

**GOAL 2.0 ENHANCE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF FDNY MEMBERS**

Enhance and expand programs to monitor and improve the health and safety of members.

Overview

The safety and well being of Fire and EMS first responders has always been a core value of the Department and remains an ongoing commitment. All bureaus, including Health Services, Counseling Services, Safety/Inspection Service Command, Training and Operations, work closely to ensure the safety and well being of members in the performance of their duties.

The Department has made the following significant improvements to protect the safety and health of its members:

- After September 11, 2001, the Department used Federal funding to launch a comprehensive health and mental health outreach, evaluation and treatment program for members affected by the World Trade Center rescue and recovery efforts.
- As part of the national smallpox vaccination initiative, the Department successfully developed and implemented a smallpox education and vaccination program for first responders.
- Bio-Terror Response Teams have been established to ensure an appropriate response to an index (initial) case or outbreak of potential biological events.
- To address specific incidents involving radiation, nerve agents or other toxins, the Department's Office of Medical Affairs (OMA) has stockpiled antidotes and other medications in sufficient quantities to treat all FDNY members and thousands of civilians in secured depots in each of the five boroughs. The Bureau of Health Services (BHS) also has established policies and distribution plans and secured stockpiles of medications, such as ciprofloxin, doxycycline and potassium iodide, to help safeguard the health of members in the event of a radiological or biological incident.
- The Department has provided Firefighters and EMS personnel with access to critical lifesaving equipment. The Department has issued the MSA Millennium Model Air Purified Respirator (APR) to EMS personnel. The APR is intended to be used as an escape mask in the event of an airborne chemical incident.
- In addition to two Major Emergency Response Vehicles, EMS has equipped five Logistical Supply Units to provide medical supplies and support for major incidents.

To build on the Department's health and safety commitments, the Department has identified three objectives.



Objective 2.1 Develop an improved Firefighter/EMS injury and fatality prevention and investigation program.

Background

The Department is concerned that the recent unprecedented loss of experienced members may lead to an increase in on-the-job injuries. To address this, the Department is taking a proactive approach to prevent and reduce Firefighter and EMS personnel injuries and fatalities. The Safety/Inspection Service Command will continue its review of current procedures to determine adherence to and effectiveness of these protocols.

Accomplishments

Every issue of the Department's official training publication, *WNYF* (With New York Firefighters), includes an article about safety. Recent articles have addressed carbon monoxide poisoning, its effects, toxicity and preventive measures, as well as proper operations on fire escapes. The Department provides "Pass-It-On" safety bulletins in a form similar to an After Action Report to highlight problems and dangerous situations experienced by field units, together with recommended actions to prevent injuries. The Safety/Inspection Service Command has incorporated an EMS Safety Message as part of the Department's Intranet. The daily message incorporates lessons learned as a result of previous experiences and fosters a dialogue on issues between supervision and EMTs/Paramedics.

Next Steps and Time Frames

- Twenty-five members have been trained to the next level to perform as accident investigators. A new procedure for investigating Firefighter fatalities or serious injuries is under development, to be completed by June 30, 2004. Additional safety training in evaluation and investigative practices will be provided to the Department's Safety Battalion staff by October 1, 2004. The intent is to shorten investigations and expedite recommendations, which will reduce or prevent the recurrence of such fatality or injury.
- By December 15, 2004, FDNY will develop an *Annual Risk Management Plan* to evaluate and quantify risks in the field and recommend interventions that will enhance safety, both in the short and long term.
- The Department will undertake pilot programs to systematically review and evaluate Firefighters' bunker gear and improved Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including a protective clothing ensemble for skin protection for EMS personnel by December 15, 2005.

Lead Bureau

- Safety/Inspection Service Command



Objective 2.2 Develop an enhanced apparatus vehicle accident prevention and reduction program for both Fire and EMS.

Background

Last year, FDNY fire units were dispatched approximately 892,000 times and 1,268,000 EMS units responded to medical calls Citywide. In light of these extraordinary demands, the Department is refocusing its efforts to improve driver safety through skills assessment and additional training.

Accomplishments

The Department's Safety/Inspection Service Command developed an apparatus accident database for use by the Borough Command Staff Chiefs and their Divisions, as well as EMS Operations and their Divisions. This database highlights trends, facilitates a comparison among boroughs and Divisions against aggregated accident data Citywide, identifies specific kinds of accidents and enables Officers to determine units and/or chauffeurs/drivers who experience multiple accidents. Divisions use this important data at quarterly Division Safety Committee conferences and in unit newsletters. In addition, several articles pertaining specifically to apparatus driving issues have been included in *WNYF*. Topics included methods to safely navigate into and across wide intersections and overall safe driving habits for chauffeurs of emergency vehicles.

Next Steps and Time Frames

- The Department is analyzing its vehicle accident data to develop prevention strategies and training interventions to reduce accidents. By June 31, 2004, the Safety/Inspection Service Command will pilot a fire apparatus accident reduction program in selected units within a specific Battalion, based on analysis of accident data, to evaluate outcomes over time. Company Officers and Battalion Chiefs, with assistance from the Safety Battalion Chiefs and the Safety Command, will visit units and hold moderator-led discussions focusing on safe driving. A key component of this pilot program will be the involvement of Firefighters in the field, who will actively participate in identifying problems, pinpointing causes and formulating strategies to effectively address these issues. It is anticipated that the program will be expanded Citywide by October 15, 2004. By December 31, 2004, the Bureau of Training will establish a Chauffeur Training Refresher course at the Fire Academy that specifically addresses the technical skills, safe attitudes and defensive driving practices necessary to drive fire apparatus.
- The Safety/Inspection Service Command will apply the lessons learned from the pilot fire apparatus chauffeur program to vehicle operator safety for EMS personnel trained in emergency vehicle operations. By June 30, 2004, a similar pilot program will be developed for the Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC). This will incorporate technical skills and safe attitudes and defensive driving practices necessary for drivers of ambulances. By August 1, 2004, new Safety Bulletins will be published with a focus on safe driving practices. Additionally, by December 1, 2004, FDNY will address safe driving practices for all drivers of emergency response vehicles Department-wide, including sedans and SUVs, which are operated by Officers and their Aides.



Upon delivery and installation of new driving simulators at the Fire and EMS Training Academies by March 31, 2004, the Department will integrate this training tool into the overall accident prevention and reduction program.

Lead Bureaus

- Safety/Inspection Service Command
- Training

Objective 2.3 Develop performance standards to address the training needs of Firefighters, EMTs/Paramedics, Fire and EMS Officers.

Background

The loss of 343 members in the World Trade Center attack, together with a surge in retirements, significantly depleted the Department's ranks and resulted in the loss of thousands of years of collective experience. In response, the Department has undertaken its largest recruitment and promotion effort ever. Exactly two years after September 11, 2001, the Department had hired 1867 new Firefighters and began training an additional 304 new recruits in September 2003, for a total of 2171 new Firefighters. These members represent 25 percent of the Department's Firefighters. Department promotions during the same period were equally dramatic. There have been a total of 1363 promotions since 9/11, representing approximately 50 percent of the Department's Officers. During the same period, 1968 Firefighters and Officers retired, representing approximately 18 percent of the entire Department. Together, the Department has experienced a significant reduction in the experience level of both Firefighters and Officers in the field.

Accomplishments

The Department completed a \$50 million capital construction project at the Fire Academy at Randall's Island and developed a state-of-the-art classroom and tactical training center. The Department also successfully negotiated with the Federal government to permanently transfer its companion training site at Fort Totten, Queens, the location of the Department's EMS Academy, Certified First Responder-Defibrillation (CFR-D) and First Line Supervisors Training Programs.

Next Steps and Time Frames

- To address the training needs of our members, the Department has developed an innovative approach to enhance the knowledge and skills in the field. With the reinstatement of a team of Field Training Officers by March 31, 2004, the Bureau of Operations and Bureau of Training will establish performance standards and certify competencies in selected areas of expertise for all members. Training curricula will be revised, based on these performance standards to best meet the needs of the Department and its members. The result of this effort is twofold: measurable increases in the knowledge and skills of Firefighters and Officers and enhanced health and safety of members in the field.

Lead Bureaus

- Fire and EMS Operations
- Training