

PART II
RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction to Recommendations

The recommendations in this report result from the lessons that emerged from our detailed examination of the FDNY's response on September 11, and from the many interviews we conducted with Department personnel, and with other emergency services agencies, experts in fire operations, the military and technology vendors. Many of the recommendations represent the joint efforts of several McKinsey-FDNY task forces involving approximately 50 FDNY members.

Our examination and analyses indicate that the Fire Department should focus its efforts to improve preparedness in the following key areas: operations, planning and management, communications and technology, and family and member support services.

In operations, the FDNY needs to expand its use of the Incident Command System (ICS), a blueprint for emergency response widely used around the country. This will lead to the creation of a well-defined, flexible, and complete command and control structure for major incidents, with clear and consistent responsibilities and roles. In addition, the FDNY should improve the support it provides incident commanders so that crucial functions can be effectively performed including command and control, planning, logistics and inter-agency coordination. And, the Department must improve its ability to assess the needs of the rest of the city during major incidents and deploy necessary resources to meet those needs. The Department would also benefit from having specialized teams that are highly trained in managing the response to large and complex incidents. Among other operational needs, the Department should have a formal, flexible procedure for recalling off-duty firefighters and for activating mutual aid from agencies in surrounding areas. It needs to improve its process for ensuring that firefighting units stage as required. And, it must expand its hazardous materials capabilities.

Planning is another important component of enhancing preparedness. The FDNY must do more to anticipate its future needs, plan ahead for them, and better manage the initiatives that will meet these needs. This includes developing, expanding and updating procedures and exchanging operational information with other agencies. It also involves improving the Department's ability to assess risks and threats across the city so it can create specific response plans for key locations and prioritize training and investments in new resources, including special operations.

Multiple difficulties involving communications and technology hindered firefighters and EMS personnel on September 11. These difficulties demonstrated the FDNY's need for an improved process to evaluate, acquire and deploy

technology and communications equipment and infrastructure. September 11 also highlighted a number of critical communications and technology needs that must be addressed immediately. These include improving radio communications, improving the Department's ability to receive and disseminate critical information about incidents, and improving the tracking of Department personnel and patients treated by EMS.

September 11 also showed that the Department needs a broader and more flexible system for providing support services to members and their families, i.e., notifying family members when a member of the Fire Department is injured, missing or killed, and providing counseling and other services to families and affected Department members.

This report has a series of broad and detailed recommendations to address all of these needs. However, in order for the recommendations to have any major impact, the FDNY must make a renewed commitment to leadership, accountability and discipline at all levels, in the field and at headquarters.

We point this out because the FDNY had considered several of the recommendations in this report before, but never fully brought them to fruition. For instance, the Department purchased new UHF radios in 1999, but was unsuccessful in an attempt to deploy them in 2001. A few years ago, chief officers discussed and planned the creation of a robust Fire Department Operations Center that would provide the infrastructure and communications capabilities necessary for effective citywide command and control and planning. These plans were never implemented. When units failed to stage properly in the past, the Department did not follow up systematically so that it could retrain those units, and, if necessary, sanction them, their officers, and their commanders. On September 11, as they took part in a response of unprecedented scale and complexity, many Fire units also did not stage properly. They went directly to the lobbies and immediate surroundings of WTC 1 and WTC 2.

In an effort to help the Department improve accountability and discipline, we have included in this report a number of recommendations for enhanced planning and management processes. Ultimately, however, recommendations and processes will only go so far. Success will be predicated on managers, civilian and uniformed, who are committed to bringing about profound change, are capable of leading all personnel by example and are eager to embrace full accountability for their own performance. As this report was being completed, the FDNY increased the number of staff chief officers in management positions. This additional management capacity will help the Department implement these recommendations.

We have computed the cost of our recommendations to the greatest extent possible. The largest cost would go to ensuring reliable communications in high-rise buildings. It would cost \$150 million to \$250 million to install repeater

systems in all high-rises in the city. (This figure could be substantially reduced if the FDNY finds it can use an existing citywide infrastructure, such as the NYPD's, to help address the in-building communications problem.) The remainder of our recommendations would cost \$15 million to \$25 million, a figure that could rise because several of our recommendations require that Department bureaus and groups change their composition and broaden their skill sets. Many of these changes will, no doubt, be accomplished with existing personnel. However, the Department may also need to add personnel, expertise and additional equipment to fully achieve what is required. Such steps could result in substantial additional costs that are difficult to quantify at this time. In addition, our cost estimate does not include the expansion of hazardous materials capabilities that we are recommending. Since the Department has yet to decide the specifics of this expansion, it is impossible to estimate the cost.

These are our recommendations for increasing operational preparedness, improving planning and management, enhancing communications and technology capabilities and expanding family and member support services.

