



Introduction

The Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) Terrorism and Disaster Preparedness Strategy (“the Strategy”) is one of many FDNY initiatives taken in response to the events of September 11, 2001. After 9/11, the Department’s core mission of life safety remained the same. What changed is FDNY’s understanding of the complex threat environment that members now live in and the additional steps that must be taken to operate safely and effectively within these new conditions.

Since 9/11, great strides have been made to increase the ability to effectively execute the Department’s life safety mandate within any response scenario. FDNY members and leadership must continue to advance preparedness levels by learning, adapting and evolving to meet the new challenges presented by changes in the threat landscape.

To ensure the Department is pursuing the right initiatives, FDNY’s role in the homeland security network must be defined, followed by continual and objective assessment of the Department’s ability to fulfill that role. This involves evaluating the outcomes of actions taken to reach these preparedness goals and finding new and better ways to work collaboratively with

security partners. Because of the inevitable constraints imposed by the political economy of homeland security, the Department also must find ways to achieve target levels of preparedness with limited resources.

Given the many variables involved in terrorism and disaster preparedness, the intent of the Strategy is to set a strategic direction for the Department’s preparedness efforts that builds upon the FDNY’s established core capabilities. Concentrating efforts on strengthening the core will further enhance a strong, resilient and adaptable skill-set that will serve this City every day and within any threat environment.

The Strategy also is designed to provide an organizational system for pursuing preparedness goals in a manner that is measurably effective, economically efficient and sustainable over the long-term. The Strategy’s end product is not simply an articulation of where the Department wants to be, but rather a road map describing how to get there.

Chapter I of the Strategy (Purpose) addresses the foundation of terrorism and disaster preparedness, including an examination of the current threat environment. This chapter also explains why the Department requires a Strategy to guide pre-

paredness efforts and the proposed outcomes of the Strategy's implementation.

Chapter II (Mission and Focus) examines the life safety mission of the Department and the key points that must be addressed to achieve a high degree of preparedness and effectiveness, including organizational adaptability; response capability; prevention and protection; and coordination and collaboration.

Chapter III (Operational Readiness) provides an outline describing how the Department is ensuring that responders have the tools, training and support they need to do their job. This chapter covers each of the elements that the Department of Homeland Security National Preparedness Goal identifies as required to fully develop capabilities and achieve a state of operational readiness: planning; organization and leadership; equipment and systems; training; exercises, evaluations and corrective actions; and personnel.

Finally, Chapter IV (Coordination & Evaluation) presents the "Strategy Cycle," which is an organizational system for managing the requisite preparedness efforts to produce a high state of operational readiness. The Cycle involves assessing risks, identifying response requirements, cataloging resources and analyzing operational needs, as well as setting and prioritizing performance goals and strategic objectives. This chapter also defines the approach the FDNY will use to implement initiatives and evaluate its progress toward preparedness, including an examination of both outputs and outcomes and how every preparedness initiative supports the Department's overall mission.

Following the Strategy Cycle will enhance the Department's ability to achieve sustainability and relevancy over the long term and realize the highest possible return on time, effort and financial investments. This Strategy document is not designed to be an end-state, but rather a starting point. It provides critical direction to create a more streamlined and coordinated approach to planning, training, equipping for and responding to terrorist incidents and natural disasters, while ensuring the safety of all FDNY members.

A report released by McKinsey & Company in 2002, which was an evaluation of the FDNY's response to the events of September 11, 2001, proclaimed that "the enormous heroism of the members of the Fire Department of the City of New York stands out as an inspiration in the face of calamity."¹ The report further stated that 9/11 "has reshaped our expectations about future threats and created a new urgency to increase preparedness. Many people believe that more large terrorist attacks on the United States are a certainty. The president and Congress are seeking to increase the nation's preparedness through a massive reorganization of homeland security agencies. The state, the city, and the FDNY must also take steps to prepare for the future."²

The FDNY has many crucial responsibilities in homeland security. This Strategy is designed to help members fulfill those responsibilities and work with all homeland security partners to enhance terrorism and disaster preparedness for the Department, the City and the nation.

