



# BUREAU OF FIRE INVESTIGATION

**T**he Bureau of Fire Investigation (BFI) and its Fire Marshals continue to operate professionally and with valor to deliver solid results. BFI stands as the investigative wing of the Fire Department, charged with determining the cause and origin of fires throughout the five boroughs. BFI has expanded and improved the scope of its routine investigations through new state-of-the-art technologies and since 9-11, has expanded its traditional mission to include Department-wide security and terrorism preparedness.

## *New Technologies*

The BFI computer system continues to evolve into a state-of-the-art tracking system for fire investigation. This system has enhanced BFI's annual report, facilitating efforts to track fire fatalities and injuries, as well as locations and causes involved in all fires investigated. This capability is a first in FDNY history.

The civilian injury information, gathered by Fire Marshals at fire scenes from official and other sources, is categorized by Community Board. This information, provided to the Community Boards, includes the type of injury and personal information on the fire victims. The information is used by the Department to conduct fire awareness and fire safety education programs.

## *Security*

BFI staff continue to develop and fine-tune internal security enhancements for the Department and provide security details and dignitary protection at various functions. The Department's Fire Marshals provide additional security through target hardening (surveillance and barriers) of FDNY facilities.

The Bureau of Fire Investigation currently is in the process of generating and distributing new identification cards for the entire agency. These cards are smart cards, which allow for encrypted identifying factors to be utilized for security and identification purposes. These cards also provide access control throughout FDNY Headquarters and certain EMS facilities.

## *Terrorism*

Operating in today's climate, under a continual threat of terrorism, BFI now has two full-time Fire Marshals assigned to the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). They both have top-secret clearance, as do the Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Marshal, ensuring that the FDNY has direct access to information that could prove crucial in case of another attack.

On a continuing basis, BFI has a liaison to the multi-agency Anti-Terrorism Work Group (ATWG). BFI receives briefings from Federal, State and local governments, which enable BFI to keep FDNY's executive staff updated on a routine basis. By continuing this specialized and advanced training in intelligence capabilities, FDNY's terrorism preparedness is improved and enhanced.



## *Investigations*

In addition to these added responsibilities, the BFI continues to successfully perform its fundamental mission of fire investigation. There were several major and notable investigations conducted by BFI in Fiscal 2006. On May 2, there was a 10-alarm fire in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. The fire consumed numerous buildings that were located in the old Greenpoint Terminal Market. This conflagration was the largest fire this City had seen in many years apart from the World Trade Center tragedy. The examination of this fire scene required the use of heavy equipment to painstakingly uncover the area of origin. Fire Marshals were able to make a determination regarding the incendiary cause. Fire Marshals, along with police, spent many days speaking to witnesses and viewing surveillance video from that area. This investigative work led to the arrest and indictment of the person responsible.

The Bureau of Fire Investigation also led the investigation into the fatal fire in the Bronx on January 23, 2005, which caused the death of two Firefighters. This detailed and systematic examination of illegal renovations in the fire building took more than a year by the members of the Bureau's Special Investigations Unit. The long-term investigation resulted in the indictment and arrest of three individuals and one corporation.

