The Case for First Responder-Based Disaster Research

Presented by Glenn P. Corbett





Why Study First Responders and Specific Disasters?

- To gain an understanding of the effect of tactical and strategic decision making, procedures, prioritizations, and protocols.
- To gain an understanding of the role of technology.
- To gain an understanding of the relationships between different emergency groups responding to a disaster such as police, fire, and EMS.

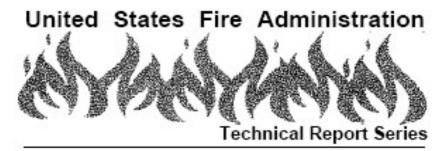
and, ultimately to.....

improve emergency response effectiveness through enhanced procedures, protocols, and technologies.....

resulting in lives saved!

The Case of *Fire Engineering*Magazine and the 1993 World Trade Center Bombing

- Historically, the analysis of firefighting response was limited to the efforts of the local department experiencing the disaster, with limited national attention.
- By the 1970's the US Fire Administration and FEMA begin studying large incidents, only to end the effort by the early 1990's.
- FEMA/USFA requests the 1993 WTC bombing issue of Fire Engineering for use as "official report."



The World Trade Center Bombing: Report and Analysis

Provided by Fire Engineering



Federal Emergency Management Agency



United States Fire Administration National Fire Data Center

The Christian Regenhard Center for Emergency Response Studies

- Created to study emergency responses to large disasters, including the actions of all response agencies.
- A variety of materials will be sought: oral histories, photos and videos, recordings, documents, news accounts, etc.
- The Center will build (with ACIA) an archive, analyze the data, prepare reports, and "spread the word" back to all to emergency responders.

Access to Data: Issues for Studying Future Critical Incidents/Disasters

- Waiting for the "dust to settle."
- "Monday morning quarterbacking"
- Victim family reactions
- "Circling the wagons" by professional groups
- Political interference
- Legal roadblocks

Case in Point – 911 Tapes from September 11th, 2001

- City of New York refused release of tapes
- Litigation initiated by NY Times, later joined by a group 9/11 families
- Multiyear litigation, ending in NY Court of Appeals
- NY Times and 9/11 families prevail; however, only "public employee" half of tape is ordered to be released.

The 9/11 Tapes: illustrating the need for *emergency responder* incident analysis



Thank you!