

Speaker 1: [00:00](#)

Speaker 1: [00:01](#) Welcome to "Prep Talk," the Emergency Management Podcast. Find out what you need to know about preparedness, get all the latest tips from experts in the field, and learn what to do before the next disaster strikes. From the Emergency Management Department, in The City That Never Sleeps. Here are your hosts; Omar Bourne and Allison Pennisi.

Omar Bourne: [00:27](#) Hello everyone. Thank you for listening. I am Omar Bourne.

Allison Pennisi: [00:31](#) And I'm Allison Pennisi.

Omar Bourne: [00:32](#) Say it ain't so. Welcome back. Welcome back.

Allison Pennisi: [00:36](#) Thank you very much and you are our listeners and as always we thank you for joining us. We want you to come back as often as you can, so feel free to add "Prep Talk" to your favorite podcast provider. You can also follow us on social media, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and more.

Omar Bourne: [00:52](#) So before we get into it, for our listeners who might be joining us for the first time; Allison, was away on maternity leave and it's great to have her back. It's been a while since we could actually say the hosts are Omar Bourne and Allison Pennisi. So how has it been?

Allison Pennisi: [01:07](#) It's been wonderful. I'm very happy to be back, and to speak with a lot of our guests about what's going on in the emergency management field. We have a great show lined up for this episode especially. It's so great to have our whole crew back here on the "Prep Talk" family.

Omar Bourne: [01:23](#) Yeah.

Allison Pennisi: [01:23](#) Especially you. I have to say I miss you. (laughs).

Omar Bourne: [01:26](#) I've missed you too. It's been too long, but happy for you and your family and on this episode of "Prep Talk" we are going to be talking to the United States Secret Service.

Allison Pennisi: [01:41](#) And that's no secret.

Omar Bourne: [01:42](#) Yeah.(laughs).

Allison Pennisi: [01:44](#) For our listeners, the 74th UN General Assembly opens September 17th, and the first day of High Level General Debate

is September 24th. And, the session officially closes on September 30th. Now, why are we telling you this? Well, that's because the U.S. Secret Service plays a key role in having the United Nations here in New York City, especially for this time of year.

- Omar Bourne: [02:07](#) Mm-hmm. And with the number of notable world leaders and dignitaries that's going to be attending the General Assembly; security is going to be at an all time high.
- Allison Pennisi: [02:19](#) Yes.
- Omar Bourne: [02:20](#) We're going to be breaking it all down for you with our special guests from the Secret Service, but before we dive in, you know what time it is. Let us get you updated on the latest news in the emergency management field.
- Speaker 2: [02:34](#) Here's your "Prep Talk" Situation Report.
- Allison Pennisi: [02:38](#) All right. It's the Situation Report. Let's get started.
- Omar Bourne: [02:41](#) Thank you Allison. First up, a story that is going to hurt my heart to talk about. Unfortunately summer, my favorite season, is quickly winding down. September 23rd marks the start of fall and as we know after fall comes winter, the worst season, I should say, and that is just around the corner. To make matters worse, the Farmer's Almanac just released their extended weather forecast, and is calling for a freezing, frigid, frosty- a lot of F-words (laughs)- winter for two thirds of the U.S. including the East Coast. It also said that people on the East Coast will endure the worst of the cold weather. So for our listeners on the West Coast, I envy you. According to the forecast, the Western third of the country, places like Cali, can expect a much milder winter. Winter weather is more than just an inconvenience for people like me. It can cause hazardous conditions; so we remind people to winterize their homes and their cars ahead of time.
- Omar Bourne: [03:55](#) If you need more information about how you can do so, you can also check out NYC.gov/emergencymanagement and we have all the tips and tricks on how you can do that. I did also find in this article something very interesting. They had the top twenty signs that a rough winter is coming. I'm not going to read all twenty for you, but it was very interesting to take a look at. Some of them included: woodpeckers sharing a tree, pigs gathering sticks, an unusual abundance of acorns was one of them, squirrels gathering nuts early to fortify against a hard

winter. Another one here, which I thought was interesting and may apply somehow to New York City; mice chewing furiously to get into your home. (laughs) So winter might be coming a lot in New York City.

Allison Pennisi: [04:53](#) Honestly Omar, I foresee a mid-winter trip to the West Coast in your future.

Omar Bourne: [04:58](#) West coast, Caribbean. You name it. I will be away.

Allison Pennisi: [05:01](#) Alright, well, we'll hold down the fort here if you decide to do that.

Omar Bourne: [05:04](#) Yes.

Allison Pennisi: [05:04](#) So for our next story up, when you enter the train during your morning commute, you're bound to see signs encouraging New Yorkers to be alert, and report suspicious activity. You know, if you see something, say something. Well now the NYPD is bringing that mantra into the 21st century. So earlier this month the department released what is called CSNYC. It is a free mobile app based on the Crime Stoppers Program. So founded in 1983, Crime Stoppers, offers rewards of up to \$2,500 for anonymous information that leads to arrests and indictments in violent felonies. So now this app which is available for both Apple iOS and Android devices, which is great, expands the system's capability by allowing users to send video and photos in addition to text. The app also offers total anonymity to users, or identified only by numerical code. And police officials hope the new app generates additional information that can aid in investigations.

Omar Bourne: [06:02](#) In other news, we all know to dial 911 in an emergency.

Allison Pennisi: [06:07](#) Yep.

Omar Bourne: [06:08](#) So now the FCC, Federal Communications Commission, is proposing a new three-digit suicide prevention hotline, 988. Experts say that three-digit hotline can make it easier for more people to call in time of need. They warn that the current National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Number, 1-800-273-TALK, or 1-800-273-8255, can be difficult for people to remember in the midst of a crisis. So the proposal is part of an ongoing effort to encourage Americans to seek help. In 2018, the Lifeline Hotline answered more than two million calls up from about 46,000 in 2005. According to the FCC, the agency presented the proposal to Congress in a report in early September, and is

expected to release more information and seek public comment in the coming months. I think is a great idea. It just make it easier for people to contact help in a time of crisis.

- Allison Pennisi: [07:18](#) Absolutely, and mental health is paramount, especially in the field of public safety as we've seen in recent months as well. So this is a really great story. Alright, and that's the Situation Report. Still to come, we'll be talking with Special Agent Patrick Freaney, from the U.S. Secret Service to talk about security measures in place for this year's UN General Assembly. First, here's a public service announcement from New York City Emergency Management and the Ad Council.
- Speaker 5: [07:44](#) Your daughter doesn't want to talk about why her room is a horrible mess. Your son doesn't want to talk about why he's wearing mismatching socks. Your spouse doesn't want to talk about their bad haircut. Families don't have to talk about everything, but they should talk to plan for an emergency. Pack basic supplies in a Go Bag, water, canned food, flashlights, batteries, medical supplies, IDs, and some cash. Talk about where you'll meet in case you lose one another. And of course don't forget to pack the dog treats. Talk to your family and make an emergency plan. Go to nyc.gov/readyny, or call 311 to make your family's emergency plan. Brought to you by New York City Emergency Management and the Ad Council.
- Speaker 2: [08:45](#) You are listening to "Prep Talk," the Emergency Management Podcast.
- Omar Bourne: [08:51](#) You are listening to Prep Talk and we are back. Joining us is Assistant Special Agent in charge of the New York Field Office for the Secret Service, Patrick Freaney, and thank you for joining us. He told us before the show that Assistant Special Agent in Charge is also ASAC, so I'm going to call him ASAC Freaney if he's okay with that.
- Patrick Freaney: [09:19](#) Works for me.
- Omar Bourne: [09:20](#) (laughs) Thank you for joining us again. Let us get started. Now, before we get into the UN General Assembly; for our listeners, a brief history of the Secret Service.
- Patrick Freaney: [09:34](#) Sure. First, thanks for having me, Allison and Omar, I appreciate being here. Some background for Secret Service; it was actually formed in July of 1865, and the original purpose of the Secret Service was to combat counterfeit currency.

Omar Bourne: [09:48](#) Right.

Patrick Freaney: [09:49](#) So at that time it was believed that one-third of all currency in circulation was counterfeit. We actually didn't start with the protection aspect of our job to 1902, and that was following the assassination of President McKinley. So at that time we picked up Presidential Protection, and then the job constantly evolved. So in 1968, we picked up presidential candidates and in 1971, we started protecting Visiting Heads of State, Head of Government to United States. We were actually ... we were formed under the Department of Treasury due to counterfeit tie.

Omar Bourne: [10:22](#) Right.

Patrick Freaney: [10:22](#) So in 2003, following 9/11, we actually left the Department of Treasury and merged into the Department of Homeland Security. So the Secret Service today has kind of evolved. We like to say we have an integrated mission. It's still the protection aspect where we're protecting of president, vice president, others directed by the president, as well as, visiting foreign heads, the state as the government, as well as, we have an investigative aspect to our job. We're constantly investigating to safeguard the payment and financial systems, the United States from computer-based crime to financial crimes.

Allison Pennisi: [10:55](#) That's a huge undertaking. Very much tied to the field of emergency management that it's not just one job that you have. It may start as one mission, but it broadly expands over time. So it's really interesting to hear that. I actually didn't know that it started as a counterfeit currency mission.

Patrick Freaney: [11:12](#) Yeah, yeah. And most people don't. We're known for the protection aspect, but really it was to combat counterfeit currency.

Allison Pennisi: [11:19](#) That's incredible. We were talking before about the UN General Assembly being in New York City. So for our listeners, it is one of the six main organs of the United Nations, and it gives member states a forum to discuss and work together on a range of international issues including: peace, security, and emission of new members. It's also designated as what is called a National Special Security Event, or an NSSE. Now, what does that mean?

Patrick Freaney: [11:47](#) Okay, so just some background, if I could, for the NSSE in a framework of that. The NSSE framework was created in 2000, under the Presidential Protection Act. With that it identified us

as the lead agency in design and implementation of an operational security plan. So for something to be designated as an NSSE, there's certain criteria. One is the anticipated attendance by US officials and foreign dignitaries. Two is the size of the event, and three the significance of the event.

- Patrick Freaney: [12:18](#) So in this case, the Secretary of Homeland Security designated us as an NSSE, and the NSSE has a defined set of dates. In this case, it's from September 22nd to September 28th is when the NSSE is in effect. So how we accomplish our mission with the NSSE as the lead agency and implementing and designing a security plan is, we do that by forming partnerships with all our participating law enforcement, public safety officials, and military agencies.
- Patrick Freaney: [12:48](#) And really the point of the NSSE is that it identifies the fact that not one agency is able to execute this mission on its own. It's really a collaborative effort and that's the important piece. It's due to all the work of our partners that we're able to work together in accomplishing this large scale security event that's coming to New York city.
- Omar Bourne: [13:09](#) Right. So you will have members like the Coast Guard-
- Patrick Freaney: [13:13](#) Sure.
- Omar Bourne: [13:13](#) NYPD Emergency Management, FEMA, everybody's involved in this right?
- Patrick Freaney: [13:18](#) Sure. We have about ... I would say anywhere from about twenty to thirty law enforcement, public safety, different agencies involved in the planning and the execution of the mission.
- Omar Bourne: [13:29](#) I'm glad that you mentioned the planning for such a huge undertaking like the UN General Assembly. What are some of the security measures that are in place or planning an event like this and when does that planning begin?
- Patrick Freaney: [13:43](#) Okay.
- Omar Bourne: [13:43](#) Does it ever end, I guess. (laughs)
- Patrick Freaney: [13:44](#) Well, I'll address that part last, right? But yes, as far as the planning goes, so once a NSSE is designated, the planning starts with the formation of what's called an Executive Steering Committee. So that Executive Steering Committee then forms,

in this case approximately twenty subcommittees. For this event, different subcommittees would be: emergency management, airspace security, crisis management, inter-agency communication, critical infrastructure protection, and fire life safety. And really when you're thinking about, or when the Executives Steering Committee is considering developing the subcommittees; they are trying to address any potential security matter that they think could occur. And that's how they decide which subcommittees are going to form and how they're going to be staffed. As far as the specifics, we can't discuss the means and methods or numbers utilized for our protective responsibilities. But what I can say is that a tremendous amount of advance planning and coordination in the development of a security plan has occurred.

- Patrick Freaney: [14:48](#) To go back to your last question of when the planning actually starts; I agree with you, I don't think it ever actually ends.
- Omar Bourne: [14:56](#) Right.
- Patrick Freaney: [14:56](#) So as soon as the United Nations General Assembly 73rd Session concluded; all the subcommittees would meet up. They'd conduct an after-action review, after-action report, and examine what worked well, and where we could potentially improve. So for us, it's constantly about making our product better and looking to improve on what we did on the previous one to just be able to create the best security plan that we can. And doing that with our partners.
- Allison Pennisi: [15:26](#) So you talk about ongoing planning coordination. What type of training is required for such a high-level event like this?
- Patrick Freaney: [15:33](#) So we're pretty fortunate here in New York City in the sense that our training is almost a continual process. The United Nations will end in September 29th, September 30th, but our work with the New York City Police Department, the FDNY, OEM, that doesn't stop; that continues throughout the year. So in that sense, we're pretty fortunate that it doesn't take a large scale event to actually bring us together, but we're constantly working together every day. And that actually ... it solidifies strong working relationships.
- Allison Pennisi: [16:05](#) Absolutely.
- Patrick Freaney: [16:05](#) That we're not looking to create right before a major event. It already exists.

Allison Pennisi: [16:09](#) Yes, very true. And that's important, because I remember an emergency management specialist once saying that you can't form those relationships when you get on the scene. Those relationships have to be formed beforehand, and they really play a huge role in how you respond. If you know the players that are supposed to be playing with you at the time of the event or who supposed to be in the room with you, during that emergency, it goes a long way towards a speedy response and an effective response.

Patrick Freaney: [16:43](#) Yeah. We build upon those relationships, and for this event in particular, what we'll do that's different than a normal protective visit is we'll conduct tabletop exercises or different field exercises, distress the NRA agency communication, make sure that's present and there are no issues. So we really build on relationships that we had and just enhance it somewhat.

Allison Pennisi: [17:03](#) Okay. So we've talked about event security, obviously coordinating with all of these partners to ensure the safety of those who are attending and those who are in New York City during this time. But one thing that I think we always talk about is public messaging. It's an important component in a special event. We use a lot of different methods to get the message out about the UN General Assembly being in town. There are signs when you're driving into New York City, for example, that say: there's a gridlock alert, take mass transit, or be mindful of your surroundings, things of that nature. So the Secret Service has a Public Affair Subcommittee in place. Can you speak about that mission?

Patrick Freaney: [17:41](#) Right. So what I can tell you is on the Public Affairs Subcommittee, there's fifteen different agencies are represented. And the whole purpose of that subcommittee is to deliver a consistent message to the media, to the stakeholders, to the general public. And the whole point is we don't want OEM saying one thing, Secret Service saying one thing, and the NYPD saying something different. So we all work together as a collaborative group to really draft our message and make sure our message is consistent. And we try to really identify just the one voice. So all members are aware of the message going out. And it's really a concerted effort.

Omar Bourne: [18:19](#) And when people think about the Secret Service, people think about the UN General Assembly. They don't think about messaging per se, the average person. They're thinking about the security, you know, NYPD patrolling, and Secret Service patrolling. But they're not thinking about how important having a concise, consistent, unified message is. And that's why

subcommittees like the public affairs one is so important to a huge event like this.

- Patrick Freaney: [18:48](#) Yeah. And I think it's an area where we can constantly improve; with the rise of social media in a way to get the message out. Because with such a large scale event, needless to say there probably will be inconveniences that people will face. But in getting ahead of that and trying to identify that and deliver the message to help the public navigate this during this busy week is extremely important.
- Omar Bourne: [19:11](#) So what do you want the public to know about their security and then the security of the world leaders and the dignitaries that attend the General Assembly?
- Patrick Freaney: [19:20](#) Yeah, so I think it's really important to recognize that the public knows that providing for their security and that of the world leaders is a responsibility that the men and women of the Secret Service as well as the respective workforces of our partners hold in the highest regard. Collectively, the law enforcement, public safety community of New York City, that have worked in this event have worked extremely hard at drafting the security plan and are dedicated to executing the mission. I think that's really important to note. And I'd also like to take a moment just to thank all our partners for the hard work that they put forward. And like I said, the Secret Service is not able to do this without the assistance of all the other partner agencies.
- Allison Pennisi: [19:59](#) I love the fact that we are able to sit down and speak with you about this. We've worked with the Secret Service on many occasions, the UN General Assembly many times. I think it's very important for our listeners to understand that emergency management, as we always say, is a coordinated effort on the local, state, federal level. We work with our private sector partners. It is a shared responsibility to ensure the safety. So we thank you for joining us.
- Patrick Freaney: [20:24](#) No, thank you so much for having me. It's an honor.
- Allison Pennisi: [20:26](#) Alright, so for our listeners, it's Rapid Response time. If you are a first time listener, it's very simple. Omar and I are going to be asking questions and they will give their first answer that comes to mind.
- Speaker 2: [20:40](#) It's time for "Prep Talk" Rapid Response.

Allison Pennisi: [20:46](#) All right. First question for you, what is the one emergency item you cannot live without?

Patrick Freaney: [20:51](#) Water.

Omar Bourne: [20:52](#) (laughs) That's what everyone says. That's the automatic response.

Allison Pennisi: [20:57](#) That and the cell phone.

Omar Bourne: [20:59](#) And it makes sense. It makes sense. Favorite cop or secret agent show or movie?

Patrick Freaney: [21:05](#) Jason Bourne.

Allison Pennisi: [21:06](#) I was just going to say that.

Omar Bourne: [21:08](#) I love it. I love it. Which?

Patrick Freaney: [21:10](#) I like the original.

Omar Bourne: [21:10](#) The original. The first one? Okay.

Allison Pennisi: [21:10](#) Yeah. The first one is the best one.

Patrick Freaney: [21:10](#) Yeah.

Allison Pennisi: [21:10](#) That or, I would say "The Untouchables." We're going to kick it back a little bit. I was a big fan of that.

Omar Bourne: [21:25](#) I'm a huge fan of the Bourne movies for obvious reasons, but no, they're great. Apart from sharing my name. (laughs).

Allison Pennisi: [21:33](#) Oh that's true. Very true.

Omar Bourne: [21:34](#) Yes. For our listeners who might not have realized, yes.

Allison Pennisi: [21:37](#) Yep, that's true.

Omar Bourne: [21:38](#) No royalties come my way unfortunately.

Allison Pennisi: [21:41](#) Here's to hoping right? So where is one place you would like to visit?

Patrick Freaney: [21:45](#) Dubrovnik, Croatia.

Omar Bourne: [21:49](#) So I imagine that you can be extremely busy as ASAC Freaney, (laughing). So what do you do to unwind?

Patrick Freaney: [22:02](#) I enjoy reading. And in the sense that I'm always trying to learn more.

Omar Bourne: [22:08](#) Right.

Patrick Freaney: [22:08](#) And so I found, especially as I get a little bit older, I've really come around to enjoying reading.

Omar Bourne: [22:14](#) It's very true. And I feel the same way. I try to read as much as I can and just try to hone my craft through reading. Whether it's just a newspaper article or a good book. Just find ways in which I can improve as well.

Allison Pennisi: [22:30](#) Yeah, I think it's important to stay hungry for information and we say that all the time. Stay hungry for information and do your research and learn more. Find out how you can improve, your job or even your lifestyle and keeping up with things. We were talking off-air about having kids. Even doing research on that if things you can expect because one child is not the same as the other and learning different things in different processes. So I'm with you on that. Last question; sum up the work you do in one word.

Patrick Freaney: [22:58](#) Important. I think the work we do is extremely important. Every day is a different challenge. Not that challenge is a bad thing, but different set of circumstances. And I think the work that we do in protecting world leaders, and protecting the financial infrastructure of the country is extremely important. And, I'm very proud of the men and women that I work with.

Omar Bourne: [23:25](#) And we thank you for the great work that you do.

Patrick Freaney: [23:28](#) No thanks. Thanks for having me.

Speaker 1: [23:34](#) That's this episode of "Prep Talk." If you like what you heard, you can listen any time online or through your favorite RSS feed. Until next time, stay safe and prepared.