



THE FIRE BELL CLUB OF NEW YORK, INC.

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BELL CLUB NEWS

The April 12 speaker will be Assistant Chief Ronald Spadafora, Chief of Logistics.

The Annual Dinner will be held June 9th and the annual visit to the Shops will be June 14. Please remember that the visit to the Shops is restricted to members only or a member plus guest.

A reminder. The Club's email group is for club members' use only. If you are going to forward mail to a non member, please utilize your personal email address and delete all references to the club's email address and other information regarding our membership. In addition, if you wish to reply to a member in the group who sends out an email, do not use the group address; utilize your own personal email address as well as that of the addressee. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Al Epstein.

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DEPUTY CHIEF NICHOLAS DEL RE CHIEF OF HAZ-MAT OPERATIONS

Deputy Chief Nicholas Del Re joined the FDNY in 1985. In 2003, he was named a Master Instructor in the IAFF. He earned degrees from the Naval Postgraduate School, Columbia University's FOMI program, and West Point. He is currently Chief-in-Charge of the FDNY Haz-Mat Group and represents the FDNY on numerous national and international boards.

Chief Del Re began his talk by acknowledging the important work of his immediate predecessor, Battalion Chief Robert Ingram, and Lieutenant Tony

Mussorfiti (ret.). They helped shape haz-mat response into a series of mission-specific competencies which have become the country's standard.

Chief Del Re continued with a presentation on the history and current status of the FDNY's Haz-Mat Tiered response. From 1982 to 1984, Rescue Four of Queens handled haz-mat incidents. On December 3, 1984, however, there was a major accident at the Union Carbide Plant in Bhopal, India. Thirty to 40 tons of methyl isocyanate (MIC) were released as a vapor cloud. Despite the highly toxic nature of MIC, there was no pre-incident plan and local responders were not called.

Over 3,000 people were killed instantly and 500,000 exposed to the toxic cloud. Along with other incidents in the United States (like Love Canal) and a greater awareness of the dangers of toxic exposure, a series of legislative initiatives were passed to try to prevent a similar incident here.

In 1995, the sarin attack occurred in a Tokyo subway. Twelve people died, 3,796 were injured, and 5,000 went to hospitals. By 1996, Chief Jack Fanning, Chief in charge of



*Deputy Chief
Nicholas Del Re*

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DEPUTY CHIEF NICHOLAS DEL RE

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Haz-Mat, starts to expand haz-mat capabilities along the mission-specific outline. Squad One, Squad 41, and Rescue Five receive training and a decon support unit is formed. The SOC Battalion is formed, as well. However, the focus is still on accidental events.

In 1997, after the Tokyo incident, the focus starts to shift to terrorist events. With input from Jack Fanning, Gerry Hauer, and Frank Cruthers, an exercise is conducted in downtown Manhattan for a potential sarin release with over 100 casualties. Mission-specific tasks are addressed and a comprehensive tiered-response system is planned and implemented.

As depicted in Figure 1, this system provides for specific training based on work tasks, different capabilities depending on level,

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and, ultimately, the ability of the Incident Commander to employ units based on the needs of each incident. As depicted in Figure 2, the tiered response now includes 682 first responders with

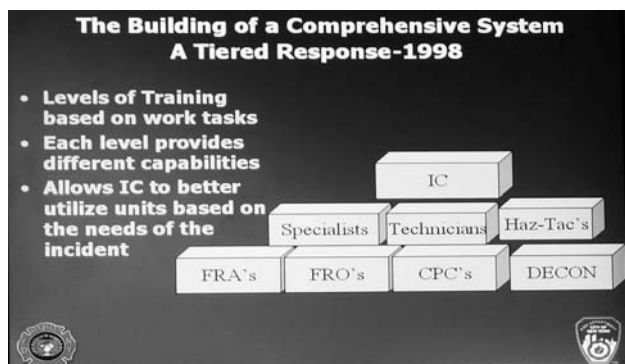


Figure 1



Figure 2

CPC training as well as other haz-mat capabilities.

Chief Del Re described the duties of Haz-Mat Company 1 and the Haz-Mat Technician II Units. Haz-Mat 1, with its advanced training and extensive resources, is responsible for advanced air monitoring, advanced leak and spill control, and other related concerns. The Technician II units (which include Rescue 5, the seven squad companies and four Engine companies) are responsible for identification and assessment of hazardous substances as well as containment and mitigation. Special Event Teams go to ball games, parades, the United Nations and other sites.

Other units include the Decon Task Force consisting of, among others, 25 SOC support ladders, 25 decon engines, five decontamination units, Haz Tac ambulances, and a number of Chemical Protective Clothing units. Decentralizing resources is emphasized to ensure quick response from any part of the City.

Chief Del Re concluded his presentation by noting that not all responders need to be trained and equipped as Haz-Mat Techs, but that FDNY members all meet the requirements of NFPA 472 to be trained to the operations level with core competencies and mission specific competencies. It is an outstanding achievement and we thank Chief Del Re for his important work and for his presentation.

THE TRIANGLE WAIST FACTORY FIRE: CAN IT HAPPEN AGAIN?

As everyone knows, March 25th marked the 100th anniversary of the infamous Triangle fire in which 146 people died when fire engulfed the top floors of the Triangle Waist Factory in the Asch (now Brown) Building off of Washington Square. At one of the many conferences to commemorate and analyze the events of that day, the Murphy Institute for Worker Education and Labor Studies and the CUNY Graduate Center sponsored an all-day event. Included among the many interesting topics was a panel session on "Could Triangle Happen Today?"

The panelists included Peter Amato, formerly with the NYC Department of Buildings and past President of the New York Chapter of the American society of Safety Engineers, Robert Solomon of the National Fire Protection Association, and Matt Connor, Firefighter with Engine 222 in Brooklyn and Masters Degree student. Mr. Amato emphasized the large number of changes in the building codes since 1911 and argued that, due to these codes and greater safety programs (like Site Safety Plans), a Triangle-like fire would be unlikely today.

Robert Solomon, on the other hand, cited recent examples of significant fires eerily similar to the Triangle fire like one in a clothing factory in Bangladesh that killed 30 people in December, 2010. The Bangladesh fire was on the ninth floor of an 11-story building. Fueled by piles of fabric and clothing made for companies like The Gap and JC Penney, the fire spread and workers were trapped by a locked door. Most of the dead were young women.

Other fires like those in a toy factory near Bangkok, Thailand, in 1993 (188 dead) and a chicken processing facility in Hamlet, North Carolina (25 dead with locked doors), illustrate that the problem of the "race to the bottom" for cheap labor has caused tragic results. The NFPA cites a study that found 213 reported garment factory fires worldwide between 2006 and 2009 that resulted in 414 deaths. As recently as February, a fire in

a sweater factory in Bangladesh killed 21. The Executive Director of the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health notes that the recent shredding of laws by those "hostile to any form of regulation" has resulted in insufficient mechanisms to protect workers (cited in Scott Sutherland, "Triangle at 100," *NFPA Journal*, Vol. 105, No. 2, March/April 2011).

Firefighter Connor noted the Fire Department's response to more complex building construction and the value of sprinklers, outward-opening doors, panic bars, and new forcible entry tools as modern deterrents. He also showed a video of a 1991 roof rope rescue in midtown Manhattan under circumstances very similar to the Triangle fire. Nonetheless, he also cited recent large-scale fire deaths as an example of the challenges of maintaining and enforcing fire and building codes. As in the Triangle fire, without compliance with codes and labor laws, workers continue to be at risk.



Triangle today: Washington Place stairwell, the infamous "locked door."



Triangle today: Ninth floor fire escape today. In 1911, workers had to climb out a window to get to the fire escape, which ended two floors above the street. The original window ledge and opening can be seen filled with brick.



Triangle today: The view from the window ledge on the ninth floor looking straight down on Washington Place. This is what the jumpers saw.

Multiple Alarms Month of February, 2011					Source: BICS
BOROUGH	2-2	3-3	4-4	5-5 or higher	TOTALS
Manhattan	2	0	0	0	2
Bronx	5	1	0	0	6
Brooklyn	5	2	0	1	8
Queens	6	1	0	0	7
Staten Island	2	0	0	0	2
City-wide Totals	20	4	0	1	25

Errata: In the last issue, the Command Chief for the Queens 8th Alarm (Box 2211) was identified incorrectly as Deputy Assistant Chief Michael Marrone. It was Deputy Assistant Chief John Sudnik.

BRONX FIFTH ALARM, BOX 2421

On March 9, 2011, Bronx Communications Office received a telephone report of a "house on fire" at 754 Manida Street in the Hunts Point section of the borough. Box 2421, Spofford Avenue at Manida Street, was transmitted at 1401 hours, summoning Engines 94, 73, and 82, Ladder 48, and Battalion 3. Upon a second source, Ladder 31 was assigned to fill out the box. Within three minutes, Battalion 3 arrived and reported a 10-75.

Fire was on the second floor of an occupied, 100-by-100-foot, six-story brick construction. Two adjoining apartments had been combined and the hallway door sealed leading to difficulty in gaining access. The delay led to extension to exposure four, a frame building at 748 Manida Street. Ladder operations were also hindered by the narrowness of Manida Street.

A second alarm was transmitted after eight minutes of operation as the fire spread to exposure four, followed by a third alarm at fifteen minutes. Subsequent extension to exposure 4A necessitated a fourth alarm assignment at twenty-eight minutes. Assistant Chief James Esposito arrived and assumed command from Division 6.

Progress report at 48 minutes indicated four firefighters with burn injuries and one with electric shock (falling power lines nearly electrocuted several firefighters) being treated by EMS at the scene; fire in three floors of the original fire building; exposures four and 4A (both two-story frame semi-attached) fully involved. There were eight handlines in operation along with multiple tower ladders and multiversals.

Chief of Operations Sweeney assumed command at 58 minutes and soon ordered a fifth alarm and exterior operations. "Probably Will Hold" was transmitted at one hour thirty-six minutes of operation. Two Firefighters, from Engines 94 and 64, were removed to Jacobi Hospital for evaluation after being touched by power lines, along with one Firefighter from L-48 for smoke inhalation.



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