

**GOAL 5.0 IMPROVE FIRE PREVENTION AND FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION**

Enhance and develop additional fire prevention and educational programs that reach out to local communities to make them stronger and safer.

Overview

Fire prevention and public safety education are essential elements of the Department's mission. The Bureau of Fire Prevention ensures fire protection of residential and commercial occupancies Citywide through direct inspections of locations and enforcement of local laws and regulations. The Bureau also monitors conditions at hazardous locations and oversees certification of individuals in regulated activities. Fire Prevention supports the Department's Bureau of Operations through the exchange of essential information on locations, buildings and special events. While Fire Prevention resources have remained strong despite current budgetary constraints, during the past two years, the Department's fire safety education staff has been reduced. In response, the Department has developed private and public partnerships to sustain and broaden its fire safety education programs, while seeking to increase staffing through grants.

Objective 5.1 Develop new safety requirements and evacuation plan procedures for commercial high-rise buildings.

Background

The events of 9/11 focused attention on the need for high-rise safety and the need to provide greater life and property protection in high-rise buildings. Because of their height and occupancy, high-rises present an unusual challenge to the Fire Department, building employees and occupants for both fire and non-fire-related emergencies. The current New York City Fire Code more than adequately protects citizens and New York City high-rise office buildings have an enviable fire safety record. While the current practice of fire-floor and floor-above evacuation for fires in high-rise office buildings remains the best option in those situations, these procedures must be re-evaluated in the context of other potential emergencies.

Accomplishments

After September 11, 2001, the Mayor directed the Department of Buildings to establish a Task Force to examine the World Trade Center disaster and current Building Code provisions as they relate to high-rise buildings. FDNY representatives from the Bureaus of Fire Prevention and Fire Operations participated. In Summer 2003, the Task Force developed a series of recommendations to enhance safety in commercial high-rise buildings. One recommendation called for the City to enact a law requiring an emergency evacuation plan, in addition to a fire safety plan, for non-fire emergencies. The Department drafted a high-rise building emergency action plan that details proposed requirements and guidelines.



Next Steps and Time Frames

- By January 1, 2004, the Department's Bureau of Legal Affairs will introduce legislation as part of the legislative package implementing the recommendations of the World Trade Center Building Code Task Force. The legislation would give the Fire Commissioner the authority to require emergency action plans for commercial high-rise buildings.
- By May 1, 2004, Department Staff Chiefs will review the draft high-rise building emergency action plan and submit the document to the Bureau of Legal Affairs for review. By June 1, 2004, the revised document will be forwarded to the Fire Commissioner for approval.
- By January 1, 2005, subject to enactment of the legislation, the Department will propose a new rule and establish a mechanism within FDNY to review evacuation plans submitted in compliance with the new rule and create an oversight mechanism for drills, record-keeping and monitoring.
- By March 31, 2005, the proposed rule containing the new requirements and providing a timetable for compliance should be adopted.
- By June 30, 2005, FDNY will evaluate the need to develop new legislation affecting residential high-rise buildings, as well as other occupancies.

Lead Bureaus

- Fire Prevention
- Legal Affairs

Objective 5.2 Integrate fire prevention and fire safety education projects to ensure that educational messages reach communities most at risk.

Background

Several FDNY bureaus provide essential fire prevention and safety education to children, families, senior citizens, disabled individuals and the non-English-speaking public. The Department will improve coordination among bureaus and provide creative approaches to bring the message of fire safety to communities throughout the City. Through the Department's "Operation Sidewalk" initiative, local Fire Companies will continue to provide fire safety education materials at schools, senior centers, festivals, health fairs and other community events. This program enhances and expands the local Fire Companies' fire safety role in the communities they serve.

The Department is intensifying its work with the FDNY Fire Safety Education Fund (FSEF). FSEF played a key role in developing the Fire Zone, the FDNY's showcase public safety center in Rockefeller Center. Working together, the Department and the FSEF recently developed and funded the "Fire Zone on the Road" program, which makes the Fire Zone's safety and education lessons more accessible to communities and schools.



Accomplishments

Since September 11, 2001, requests for educational materials and for FDNY participation at community events and special events have increased dramatically. In that time, the Department has sponsored 4244 fire safety education events. However, without an increase in staffing and resources, FDNY cannot keep pace with the demand.

Since November 2003, the "Fire Zone on the Road" program has provided outreach to targeted communities through educational campaigns, increasing school and community presentations and providing a wider distribution of fire safety and public health information and literature throughout the City and on the Internet.

Next Steps and Time Frames

- To ensure that the Department meets the increasing demand, FDNY will further integrate and coordinate Fire Prevention, Fire Safety and Fire and EMS Operations. By May 15, 2004, the Department will assess its fire prevention, inspections, fire safety and public health activities to maximize the effectiveness of the FDNY's manpower and resources devoted to public education.
- By June 1, 2004, the Department will strengthen relationships between local firehouses and communities they serve. This will be accomplished by fostering the role of the local firehouse as a community resource that promotes fire-safety practices and education at home, at school and in the business community.
- By assessing fire fatalities and injuries, the Department will identify high-fire-risk neighborhoods. By September 1, 2004, at least one community in each borough will be chosen for a pilot program.
- By May 1, 2004, the Department will evaluate the effectiveness of the "Fire Zone on the Road" program.

Lead Bureaus

- Fire Prevention
- Training