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# Unprepared Nature of 9/11



# Before and After





**I was driving to work when the terrorist attack occurred. I watched as the planes hit the South Tower. I was able to get within a block or 2 before I had to stop because of both pedestrian and vehicle congestion. I really could not believe what I was seeing when I arrived on the scene.**

**By midday I returned to New York Downtown Hospital where I worked at that time. New York Downtown Hospital was 0.2 miles from the World Trade Center. Light dust reached as far as the Empire State Building, located 2.9 miles away.**



My responsibility at the hospital was to set up decon. I had been training the security dept in HAZMAT as they were going to be responsible for security and setting up the decon tent.

As staff and patients began to arrive in the emergency room, they were deconned first. We were not prepared for the numbers arriving. The water from the decon tent was overflowing, and the water was running down the driveway right into the sewer and into the East River.



# Communication

1. Emergency responders repeatedly stressed the importance of having timely and reliable health and safety information.
2. Special operations and law-enforcement responders reported problems caused by different information sources telling them different things.
3. Radio etiquette was completely lost.
4. Such information conflicts were often attributed to differences in risk assessment and PPE standards among reporting parties.

# Site Management

1. The most critical need for site management is a coherent command authority.
2. An effective command structure is essential to begin solving three critical issues affecting PPE: information provision, equipment logistics, and enforcement.
3. Emphasis was placed on the need for immediate and effective perimeter or scene control.
4. As the response evolved, it was necessary to erect a “hard perimeter,” such as a chain-link fence, to make sure only essential personnel operating under the direction of the scene commander were on-site.
5. Lack of a unified command, and shortcomings in scene control.

# Personal Protective Equipment

1. There were significant shortfalls in the way we (responders) were protected. Personal protective equipment was almost unavailable for those responding at that time.
2. While head protection and high visibility vests functioned relatively well for most responders, protective clothing and respirators were in short supply.
3. Eye protection, while protecting well against direct impact injury, provided almost no protection against the persistent dust at the World Trade Center site.
4. Available garments did not provide sufficient protection against biological and infectious disease hazards, the heat of fires at the sites, and the demanding physical environment of unstable rubble piles, nor were they light and flexible enough.
5. Emergency medical technicians, like myself, who were themselves treating casualties in the heart of the disaster site should have been wearing PPE but frequently were not, in large part because this equipment was not part of their standard training regimen.
6. The events of 9/11 thrust responders into new roles for which we were not properly prepared or equipped or trained.

# 9/11 Dust Exposure Related to Cancer

<p><b>410,000 - 525,000</b> The number of first responders, residents and cleanup workers exposed to contaminated air from the collapse of the Twin Towers</p>	<p><b>112,000 X Higher</b> The asbestos levels above the legal limit if a building near Ground Zero. Tests showed that building had become toxic.</p>
<p><b>2,536</b> The number of first responders who have died after 911</p>	<p><b>1.8 Million</b> The tons of debris removed from Ground Zero</p>
<p><b>931</b> The number of people who have died from lung or other related cancers</p>	<p><b>19%</b> The increase of cancer diagnosis in firefighters who served during 911</p>
<p><b>6.9 Billion</b> The amount of money the federal government has awarded 911 victims through the Victim Compensation Fund, which was extended until 2092 assuring that all families of victims and survivors would be medically and financially covered</p>	<p><b>2,000 Tons</b> The number of asbestos fibers that were released into the air by the towers collapse</p>