

Speaker 1: [00:07](#) Hello everyone. 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: [00:26](#) Hello everyone, thank you for listening. I am Omar Bourne.

Allison Pennisi: [00:29](#) And I am Allison Pennisi. 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 RSS feed. You can also follow us on social media.

Omar Bourne: [00:40](#) This episode we are coming to you from the 2018 National Homeland Security Conference, which is being held here in the Big Apple.

Allison Pennisi: [00:48](#) That's right Omar. The National Homeland Security Conference brings together emergency management professionals, military and the private sector, each year to share best practices.

Omar Bourne: [00:58](#) We have two special guests today. Joining us for this episode are New York City Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito, Commissioner Esposito was also serving as one of the conference's keynote speakers, and we have Branch Strickland, who is the executive director of finance at New York City Emergency Management. Branch is also the president of the National Homeland Security Association, which sponsors the National Homeland Security Conference.

Omar Bourne: [01:26](#) Welcome guys.

B. Strickland: [01:28](#) Thank you.

Joseph Esposito: [01:28](#) Pleasure to be here, thank you.

Allison Pennisi: [01:30](#) Branch, let's begin with you. So, this conference was originally conceived as an information sharing opportunity. Can you share with our listeners how that has evolved, and what can and should attendees expect for this years conference?

B. Strickland: [01:44](#) Sure, and thank you for having me here. The conference originally started, in Dallas in 2005, as a really informal way for first responders, emergency managers, to get together and share best practices, to learn from one another. Really kicking off in Miami in the 2007 conference and going until this year in

New York City, it's been growing year over year, a lot more engagement with local, state, and federal partners, and we're just seeing a lot more excitement for cities that want this conference to come that they can showcase the work that they're doing and really share what they have, either through personnel, through equipment, through training. It really is just exciting to have it finally in New York City. It's the first time that it's here. We're very excited to come. This is the best city in the world. We've got the greatest police, fire, emergency managers, health officials here.

B. Strickland: [02:40](#) For this week, we've got a few in person demonstrations for our operational folks. Great keynotes including Commissioner Esposito here. We're just excited to really showcase everything that New York City has to offer.

Allison Pennisi: [02:55](#) Fantastic, and I think everybody's very excited to be here, too.

Allison Pennisi: [02:58](#) Commissioner Esposito, what are you hoping that this years attendees can take away from the event being held here, and as Branch said, to be biased, the greatest city in the world?

Joseph Esposito: [03:09](#) Well, it is the greatest city in the world. I think most people would say that, well they believe that, whether they would say it or not, but most people do believe that. We all know that public safety and emergency management is a shared responsibility. I want every attendee here to learn something new, whether it's preparedness, response, or recovery. So they can take back to their community, make their community better and safer.

Joseph Esposito: [03:34](#) Also, make connections. We've got people here from around the nation, from federal, state, city, local agencies. They're all here for a common goal and if they can make connections with other folks, I think that's a tremendous thing to do, because we all work better when we're working with somebody we're familiar with. So, part of it is just making connections with other people, and of course we want the folks here, again, the best city in the world, the safest and best city in the world, we want them to enjoy themselves. It's a great city. We hope they spend some cash, and we hope-

B. Strickland: [04:07](#) That's always good.

Joseph Esposito: [04:07](#) -that they can take in some of the sights. There's so many sights we want them to get as many as they can and enjoy themselves also.

Omar Bourne: [04:16](#) Yeah, it's definitely about networking. Commissioner during your opening remarks you said something that really stood out to me. You said, "Prior to 9/11 FDNY fought fires. The NYPD fought crime. Now we're looking at them working together with fighting terrorism and just helping the City to run and to be safe."

Omar Bourne: [04:40](#) So, how has 9/11 changed the game of homeland security?

Joseph Esposito: [04:45](#) Well, it's changed it tremendously. Again, as I said earlier on stage, before 9/11 what did the Fire Department do? For the most part they fought fires. What did the PD do prior to 9/11? We fought crime. Now, we thought about terrorism. We had a unit that investigated terrorism and dealt with, not at the level that we're doing it now. Now, any incident, any event, any parade or event that happens in this city, the first think we think about is how can we prevent terrorism at this event? That's the Fire Department also. You know, you've seen around the country, around the world, where they use fire as a terrorist act. So, firefighters will have to go in and fight that fire. Perhaps, when there's an active shooting in that building also. They've drilled with NYPD to address situations like that. So, we've changed.

Joseph Esposito: [05:40](#) Again, with the Police Department, before 9/11, they fought crime. They had a piece of counter-terrorism, yes, not to the extent it is now. Now, they have eyes on the world. They look at every event around the world to see what they can pick up on those events to make this city safer. So, it's a different world, it's a different country, it's a different city, and we've adapted, I think, very well to it.

Omar Bourne: [06:06](#) Wonderful, and I know you served on the NYPD for close to 50 years, and now you are the Commissioner for New York City Emergency Management. So, you've seen both the terrorism side and fighting crime, and being on the streets, on the ground, with the people, and now you are serving in the capacity of helping people to prepare. So there's a lot of good insight that you bring to the table and that you have.

Omar Bourne: [06:37](#) This question is for both of you. What key takeaways have you learned from your colleagues in the field, going back to, Commissioner your time with PD and now with Emergency Management, and then Branch as president. What key takeaways have you learned that you've applied to your role today?

- Joseph Esposito: [06:55](#) Well, as you said, I was the chief of the department for the NYPD, and I was able to take the lessons learned in my role there, to my position here as commissioner of Emergency Management. But, I must tell you, also, since joining Emergency Management I've encountered so many knowledgeable and professional colleagues, both in the agency that I'm in charge of, Emergency Management, but also agencies around this city, around this nation, even around this world, and I've learned something new every day, probably, from those professionals. They're a great group of people and it's a great experience. What I've learned from them, I've actually used a lot of it in a number of events, emergencies, that have happened in New York City.
- Joseph Esposito: [07:43](#) So, again, in the four years I've been here what I've learned from the colleagues and professionals in emergency management, has really impressed me and I think it's helped me do my job better here.
- B. Strickland: [07:53](#) Sure, and the thing I would add is we have about a team of 20 people from five different City agencies, our regional partners, the State, all working to make this week a success. It really does go to show that the connections, the collaboration, working with people from other agencies really does make a difference to, not only making this week a success, but also in our day to day jobs as emergency managers, as PD, as Fire, that those connections, those networks, knowing who to call late at night from a different agency, it really makes a difference. So, I think that is certainly something that is making this week a success and then, when this week is over, it'll help us keep the city safe.
- B. Strickland: [08:37](#) I think the other thing I'll just add is: From everyone I've heard, all the attendees, they are so excited to learn from New York City on what we do best, to bring that back to their communities, and really see how they can impact change on how they protect their communities.
- B. Strickland: [08:53](#) On the other side, I've heard a lot of people from New York City that are excited for the Charlottesville presentation, for the Las Vegas shooting presentation. They wanna see these events that happened across the country, and how we can make our, what we do here, even better.
- Allison Pennisi: [09:10](#) Fantastic.
- Joseph Esposito: [09:11](#) That's why I think this conference is so important. It does bring all the communities together, and, as Branch said, we'll hear

from Las Vegas about their sho- We're gonna hear first hand from the people that are on the ground, in those cities, and handled those events, we're gonna hear from them. That's how you learn best, from hearing first hand from the people that actively, actually responded and dealt with that situation. So, I think that's important. Again, I'm just hoping that all the attendees here learn something, take something back to their home, that they didn't have the knowl- They learned something. I also hope that they enjoy this great city.

- Joseph Esposito: [09:49](#) I just want to take this time to thank Branch, and the whole staff at Emergency Management, and, again, all our other partners, FD, PD, everyone who is involved. This is gonna be a great conference. It's already off to a great start. I'm very happy with the way it's going and I wanna thank everybody for putting it together. So, thank you.
- B. Strickland: [10:05](#) Thank you.
- Allison Pennisi: [10:06](#) Alright, for those interested in learning more about the National Homeland Security Conference, you could follow the hashtag, on social media, NHSC2018, or visit nationalhomelandsecurity.org.
- B. Strickland: [10:19](#) And I'll just plug that we are planning already for the 2019 conference in Phoenix, Arizona. So, I hope you'll all join us there next year.
- Allison Pennisi: [10:26](#) Fantastic. We'll see you there.
- Joseph Esposito: [10:28](#) Looking forward to it.
- Allison Pennisi: [10:29](#) That's this edition 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.