

Chapter 6

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

6.1 CONTEXT

Soon after the first aircraft impacted WTC 1 at 8:46:30 a.m., and before the full extent of the disaster unfolded, emergency services in New York City were functioning on the scene. Port Authority Police Department (PAPD) officers were already present performing their law enforcement duties, assisting with the evacuation, and helping the injured. By 8:50 a.m., the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) was operating at the Fire Command Desk in the lobby of WTC 1. New York Police Department (NYPD) helicopters and ground staff reached the scene by 8:52 a.m.¹ This early deployment is discussed in detail in NIST NCSTAR 1-8.

An additional, critical component of the New York City emergency response system, the New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM), was located on the 7th and 23rd floors of WTC 7.² The OEM office on the 23rd floor contained the emergency operations post for OEM and was designed to function as the primary command center to help coordinate multi-agency operations at incidents throughout the city² (Sheirer 2004). The OEM office consisted of a communications center and management facilities staffed by OEM personnel, liaison personnel from each of the emergency response departments, and personnel from organizations who provide support to the city's critical infrastructure. The OEM facility also had meeting rooms available for use by the Mayor, senior emergency response personnel, personnel responsible for transportation systems, and personnel who managed other infrastructure critical to city operations.

WTC 7, on the north side of Vesey Street and across from the main WTC complex, was affected by the collapses of the two towers and was included in the total emergency response at the WTC site. This chapter describes the response operations in, near, and relating to WTC 7.

6.2 DATA GATHERING

The Investigation Team compiled first person accounts, conducted interviews, reviewed FDNY communications recordings (including radio communications with command posts and personnel), and examined recordings of dispatcher telephone communications. In addition, FDNY documents were analyzed as they related to operations at WTC 7. For details on the data gathering processes, see NIST NCSTAR 1-8.

¹ Some times listed in this chapter are based on times documented during the investigation and are written as actual times. However, these actual times are estimated to have a potential error of ± 2 min. Other times listed in this chapter are estimated based on the best evidence available and are written as "at about" or "at approximately." These times may have an error of ± 8 min, unless the potential time frame error is otherwise stated.

² FDNY Interview 54, winter 2004.