

Established 1978

HISTORY OF THE ASSOCIATION

1972-2023

In 1972, an impromptu telephone call between two high-rise fire safety directors began the unofficial birth of the Fire Safety Director's Association. Robert Elko who worked for Morgan Guaranty a banking institution that was founded by J. P. Morgan, and Dennis Rice (Irving Trust), met along with George Semus to exchange some common fire safety problems and how to deal with the new fire protection systems for their buildings. Some of the discussions were about the new fire protection technologies that were being introduced into the marketplace: Halon chemical systems; hydraulic calculated sprinkler systems; quick release type sprinkler heads; ABC type fire extinguishers; improved smoke detection systems and stairwell pressurization. Before long, Bill Sarnelli joined this informal gathering. Ray McDermott and Bill Whalen soon appeared on the scene. Later, Mr. Whalen would become a key advisor for this "informal gathering" of fire safety directors.

After two disastrous high-rise fires (One New York Plaza & 919 3rd Ave) and innumerable legal cases, Local Law (LL) No. 5 of 1973 became a central point in the growth of the Association. More than just steel and concrete, adequate fire protection and a process to safely evacuate a high-rise building were introduced as a means to protect property and provide life safety for the occupants. The City of New York Fire Department (FDNY) with the blessing of the city fathers, created the most restrictive law of its kind for high-rise buildings. The new law called for Fire Safety Directors to be on duty for each building over 100 feet in height or occupied with more than 100 people above or below the street or more than 500 people above the first floor. In the mid 70's at each meeting a guest speaker gave noteworthy information regarding fire protection and life safety. In attendance at these meetings were the FDNY and a large group of fire safety directors. Both groups conducted high-rise building fire drills and pre-planning inspections. The collaboration from these meetings, drills and inspections created new era teamwork.

In 1978, the informal assembly of fire safety directors became an official organization, and Robert Elko was elected the charter President. Through the efforts of Bob Elko, Ray McDermott, George Semus, Bill Sarnelli, Dennis Rice and Michael Laffey the reorganization and membership drive flourished. This dedicated team set the tone for placing the Association on the right track. These six gentlemen were the founding fathers and later charter members of our Association. The organization was officially named the Fire Safety Directors of Greater New York. By-laws were drafted and the organization was becoming a resounding association.

The Association constitution and by-laws were officially adopted on April 28, 1982 by the membership. Under Michael Laffey's tenure as the 2nd President, the Association instituted a fire safety seminar program. The annual seminars had a great impact on the professional growth of this association.

In 1984, LL No. 16, which required fire protection, elevators, smoke control and life safety for new and existing buildings also committed to a Fire Safety Director for hotel occupancies. Successful and growing years of the organization were following by Sandy Sansevero and Dan Nastro in their terms as President.

Other Association activities include fire safety training with the local fire department and private industry. Our charitable endeavors include such outstanding organizations as: New York Firefighter's Burn Foundation; New York City Fire Museum; New York Fire Safety Foundation; Edward W. Whalen Memorial Fund; FDNY/NYPD Silver Shield Game; New York State Fire Safety Consortium and a host of other worthy charities.

During the Association's 10th year in 1988, over 250 participants attended our annual seminar on "Fire Technology for Today." Over the year's these Annual Symposiums have provided a variety of tall building topics for the Fire Safety Directors, the FDNY, visiting Fire Departments and Property Management Groups.



Guest Lecturers and Topics at the 2015 Association Symposium: L to R: Jack J. Murphy, FSDA Chairman (Alteration Projects in Occupied High-Rise Buildings); Louis Cendagorta, FDNY- Executive Director Fire Suppression & CDA (Maintaining Fire Protection Systems in Occupied High-Rise Buildings); Allan Springer, 1st Battalion Chief and Greg Stoy, 8th Battalion Chief from the Dallas Fire Department, High-Rise Fatal Fire Thanksgiving Office Tower); Tom Lapolla, FDNY 8th Battalion Chief, (High-Rise Building Fire Undergoing Major Alterations) and Russell Touhey, FSDA President.

This was also the year that all LL No. 5 buildings had to be in frill compliance with either compartmentation requirements or a full sprinkler system. We also celebrated the year with a dinner dance at Governor's Island. On May 4, 1988 another major high-rise office building fire occurred at the First Interstate Bank Building in Los Angeles. The fire demonstrated the enormity of high-rise structure fires. If fires in related occupancies with similar fire loads are not detected and suppressed in their incipient stages, they may burn until all usable fuel is consumed, growing so large that the fire department cannot quickly control them.



A Fire Department issued Fire Safety Director Certificate (circa 1988)

The Fire Department of the City of New York in 1989 created a committee that would meet to discuss problems, explore solutions and evaluate new technologies to better serve the occupants of various types of occupancies within the five Boroughs of New York. This committee became known as the “Industry Advisory Board.” Today, several members of our Association serve on this Board. This same year, the FSDA supported a change to the local law that would provide for a dedicated Fire Safety Director in all Class-E (office) buildings over one million square feet or greater than 350 feet in height. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass the City Council. To this day, the FSDA has strong ties to seeing a dedicated FSD for each high-rise building with a Class-E fire alarm system.

In 1990, the Federal Hotel/Motel Fire Safety Act had all impact on all Class-J occupancies since it helped push for all hotels and motels three stories or above to be fully sprinkled. At our spring seminar the Association chose to bestow the Fire Safety Director Award upon C. Tom Shires, MD. Dr. Shires was instrumental in establishing burn care at New York Hospital/Cornell Burn Center. Prior to coming to New York City Dr. Shires was an attending physician at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas, Texas. He was the doctor who attended to the mortal wounds of President John F. Kennedy. Today, New York Hospital is one of the busiest Burn Centers in the nation. It has expanded its role from burn care to include burn prevention, research and a skin bank.

A 12-alarm fire in a downtown Philadelphia high-rise office building on January 23, 1991 would again demonstrate the value of a fire sprinkler system. This fire burnt out of control for 18 hours. After destroying 10 floors of this structure, it was finally controlled by the activation of the sprinkler system. The limited area sprinklers were partially installed on the upper floors. It was the first time in modern history that a super structure was in jeopardy of a major structural collapse. Later that year on September 13th the Association converged onto the Hauppauge Country Club to hold the first Edward W. Whalen Golf Tournament. This tournament later became one of the first fundraisers for The New York Firefighters Burn Foundation Children’s Burn Camp. Over the years, the Association has given support to this worthy charity that provides young burn survivors a summer treat.

On a cold February 26, 1993 Friday afternoon, the nation was shocked to learn the World Trade Center [WTC] sustained a terrorist attack. The magnitude of this response was monumental, and it would test to the fullest the capabilities of the fire department, the fire safety director, the building engineering staff, the emergency medical units and the law. After this event many FSDs were given extensive training on “Weapons of Mass Destruction.” Also that year, two FSDA members Sandy Sansevero and Jack Murphy assisted the FDNY in re-writing the new FSD certification test for the training institutions. Over the years the Association had a seat at the table for other FSD related training.

The Association celebrated its 20th Anniversary with a Black-Tie Gala Event. This social was held at the United States Army Garrison in Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn. *(See photo below)*

FSDA Past Presidents



Seated (L to R): Jack Murphy (96-97), Danny Nastro (86-87) and Larry Byrnes, Current President. Standing (L to R): Sandy Sansevero (84-85) Current Chairman, Lt. Jim Fitzgerald (*FDNY FF Burn Foundation*), Mike Laffey (82-83), Mike Nelson (90-91), Bill Stromstedt (94-95), Bob Elko (78-81), the 1st elected President and Dick Abbott (92-93).

On September 11, 2001 our country witnessed terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and on the United Airlines Flight 93. This flight was brought down in Stone Creek Township, PA by heroic passengers who prevented the jetliner from slamming into another building. The WTC/FSD Complex fire safety team was made up of nine FSDs on duty that day in addition to each floor having fire warden teams. With some confusion at first, Tower-2 FSD Michael Hurley, didn't really know what happened after peeking up at Tower-1. In the first few minutes of the attack, the initial fire alarm voice communication in Tower-2, FSD Hurley asked people to Shelter-in-Place. Parts of the Tower-1 building, airplane debris, and victims hitting the plaza made evacuation hazardous. But all this changed when the second plane hit Tower-2, 19 minutes later. As long as the Fire Command Center/fire alarm control panel (FACP) were still operational, the FSDs were making announcements that the situation was serious and that occupants should evacuate the building immediately. As debris continued to rain down on the Plaza, the FSDs help redirect many evacuees to the concourse level that led away from the Towers and onto the Church Street side of the Plaza. Director Hurley survived the collapse. Actions taken by the WTC Fire Safety Directors and floor Fire Warden Teams aided in the Complex evacuation.

NOTE: In 2016, FSD Hurley was the recipient of the Association's World Trade Center Fire Safety Directors Memorial Award for the significant part he played on 9/11.

The FSDs and many floor fire wardens during the evacuation, stood fast alongside the Fire Department at the Incident Command Posts and in the stairways of all the towers. One Fire Warden Brian Clark (Tower-2/84th Floor) using his flashlight and whistle leading groups of people down the stairs. On the 81st floor, they encountered a trapped victim. While the groups continued to proceed down the stairs, Clark and another person pulled the victim out from under wreckage. All three made it out alive. In Tower-2, Rick Rescorla the Security Vice President for Morgan-Stanley/Dean-Witter and a U.S. Army Col. (Ret.), who survived the WTC 1993 bombing, led thousands to safety on 9/11. Col. Rescorla was last seen going back up the stairs in Tower-2 before it collapsed.



Photo by: Bob Krist, Photograph Books: A Photo Tour of New York City (Prior & After Books 9/11/2001)

9/11 IN MEMORIAM



Director F/LS
James J. Corrigan

Jim was the Director of Fire and Life Services for the World Trade Center (WTC) Complex and a FDNY Captain (Ret.). Knowing that the fire department's portable radio system was not functioning properly, he and the 1st Battalion Chief tried to make their way to the old fire command center to see if they could activate the intercom system and make an evacuation announcement that all emergency personnel could hear. Then he with 3 other fire safety directors rushed to the day care center (Tower-5) to evacuate the children. All of the children and only one of these courageous men survived the collapse of the building.



FSD
Lawrence F. Boisseau

Larry was a WTC Fire Safety Director since 1993. On Sept. 11, he helped knock out the windows of a ground-floor day care center at Tower-5. Later he was directed to go to the Fire Command Post on the ground floor of Tower-2. There, he helped direct fleeing office workers and firefighters before the South Tower collapsed.



FSD
Richard P. Fitzsimons

Rich was a WTC fire safety director where he conducted drills and planned evacuations. He had just completed evacuating the children from the day care center and was last seen heading toward a sub-basement in the WTC Complex to assist in the rescue effort.



FSD
Philip T. Hayes

Phil was a WTC Fire Safety Director and a FDNY Firefighter (Ret.) He helped rescue children from the day care center in Tower-5. Then, as debris fell from the sky, he ran into Tower-2 to redirect people out of harm's way.



FSD
William X. Wren

Bill was a WTC Fire Safety Director and a FDNY Firefighter (Ret.) Bill and a small group of the building's fire safety team members rushed to Tower-5 to assist in the evacuation of a day care center. Then, Bill and the others, headed back to Tower-2.

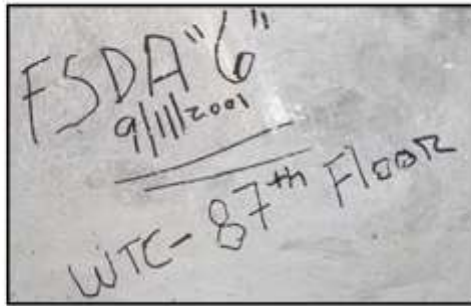


FSD
Robert J. Mayo

Bob was a WTC fire safety director, stationed in Tower-4. He successfully helped evacuate that structure. He was last seen in the lobby of Tower-1 shortly before it collapsed, working to keep calm and order as he helped evacuate thousands of people from the building.



Their unwavering duty and valiant efforts along with members of the Fire Department, two Police Departments and the WTC floor fire warden teams helped save many lives that day. Their names along with hundreds of other souls are enshrined on the 9/11 Memorial Wall in Lower Manhattan.



Dedicate to 9/11 Fire Safety Directors (FSDA) "6"
Inscribed on the 87th Floor Wall of the New WTC (Freedom Tower)

Also on this infamous day, FDNY 1st Battalion Chief Larry Byrnes (Ret.) & Past FSDA President) responded and helped contribute to reestablishing a command presence at the site. He was quoted as saying *"Old firefighters never retire; they just go away for a while"* which attributes as a fitting statement to praise all those who never wavered in their duty to save others.

FSDA 9/11 ASSISTANCE

During the first few days and weeks that followed 9/11, the Association responded to many requests for assistance from the FDNY Special Operations Command (SOC) under the leadership of Deputy Chief John Norman. One of our members James Ellson, FDNY Captain (Ret.) and former Executive Assistant to Deputy Chief Ray Downey at SOC and USAR Task Force Leader was instrumental in helping the Department in the initial efforts to recover from the terrorist attack.

One of the earlier requests was for help in identifying a stair tower in which several victims were found. In the floor plans FDNY had, the stairs were designated by number (Stair-1, for example). Over the years, all stairs had come to be identified with a letter of the alphabet, such as "Stair-A". Several attempts were made to obtain current building plans from the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PA). The PA said it had already given the plans to the command post. The question then becomes, Which Command Post, the City Police Department, the PA Police Department, or the Office of Emergency Management? Unable to acquire any WTC floor plans, Chief Byrnes was contacted and able to provide the information concerning stair identifications that same day.

Concerned with hazardous conditions such as the wind's effects on the remaining panes of broken glass and the conditions of the facades of the surrounding structures, the FSDA network was asked to contact individual Fire Safety Directors and ask them to report to their respective buildings to assist with the erect of scaffolding and tarps that would enwrap the buildings and help alleviate unsafe conditions.



A 9/11 Recovery Piece - World Trade Center Fire Safety Floor Warden Whistle

The Association testified before the City Council and National Institute of Standards and Technology [NIST] in 2002, to enhance life safety needs within high-rise buildings. A collective wealth of FSDA knowledge facilitating emergency events in these tall buildings was given at both of these public hearings.

The Association also supported the creation of the NIST *"The National Construction Safety Team Act"* to investigate major building collapses and structural fire incidents, and secured from the National Fire Protection Association [NFPA] a commitment to create a High-Rise Building Safety Advisory Committee.

On March 1st the Association formed the first Task Force (*See photo below*) to develop a High-Rise Office Building Evacuation Plan for Emergencies Other Than Fire. Upon completing their tasks for these all-hazard emergencies, the Task Force sought the assistance of City of New York Fire Department / Bureau of Fire Prevention to discuss the conclusions. Based on this, a joint task force was developed to formalize the City Emergency Action Plans [EAP] for high-rise office structures. The vast on-the-job experiences of FSDA members took an old cliché, *"If these walls could talk"* to lessen the new high-rise building heighten concerns.



This High-Rise FSDA/EAP Task Force Group consisted of six retired firefighters and two fire protection engineers.
Front Row (L to R): Jack J. Murphy, Chairman; Joe Razza; Larry Byrnes and Joe McGearry
Back Row (L to R): Mike Nelson; Jim Ellson; Tom Brennan and Jim Hayes

In 2003 following the 9/11 event, the Association has also made great strides to enhance other FSDA high-rise concepts both on the local and national levels. The EAP Plans for high-rise office buildings was enacted in 2004 as a local NYC law (LL-26) featuring some of the following life safety enhancements:

Some of EAP Plan highlights are:

- Developed a Fire Department Building Information Card
 - (*1st fire code enacted for building intelligence in the United States*)
- Designate the Fire Safety Director [FSD] as the EAP Director
- FSD/EAP Enhance Training Program (8-Hrs)
- EAP Training - Floor Warden Teams & the Building Emergency Response Team
 - (*1st fire code enacted for All-Hazard Emergencies Other than Fire in the United States*)
- The use of elevators for all-hazard emergencies other than fire
- Accommodations for People with Disabilities
-

- New Evacuation Protocols known as **TIPS**:
 - **T**otal Building, **I**n-Building Relocation, **P**artial Building and **S**helter-in-Place
- EAP Evacuation Drills
- EAP Plan submission to the Fire Department for approval
- Establish a neighbor notification protocol when conducting an EAP drill.
- Enhanced fire proofing for structural support members
- Fire Tower (stairwell) option
- Elevator lobbies are enclosed above street level
- Ban truss construction above 75 feet
- Relocate HVAC air intakes above grade no less than 20 feet
- Retroactive installation of:
 - Sprinkler system in high-rise office buildings
 - Photo-luminous exit path markings within the stair towers

Photoluminescent Exit Path Markings

In 2003, the Department of Buildings also enacted Chapter 26 of the New York City Charter for the Photoluminescent Exit Path Markings, (Sections 27-131.1 and 27-383(b) of the Administrative Code of the City, § 27-3 Reference Standard 6-1

Shortly after the 1993 bombing of the original World Trade Center (WTC), the building owner marked the steps, landings, and hand rails with photoluminescent materials to highlight the exit paths within the stairwells. This proactive action would later be of a great assistance in the evacuation of this tall building complex on September 11, 2001. Part of NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) enacted Local Law-26 (2004) was to install photoluminescent low-level exit path markings for both existing and new office buildings. A DOB Task Force was formed to develop the first National Standard to install these exit path markings. This Association along with other global subject matter experts gathered in NYC to develop the 1st standard enacted in the United States, and later it was a means to develop an Underwriters Laboratory (UL) 1994 Standard for Luminous Egress Path Marking System.

Exit path drawings (See Fig.1) were added to further illustrate their placements with stairwells, stair obstructions (e.g. standpipe riser), intermediate and final exit doors as well as signage.

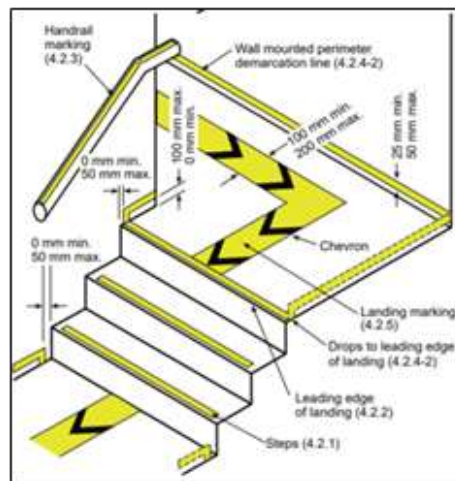


Fig.1 Photoluminescent stair landing exit path markings illuminate a ‘green’ glow that highlights the steps, rails, landings, doors and obstructions in a stairwell when the building lights or the emergency standby power fails. Source: NYC/Dept. of Buildings

With the heightened threat of active shootings in America, the Association in 2014 developed an Active Shooter Task Force on actions to be taken by the FSD/EAP Director. Completing their building related recommended actions the Task Force sort and formed a collaboration with the Bureau of Fire Prevention under the direction of FDNY Chief of Fire Prevention Ron Spadafora. Though their collective efforts an Active Shooter and Medical Emergencies component was added to the FSD/EAP course of study.

FLSDA Impacting National Codes and Standards

On the national level, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) a federal government agency studying the 9/11 World Trade Center collapse release it recommendations. Today, some these recommendations have been enacted as either in the International Code Council Building and Fire Codes or became an NFPA standard.

In 2004, the NFPA formed a High-Rise Building Safety Advisory Committee (HRB-SAC). The Charter for this Committee would be a standing advisory group, reporting directly to the NFPA Standards Council. The HRBSAC is charged with: Identifying existing needs and emerging issues within the high-rise building environment; Providing recommendations to the Standards Council as to how NFPA can provide leadership on such issues; Working to ensure that NFPA's code and standard development process includes proposals and comments that reflect the latest thinking on high-rise building safety issues, high-rise emerging technology provisions and other matters which impact those who work, live or have to operate high-rise buildings. One of the HRB-SAC committee recommendations was to upgrade the 1620 Pre-Incident Planning as a Recommended Practice to a Standard. In 2010 it became a Standard with the current 3rd Edition rolling out in 2020.

Also in 2004 an Elevator Task Group was formed with the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), NFPA, NIST) and the International Association of Firefighters to enhance high-rise building occupant evacuation operations (OEO) using an elevator car and Firefighter Emergency Operations (FEO). This ASME-17 Task Group met every 3 months from 2004-2012. These new tall building OEO/FEO elevators would impact firefighter and occupant safety.

In the 2009 International Building and Fire Code Editions, 23 model building and fire code changes consistent with the NIST/WTC investigation recommendations were enacted.



L to R: 2016 FSDA Group: Mike Gimpel, Trustee; Joe Razza, Vice-Chairman; Vicki Pitcavage, Trustee; Jack Murphy, Chairman; Gina Bertucelli, President, Russ Touhey, Trustee; John O'Grady, 1st Vice-President; Mitchell Newman, Financial Secretary and Joe Haney, 2nd Vice-President

In 2019 this Association incorporated the word "Life" into their title – Fire and Life Safety Directors Association of Greater New York. And in the same year the NFPA Technical Committee on Building Fire and Life Safety Directors was sanctioned to develop Professional Qualifications for this position. This Technical Committee along with Correlating Committee on Professional Qualifications was created in 2023 as the 1082 Standard for Facilities Fire and Life Safety Director Professional Qualifications. This standard addresses the duties, requirements, competencies, and professional job qualifications for this life safety position.

From this standard group a Facility Emergency Actions Plans was also enacted in 2023. This new standard provides guidance on the development of emergency actions plans for all-hazard emergencies in facilities more than 500 persons.

In 2024, the NFPA 1620 Standard for Pre-Incident Planning (2020 Edition) merged with other related emergency standards as part of a consolidation plan for emergency response and responder safety. The new benchmark is known as the 1660 Standard for Emergency, Continuity, and Crisis Management: Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. Several FLSDA Board of Trustee members serving on the three standards provided expertise on the subject matters at hand.

FDNY Plaque Dedication – 9th Battalion, Engine-54 and Ladder-4
Honoring FLSDA Past Chairman C. W. ‘Sandy’ Sansevero
November 17, 2023



Sandy loved the 9th Bn, Eng-54 and Ladder-4. He served here as a Lieutenant on the ladder company and would regularly visit this fire station. He knew every member assigned here and always did a check on how the members were doing. And when someone new was assigned he would make sure to meet them.

When Sandy became aware of a problem with the firehouse September 11th Memorial Plaque, his unique ability to fix problems immediately kicked in. Within two days, Sandy showed up with the Rockefeller Center Management Group from Tishmen-Speyer and explained the issue at hand. Within 5 days, a donation was made available and a plan in place to enhance the Memorial.



Today, this Memorial serves as a great honor to the 15 members lost on 9/11. It is viewed hundreds of times a week by the public. This 9/11 Memorial is both humbling and an inspiration to everyone who sees it. So, the members felt it is only fitting to bestow this honor and place Sandy's plaque on the Memorial Wall.



In attendance that day representing the Association were: L to R: FLSDA Officers: Tom Burke, 3rd Vice-President; Nick Gaudiosi, Board of Trustee; Joe Razza, Co-Chairman and Dennis Stewart, 1st Vice President.

Association's 35th High-Rise Symposium

The 2023 seminar on tall building subject matters was well received by all in attendance from the FDNY, visiting Fire Services across the country, Association members, BOMA and other building representatives. Over the years, the mini-conferences have enlightened all to emergency events and life safety concerns that maybe imposed within these tall building walls.

HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS: UNDERSTANDING THE VERTICAL CHALLENGES

TODAY'S AGENDA

Stephen Marsar, FDNY 6th Battalion Chief
 Michael Nigro, FDNY Captain (Ret)
FLSDA Expectations for a Fire & EAP Emergency Responses

BREAK - 15 MINUTES
EXHIBITOR TABLES OPEN

James Pirot, FDNY Lieutenant, 7th Division
Building Systems and Emergency Response

Jerry Tracy, FDNY Battalion Chief (Ret.)
High-Rise Buildings & Complexes Under Alteration/Renovation

QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD

Fire and Life Safety Director's Association of Greater New York

IN ATTENDANCE

FDNY

- 1st Dep. Comm. Joseph Pfeifer
- Chief of Ops. John Esposito
- Chief of Trng. Thomas Curcio
- Asst. Chief Michael Meyers
- Man. Boro. Com Michael Ajello
- Other Sr. Staff & Dept Personnel

VISITING FIRE SERVICES:

- Boston
- Hoboken
- Jersey City
- Morris Co. Fire Academy
- Monmouth Co. Fire Academy
- Nassau Co. Fire Academy
- N.J. State Fire Marshal's Office
- N.J. Deputy Fire Chiefs Assoc.
- North Hudson Fire & Rescue Services
- Paterson
- San Francisco
- Teaneck
- Toronto

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Jersey City

This Association has seen many improvements with fire protection systems and has witnessed the valuable role of a dedicated Fire and Life Safety Director plays when a crisis of any magnitude occurs within these high-rises. These tall buildings are vertical challenges not only for the occupants, but also First Responders. Through the years, the Association's life safety collaboration in these structures has proved to be a cooperative relationship with the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Be Safe out There!