



Fire & Life Safety Preparedness – BOMA NY & FLSDA NY

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BOMA
New York

FIRE & LIFE SAFETY PREPAREDNESS

RUSSELL TOUHEY
Brookfield Properties

JOE RAZZA
Z.S. Engineering, D.P.C

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EMERGENCY PLAN

PLAN
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New York, NY BOMA New York leadership sat down with the BOMA New York co-chair of the Life Safety Preparedness Committee Russell Touhey, retired captain of the FDNY and director of Fire Life Safety for Brookfield Properties; together with Joe Razza, Z.S. Engineering, D.P.C. Collectively, they chair the Fire and Life Safety Director’s Association. We discussed the importance for all building owners and managers to be ready for any and all emergency scenarios. For some perspective of the growing relevance, Touhey said, “The needs for security and preparedness change over time, and as a result, even the title of the job has changed to accommodate the growing responsibilities.” Razza said, “In fact, the BOMA New York committee name has evolved from Security Committee to Emergency Preparedness Committee to its current form, with a focus on life safety.”

In the city that never sleeps, neither do its public policies for buildings. For example, as a direct result of 9/11, preparedness for non-fire events changed with the introduction of Local Law 26 in June 2004, which amended the Building Code and Fire Prevention Code. Touhey said, “Codes should be embraced and looked upon favorably by all New Yorkers.” Both gentlemen agreed that most high-rise and certain low-rise buildings require a fire and life safety director. Razza said, “chief engineers are able to do a lot of the job, and they too need to be focused on their responsibility and

collaborate with dedicated staff. The fire life safety director is exclusively focused on life safety.”

The job of fire life safety director has become all encompassing, including natural disasters, chemical disasters, biological disasters, medical emergencies, active shooters, explosions, and civil unrest. As Touhey said, “People that work in the actual building are the true first responders and need to be ready at all times.” Razza said, “The new normal requires a need to have multiple fire life safety directors for each asset to ensure there is always a person on-site to do the job.”

At a starting point for being prepared, Razza said, “From current utilization to retrofitting, it’s essential to have all floor plans and tenant customizations updated. “Tenants play a vital role in preparedness. They must communicate and be a part of drills, tabletop exercises, as well as understand how to react to different scenarios.”

Leveraging today’s tech offerings, security intelligence is an integral part of seeing and being prepared. Situational awareness and comprehensive collaboration are also essential. As building owners and managers develop their preparedness program, both Touhey and Razza said to keep these three items top of mind.

1. Tenant’s concerns and safety
2. The property
3. Go the extra mile (above & beyond code requirements)

The CRE industry in New York City is at its strongest when we work together. BOMA New York is proud to partner with multiple trade organizations throughout NYC, including the Fire and Life Safety Director’s Association of Greater New York (FLSDA NY). They work tirelessly to preserve life and property. In doing so, they work hand in hand with the FDNY to ensure that fire life safety directors are certified, knowledgeable, and ready to be the first line of defense for all building emergencies. We will continue to collaborate to provide our members and the collective industry with important information about vertical challenges with high-rise assets.