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NEW YORK CITY **OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
Office of Public Information

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Office of Emergency Management and Department of  
Transportation Hold Operation Maritime Strength Tabletop  
Exercise**

**Tabletop is Focused on the City's Response to Waterborne Emergencies**

Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno announced the completion of *Operation Maritime Strength*, a tabletop exercise moderated by a United States Department of Homeland Security funded contractor and hosted by OEM and the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT). The exercise is designed to help determine the City's ability to respond to hypothetical terrorist attacks by exploring leadership roles and communications protocols among City officials. Joining Commissioner Bruno were Department of Transportation Commissioner Iris Weinshall, Human Resources Administration Commissioner Verna Eggleston, NYPD Chief of Patrol Nicholas Estavillo, FDNY Chief of Operations Salvatore Cassano, United States Coast Guard Captain of the Port of New York and New Jersey, Captain Glen Wiltshire as well as other City, State, and Federal officials.

*"Operation Maritime Strength* is the latest example of the field and tabletop exercises that are being conducted by the City of New York to help us prepare for all types of emergencies," Commissioner Bruno said. "This tabletop allows us to look at the unique challenges posed by responding to an incident on the waterways that surround our City. This continual process of reviewing and improving our emergency management plans and protocols enables us to ensure that New York is the most prepared city in the world."

"I would like to thank the Office of Emergency Management for coordinating this exercise," said DOT Commissioner Iris Weinshall. "We also want to thank our Ferry Division and various other governmental Agencies, for participating."

"Although there a number of programs and measures in place to prevent such incidents from occurring, exercises such as this one are critical to refreshing interagency relationships or building new ones, testing contingency plans, and identifying gaps to



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ensure we're better prepared to make the best use of the resources available within our respective agencies," said Captain Glenn A. Wiltshire, Captain of the Port of New York and New Jersey and Commander of Coast Guard Activities New York. "An incident is not the place to meet for the first time."

"By using their grant funding, today's exercise shows once again the City of New York is constantly preparing for the any type of disaster in all areas of the city." stated C. Suzanne Mencer, Director of the Department of Homeland Security's Office for Domestic Preparedness.

*Maritime Strength* took place on board the recently delivered DOT ferry *Guy V. Molinari*, currently moored at the Saint George Ferry Terminal in Staten Island. This seminar-style exercise simulated a variety of different threats to the Staten Island Ferry and other waterborne craft, putting demands on each participant's expertise in several fields, from preparedness and law enforcement to consequence management and health/medical protocols.

Tabletop exercises are conducted to provide a venue for assessment of emergency management procedures in an environment which engages critical thinking by key personnel. The intent is to discover critical issues and insights from the context of the scenario. Participants focus on operational, strategic, policy and communications decisions and use the exercise to evaluate their responses and determine how they could be improved in the event of a real emergency.

Participating agencies in *Operation Maritime Strength* include:

Fire Department of New York City (FDNY)  
FDNY – Emergency Medical Services (EMS)  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)  
New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)  
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)  
New York City Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications (DoITT)  
New York City Department of Transportation (DOT)  
New York City Health and Hospital Corporation (HHC)  
New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA)  
New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME)  
New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM)  
New York City Office of the Mayor  
New York City Police Department (NYPD)



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Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)  
United States Coast Guard (USCG)  
Greater New York Hospital Association (GNYHA)  
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ)  
Safe Horizon  
American Red Cross

*Operation Maritime Strength*, funded by a grant from the Department of Homeland Security, was the latest in a series of tabletop and field exercises conducted by the Office of Emergency Management and other city agencies to help better prepare the City of New York to respond to different types of emergencies. In the past two years other drills and exercises have included:

*Operation Transit Safe* (May 2004) – *Operation Transit Safe* was designed specifically to test rescue, casualty management, crime scene investigation, environmental, law enforcement, logistics, mutual aid, and telecommunications aspects of the City's response to an incident in the subway system.

*Operation United Response* (March 2004) - *United Response* was designed specifically to test rescue, casualty management, law enforcement, hospital, telecommunications, environmental, and public information response to an incident in a large, public venue.

*Operation Recovery* (December 2003) - *Operation Recovery* focused primarily on human services aspects of an emergency, from providing adequate shelter for evacuees to effectively managing volunteers.

*Operation Spring Tree* (November 2003) - *Operation Spring Tree* aimed to test responding agencies' ability to assess building damage caused by a significant explosion, setup time for the 800 MHz back-up radio system, and interagency coordination at the incident scene.

OEM is planning additional tabletop and field exercises in the future.

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