Companies, and three new HazTech Engine Companies comprise the Department's next tier of HazMat incident response, with members receiving 80 hours of specialized HazMat response training. Rounding out the Department's HazMat capabilities are 20 EMS Haz-Tac Ambulances, 21 SOC Support Companies (with 64 and 40 hours of specialized HazMat training, respectively) and 210 members trained and equipped to don chemical protective clothing (CPC) for HazMat response.

The Department first added HazMat response capabilities in September of 1984 to deal primarily with industrial spills and releases. Over the past 20 years, a robust HazMat response program has developed. As the threats facing New York change, the FDNY continues to adapt, ensuring the safety of all New Yorkers.

FDNY Haz-Mat Incidents

FDNY Appoints New 1st Deputy Fire Commissioner and Chief of Department