

because of the large smoke and dust cloud. This Chief proceeded down the street to WTC 7 to gather information on conditions. He was able to negotiate the debris fields and get to the building, where he saw the WTC 7 logo on the building's south side. There were numerous burned-out FDNY vehicles around WTC 7. Fire was observed on the south face, on a single floor around Floor 10 to Floor 14, and appeared to be traveling from west to east.²⁰ At the corner of Vesey and West Broadway, a Chief reported that a FDNY Engine was connected to a hydrant at the corner of WTC 7. Hose lines were stretched, and the engine's pump was still running even though the engine was on fire and was almost burned out. There was no water coming out of the hydrant system.¹² One FDNY Chief, who had been inside WTC 7, reported to him that he had opened a standpipe on the 4th floor of one stairway and found no water in the standpipe system. As they were leaving the building through a service door in the southeast corner, glass was breaking from overhead. After it stopped, they exited and saw that the fires on the south face had moved to the east face and were moving north.^{12,20} They reported that flames were coming out of the windows, and that the windows were breaking out sequentially in groups of two or three every 15 min to 20 min. The rooms appeared to have reached a flashover condition, but no heavy smoke was being pushed out of the windows. By this time, a FDNY fire boat and the retired FDNY fire boat "Harvey" were operating at the shoreline on the Hudson River near the site, and they were stretching hoselines up to the WTC site. However, according to the FDNY first-person interviews, water was never an issue at WTC 7, since fire fighting was never started in the building.¹²

At 12:10 p.m. the Governor of New York State mobilized the State's National Guard, and by 1:30 p.m., National Guard personnel and military police (MP) were assisting the NYPD with patrolling lower Manhattan.⁶

At approximately 1:00 p.m., an OEM staff member, a FDNY Deputy Chief, and a FDNY Battalion Chief entered WTC 7 to further evaluate conditions.²¹ The OEM staff member reported that they entered WTC 7 through the door near the southeast corner on West Broadway and proceeded up the B stairway on the east side. They stopped at the 3rd floor level. The atrium was filled with dust but had no significant debris. As they observed the area, they heard the building creaking. Debris was piled up on the Vesey Street side between Columns 17 and 22. They checked the 4th and 5th floors and did not see much damage from their viewing location. At the 5th floor, they moved to the A stairway and proceeded up. On the 8th or 9th floor, one of the group said he saw two elevator cars ejected from their shafts and in the hallway. Looking past the elevators, they could see a gaping hole in the south face from around the 6th to the 9th floors. They could see one floor below and two to three floors above that location. A lot of the core walls were destroyed, and one individual reported that he saw columns hanging from the floor above. They did not observe any fires at this time on the 8th floor or 9th floor, but the interviewee reported that they could hear fires burning well above where they were standing. Also, they continued to hear creaking noises in the building.²¹ As the FDNY Officers continued their inspection of WTC 7, they heard a loud noise, and a Chief decided that they should evacuate the building.¹⁸ They also met a Deputy Chief who had just returned from inside the building, and he reported that he had conducted an inspection up to the 7th or 8th floor.²³ He indicated that the stairway he was in was filling with smoke and that there was a lot of fire inside the building.

When a Chief Officer got to Barclay Street and West Broadway, numerous firefighters and officers were exiting WTC 7. These firefighters indicated that several blocks needed to be cleared around WTC 7 because they thought that the building was going to collapse.¹² In addition, there were numerous

²³ FDNY Interview 14, winter 2004.