

# The Chief

Civil Service LEADER  
THE CIVIL EMPLOYEES' WEEKLY

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November 16, 2007

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## News of the week

### [Question FDNY Policies](#)

## Unions: Inspection Changes All Smoke

By ARI PAUL

Firefighter unions denounced Fire Department changes in inspection procedures last week, calling them cosmetic, lacking in substance and counter-productive.



**NICHOLAS SCOPPETTA:**  
Singed by unions.

The changes were made in response to the Deutsche Bank building fire Aug. 18, which killed two firefighters. It was later revealed that the department had not inspected the building, which was undergoing demolition, in more than a year, although protocol required an inspection every two weeks. An FDNY statement announced Nov. 7 the "Implementation of a third inspection period each week for every field unit, increasing the amount of time - six to nine hours - units will be scheduled for weekly building inspections," and "added oversight of field inspections by or at the Borough Command level, and additional oversight with compliance measures implemented at FDNY headquarters in Brooklyn."

### Boost Inspection Hours

The department also announced a program to update software containing building inspections and making them more accessible, in addition to strengthening relations with the Department of Buildings and making inspections a bigger focus of probationary firefighter training.

It changed the name of the department's inspection program from Apparatus Field Inspection Duty (AFID) to the Building Inspection Safety Program (BISP).

Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta explained in a statement, "By increasing inspection time and providing more tools and information to our members, these initial steps will give firefighters a better opportunity to uncover any challenges they may face while fighting fires. What they see could ultimately save their own life or the lives of others."

### UFOA: He Doesn't Listen

Calling the changes "pathetic," a statement from the Uniformed Fire Officers Association claimed that the department's change to give units more inspection hours would increase response times. The union said it suggested to the department that it create a task force led by a Deputy Chief in each division with the assistance of a Battalion Chief whose only job would be conducting inspections. A Captain would supervise four to six inspection teams in each division. The teams would be made up of firefighters and led by a Lieutenant.

But, the union said in its statement, the "splendid idea went by the wayside."

Uniformed Firefighters Association President Steve Cassidy said the department chose to give firefighters more work rather than hiring more people. "It's going to compromise public and firefighter safety," he said.

John Bosco, the lawyer for and brother of Capt. Peter Bosco, one of the three fire officers who were reassigned after the Deutsche Bank building fire, also blasted the changes in an e-mail, saying the most notable difference was a new acronym for inspection duties.

"Cool name change, Scoppetta," he said. "However, didn't you forget something while you were busy thinking about what to name the new baby? The defects in the FDNY's

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This round, like the rounds before it and the ones ahead, we are fighting for a contract that provides us the resources we need to provide the best education for our students. Through our contract, we fight to make CUNY what it could be, what it should be, and what our students deserve - a great University.

We welcome your support in our fight, and applaud The Chief-Leader for its lucid analysis, its thorough reporting, and its continuing coverage of our collective fight for reinvestment in public life.

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building inspection program that were exposed by the tragic August 18, 2007 fire at the Deutsche Bank building were that FDNY still lacks a plan to inspect toxic buildings and the local firehouses lack the ability - no training or safety gear - to safely do the inspections."

"THE BASIC GOAL OF LABOR WILL NOT CHANGE. IT IS, AS IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN AND I AM SURE ALWAYS WILL BE, TO BETTER THE STANDARDS OF LIFE FOR ALL WHO WORK FOR WAGES AND TO SEEK DECENCY AND JUSTICE AND DIGNITY FOR ALL AMERICANS."

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