

# The Case for First Responder-Based Disaster Research

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# 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."

**United States Fire Administration**



**Technical Report Series**

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**The World Trade Center Bombing:  
Report and Analysis**

*Provided by Fire Engineering*



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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 11<sup>th</sup>, 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!**