



New legislation enacted to improve safety for all New Yorkers

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The City of New York took a step in the right direction when Local Law 26 of 2004 was implemented. The law basically improves evacuation procedures for office buildings in New York City and also some required landmark buildings. The new law, created in 2004 to address building emergency preparedness and response, mandates that all commercial buildings over six stories tall or 75 feet or higher implement an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) over and above current requirements.

Being prepared for an emergency situation, as we are all aware, is an unfortunate necessity and New York City is not a stranger to tragic incidents. In the past six years, three planes have crashed into high-rise buildings in Manhattan. "The September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center made it clear that new procedures are required to protect the occupants of office buildings in the event of non-fire emergencies." This quote from the Statement of Basis and Purpose of the Final Rule Local Law 26 certainly holds true.

In January 2007, a mysterious odor, later identified as mercaptan, swept over the city leaving many puzzled, not knowing what actions to take - a perfect example of why the citizens of New York should be prepared.

Local Law 26 requires that building occupants be trained in evacuation and also requires the installation of photo-luminescent markings in stairwells.

The need for safety provisions as outlined in the new law became even more apparent this past October when Yankees pitcher Cory Lidle tragically crashed a plane into a building on the upper east side of Manhattan. The small plane flew into the 39th and 40th floors of an apartment building, and then crashed to the street below leaving New Yorkers wondering, "what was that?" Fortunately, all of the building occupants were safely evacuated.

Coincidentally, Total Safety Consulting had done fire safety plans for two of the buildings adjacent to the incident building.

"Local Law 26 of 2004 is in some way New York's proactive action for Emergency Preparedness and Response. As the Department of Homeland Security has stated we cannot assume that we can prevent all acts of terror or prevent disasters, therefore we must prepare to minimize the damage and show strength to recover from incidents that do occur," said James Bifulco, managing member of Total Safety Consulting, LLC. "TSC is actively working with its clients to comply with the new law and the mindset all around is crystal clear. The better prepared New Yorkers are for any unfortunate incident, the potential is there to minimize loss of life and property damage."

New York is on the forefront of requiring that building management and construction personnel are trained in recognizing and taking preventative measures to control causes of accidents, incidents, or unwanted events. Local Law 26 is one of these new initiatives and Local Law 52 of 2005 is another example of New York being proactive. Local Law 52 requires training and a supported scaffold

certificate of completion for anyone erecting, dismantling, or repairing supported scaffold.

In the spirit of being proactive, over the past several years the New York City Department of Buildings has moved toward evaluating the existing laws and creating new laws with strict enforcement for construction safety. In fact in the latter part of 2006, buildings commissioner Patricia Lancaster launched a safety outreach campaign, which is part of a larger ongoing effort to enhance the agency's safety strategies, to reinforce existing safety rules and regulations for all industry members. In a press release issued by the DOB, commissioner Lancaster said, "We are deeply concerned about recent accidents and want to ensure that all industry workers understand and abide by safety rules and regulations already in place. With over 950,000 buildings in New York City, we must work together."

Total Safety Consulting, LLC, headquartered in Long Island City, New York, has been involved in the safety industry for more than ten years. The company has trained thousands of individuals in construction safety in its state-of-the-art training facility. Total Safety Consulting is approved to provide the Fire Safety Director's Course and Emergency Action Plan Training as mandated under Local Law 26, Supported Scaffold Training as mandated under Local Law 52, Suspended Scaffold Training indicated under Rule 9 of the City of New York, in addition to asbestos and lead awareness training, First Aid/CPR and a myriad of other training programs.

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