



Agency History

1941

During World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt establishes a federal Office of Civilian Defense (OCD) and names New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia director.

1950

With the rise of the Cold War, New York's OCD is formed on April 18, 1950. Under the New York State Civil Defense Law, the Mayor appoints a City Director of Defense to prepare the city for an atomic attack. As part of its mission, OCD also helps residents prepare for an enemy air attack and coordinates civil defense programs with nearby counties and cities.

1961

The Mayor's Emergency Control Board (MECB) is established. The Mayor serves as chairman and the board comprises commissioners of several agencies, including the Fire and Police Departments, the MTA, and Health and Hospitals Corporation.

1967

OCD is renamed the Office of Civil Defense and Disaster Control (OCDDC). Some components of the OCD are transferred to the Department of Public Works, the New York City Police Department (NYPD), and the City's municipal radio station, WNYC.

MECB begins the development and implementation of a disaster management system which would enable the City to meet the impact of all types of disasters, including a civil defense situation. The MECB advises the Mayor in times of crisis, charting a course of action and taking steps to implement the decisions of the Mayor. It also formulates and activates the City's disaster management system.

Later the OCDDC and the MECB are combined into the Office of Emergency Control Board - Civil Defense, which focused on the day-to-day planning toward the development and maintenance of a total disaster management system.

1975

The functions of the former OCD, which were first transferred to the Department of Public Works, the NYPD, and WNYC Radio, are formally transferred to the Police Department. The Police commissioner is appointed interim coordinator of the Office of Emergency Services - Civil Preparedness.

1976

The Office of Emergency Services - Civil Preparedness is renamed the Office of Civil Preparedness. The Police commissioner is appointed director. He reports to the Mayor and serves as the local director of civil defense.



1977

The Police commissioner is appointed Director of the Mayor's Emergency Control Board, which meets when convened by the Mayor, or when called into committee session by the director.

1984

The Office of Civil Preparedness is renamed the Office of Emergency Management, which falls within the NYPD.

1996

By executive order, the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management is created. The director reports directly to the Mayor, and serves as the local director of civil defense.

2001/2002

In a referendum held in late 2001, voters overwhelmingly elect to elevate the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management to departmental level status. In 2002, the agency is renamed the Office of Emergency Management and headed by a commissioner who reports to the Mayor.

2006

In late 2006, the Office of Emergency Management moved into a new headquarters at 165 Cadman Plaza East in Brooklyn. The new facility replaces the agency's former headquarters destroyed on September 11, 2001. The building balances state-of-the-art technology with progressive sustainable design elements. It is the first "green" agency headquarters in New York City.

Today

NYC Emergency Management (formerly the Office of Emergency Management or OEM) is undergoing a rebranding process as part of a comprehensive effort to increase the public's awareness of our presence and role in the city. This rebranding includes phasing out the use of the OEM title, acronym, and logo.

NYC Emergency Management continues to educate the public about emergency preparedness. Programs like Ready New York, Community Emergency Response Teams, and Citizen Corps reach more New Yorkers every day through public outreach, volunteerism, and strategic partnerships.