

and regulators determine those loading events that should be considered as credible hazards in the design process. These building codes are developed by the design and regulatory communities themselves, through a voluntary committee consensus process. Prior to September 11, 2001, it was the consensus of these communities that aircraft impact was not a sufficiently credible hazard to warrant routine consideration in the design of buildings and, therefore, the building codes did not require that such events be considered in building design. Nevertheless, the design of WTC 1 and WTC 2 did include at least some consideration of the probable response of the buildings to an aircraft impact, albeit a somewhat smaller and slower moving aircraft than those actually involved in the September 11 events. Building codes do consider fire as a credible hazard and include extensive requirements to control the spread of fire throughout buildings, to delay the onset of fire-induced structural collapse, and to facilitate the safe egress of building occupants in a fire event. For fire-protected steel-frame buildings, like WTC 1 and WTC 2, these code requirements had been deemed effective and, in fact, prior to September 11, there was no record of the fire-induced-collapse of such structures, despite some very large uncontrolled fires.

The ability of the two towers to withstand aircraft impacts without immediate collapse was a direct function of their design and construction characteristics, as was the vulnerability of the two towers to collapse a result of the combined effects of the impacts and ensuing fires. Many buildings with other design and construction characteristics would have been more vulnerable to collapse in these events than the two towers, and few may have been less vulnerable. It was not the purpose of this study to assess the code-conformance of the building design and construction, or to judge the adequacy of these features. However, during the course of this study, the structural and fire protection features of the buildings were examined. The study did not reveal any specific structural features that would be regarded as substandard, and, in fact, many structural and fire protection features of the design and construction were found to be superior to the minimum code requirements.

Several building design features have been identified as key to the buildings' ability to remain standing as long as they did and to allow the evacuation of most building occupants. These included the following:

- robustness and redundancy of the steel framing system
- adequate egress stairways that were well marked and lighted
- conscientious implementation of emergency exiting training programs for building tenants

Similarly, several design features have been identified that may have played a role in allowing the buildings to collapse in the manner that they did and in the inability of victims at and above the impact floors to safely exit. These features should not be regarded either as design deficiencies or as features that should be prohibited in future building codes. Rather, these are features that should be subjected to more detailed evaluation, in order to understand their contribution to the performance of these buildings and how they may perform in other buildings. These include the following:

- the type of steel floor truss system present in these buildings and their structural robustness and redundancy when compared to other structural systems
- use of impact-resistant enclosures around egress paths
- resistance of passive fire protection to blasts and impacts in buildings designed to provide resistance to such hazards
- grouping emergency egress stairways in the central building core, as opposed to dispersing them throughout the structure