



November 17, 2025
Testimony of Kevin Woods, Chief of Fire Operations, FDNY
“Legislative Hearing: Int. 1140, 1229, 1452, 1453, 1454, 1455”

Good morning Chair Ariola and members of the Fire & Emergency Management Committee. My name is Kevin Woods and I am the Chief of Fire Operations at the New York City Fire Department. I am joined today by Paul Miano, Chief of EMS; James Canty, Chief of Safety; Dr. David Prezant, Chief Medical Officer, Special Advisor to the Commissioner on Health Policy, and Director of the World Trade Center Health Program; and Jeremy Brooks, Deputy Commissioner for Support Services. Thank you for the opportunity today to discuss several pieces of legislation pending before the Council.

First, I would like to take a moment to thank Chair Ariola for attending the funeral of Firefighter Patrick Brady this past weekend. We appreciate your support for our members.

Introduction 1452, Introduction 1453, Introduction 1454 & Introduction 1455

I know that it is your concern and the Council’s concern for the safety of firefighters that led to the introduction of several bills on the topic of polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS. Exposure to PFAS is an issue that we take very seriously.

Bunker gear consists of three layers: the outer shell, the moisture barrier, and the thermal barrier. PFAS is incorporated in the moisture barrier. This layer, which does not come into direct contact with the skin, prevents moisture penetration while maintaining breathability. This is an essential feature given the extreme temperatures faced by New York City firefighters. This functionality significantly reduces the risk of burn injuries, heat exhaustion, and heart attacks, which are the leading causes of firefighter fatalities during firefighting operations.

The FDNY fights fires differently than most other departments. As a result, we have equipment needs that differ from most other departments. Due to the density of the neighborhoods and the nature of the building stock in New York City, FDNY firefighters use an aggressive interior attack strategy in which firefighters enter the burning building and directly attack or fight the fire. The volume of fires occurring in New York City also dwarfs that of other jurisdictions. As a result, FDNY firefighters receive much greater exposure to extreme temperatures than their counterparts in other cities. The bunker gear that we use must be up to the challenge.

The Department maintains an active Safety Command and Research & Development unit that monitors the evolution of equipment in order to outfit FDNY members with the safest possible firefighting equipment. Currently, manufacturers have not developed an alternative breathable moisture barrier that reliably matches the effectiveness of those containing PFAS. Once such a product becomes available, the Fire Department will test its reliability and safety to ensure that it is suitable to protect FDNY firefighters. We do have a few potential products that we expect to begin testing early next year. These are brand new and we won't know for several months whether they are suitable for our members. We cannot afford to risk firefighter safety by making a change prematurely.

Given this uncertain timeline, we do not know if this will take place by January 1, 2028 as put forth in Introduction 1452 and 1453, so we appreciate the language allowing for flexibility based on the availability of appropriate gear. We know that the industry continues to work on this challenge as we speak, and we are looking forward to transitioning our members to PFAS-free gear as soon as a viable alternative becomes available and a full transition is possible. Regarding disposal, we have vendors in place who handle gear disposal under existing contracts, so it would not be necessary to set up an additional program with other city agencies.

Regarding testing water from drinking fountains for PFAS (Introduction 1454), we have consulted with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and our understanding is that the testing that DEP performs at the water source entry point would make additional testing at the point of the faucets unnecessary.

The Department does not currently perform screenings that are specific to PFAS exposure (Introduction 1455), but we do perform extensive testing within a world-class health monitoring program that screens firefighters on a regular basis for a variety of job-related chemical exposures and illnesses including cancer. We value this broader testing practice because we want to be certain that we are able to detect indications of illnesses that result from the large variety of potential exposures that firefighters encounter, including but not limited to PFAS.

Introduction 1140

Introduction 1140 would require the Fire Department to report annually on needs and the status of firehouse vehicles, equipment and supplies. We can report the status of vehicle inventory and needs and we would work with the Department of City Administrative Services for additional responsive data. We would like to work with the Council to clarify the meaning of “equipment” and “supplies” so that we better understand what is expected and to ensure that the reporting requirement is structured in a way that would enable the Department to comply with the law.

Introduction 1229

Introduction 1229 would require the Fire Department to report on the availability of Emergency Medical Service (EMS) units for each day of the prior calendar year, categorized by unit type and EMS station. We maintain data on EMS unit availability and believe that we can report the type of information that the Council is seeking. We would want to work with the Council to refine the bill language to make sure that the requirements align with how we track that data and that the time periods are feasible for reporting.

Thank you. We would be happy to answer your questions at this time.



**New York City Department of Emergency Management
Committee on Fire and Emergency Management
Hearing Testimony
November 17, 2025**

Good morning, Chairperson Ariola and members of the Committee on Fire and Emergency Management. I am Christina Farrell, First Deputy Commissioner at New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM). We are here today to discuss two items of legislation currently directed to NYCEM's code.

Regarding Introduction 1243, legislation to create uniform emergency response maps for city properties, NYCEM opposes it in its current form because it falls outside the responsibilities and mandates of our agency. If Council would like to continue discussions, we recommend they reach out to the Department for Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) which, as the City's landlord is responsible for overseeing the properties named in this legislation; and to the NYC Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI), which has a similar project already in progress and can speak to the details of their work in this sphere. Both DCAS and OTI have the relevant authority and expertise and are aware of this legislation and will make themselves available to continue this conversation with Council.

Regarding Introduction 1300 and the codification and public publishing of after-action reports, we respect the intent of Council and are interested in furthering this conversation. An after-action report (AAR) is a comprehensive document created after significant emergencies. It serves as a collaborative effort for all involved city agencies and our partners to evaluate the response, highlight successes, document lessons learned, and recommend improvements for future incidents. The AAR is a crucial tool for assessing response operations, identifying strengths, and capturing insights from all participating agencies. To ensure a thorough evaluation, participation from key representatives is essential, including staff from health, logistics, leadership, public safety, and utilities. Throughout the process, which can take anywhere from weeks to years depending on the complexity of the emergency, the process undergoes multidisciplinary reviews as part of the Citywide Incident Management System (CIMS) and can be a living, rather than static document, for some time period.

Not every emergency undergoes an AAR review process. NYCEM focuses AAR efforts on major citywide emergencies, such as COVID-19 and Hurricane Sandy, that involve extensive coordination with state and federal partners. However, smaller-scale incidents or limited declarations typically do not result in a full AAR, allowing resources to be dedicated to events with the greatest potential for organizational learning and system improvement.

While some AARs are made public, such as the significant emergencies we referenced above like covid, and Hurricane Sandy, not all are developed with an eye for public distribution; rather, they serve to analyze events and implement changes for improved responses in the future. These reports offer agencies and partners the chance to apply lessons learned, thereby strengthening future emergency activations and enhancing interagency collaboration. AARs often include operational and technical details that could reveal vulnerabilities, such as emergency response procedures and

response times, infrastructure weaknesses (e.g., hospitals, transit systems, shelters), gaps in communication or coordination, and tactical decisions or delays in execution. If they were to be made public, essential partners – both internal and external – could be reluctant to participate in due to concerns about sensitive information becoming public. Without their participation, the AAR would be incomplete, which would impede progress. This endeavor also requires a significant investment of time, coordination, and analytical effort, raising concerns about financial sustainability. Additionally, allocating more resources to generate AARs for lower-impact incidents could hinder the agency’s ability to implement necessary corrective actions and update strategic plans.

That said, if the intent is to ensure transparency and continuous improvement, this is something that NYCEM prioritizes at multiple levels. We are committed to responding to requests and inquiries as quickly as possible. Each bureau within our agency has specific goals and objectives that are evaluated quarterly, and we report our metrics to City Hall for several reports, including the Mayor's Management Report. Additionally, we publish our strategic plan for the upcoming five years and annually release a report summarizing our accomplishments and lessons learned. And, as you all know, preparedness is the crucial step everyone can take to help us ensure safety for all. Just some examples of how we achieve this are by hosting calls with key stakeholders before weather emergencies, participating in discussions with our elected partners to address the concerns of their constituents, and working with the private sector to leverage continuity of services. We are always available to our elected partners, participating often in calls hosted by Borough Presidents, the Public Advocate, and other elected partners to keep them updated on incidents in their district and relay information they can amplify to their constituents while discussing the City’s response, lessons learned, and strategies for future events. Our Ready NY team actively engages with communities across the city to reach as many people as possible in their communities and in their languages. This outreach helps us identify areas for improvement and learn from our stakeholders about what services would best meet their needs.

We look forward to continuing this conversation with Council. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Testimony for 11/17/25:

Legislation for Reporting on emergency medical services units.

Hi, my name is Tyler Weaver. My relevant background for testifying today is that NYC ambulance availability tragically impacted my family in December 2023 when our adult son Nicholas Costello suffered a cardiac arrest in the Bronx, and waited 19 minutes for an Ambulance. Additionally, I have been a volunteer EMT and have personally responded as a first responder to hundreds of 911 calls. I am also currently certified in New York State as an EMT-B,

The item from today's agenda that I would like to comment on is Int. No. 1229, about a Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to reporting on emergency medical services units. A summary in plain language is as follows:

This bill would require the Fire Department (FDNY) to report on the availability of emergency medical services (EMS) units for each day of the prior calendar year, categorized by EMS unit type and EMS station. The reported information would include the total number of EMS units, and the total number of EMS units that are unable to respond to an emergency call, disaggregated by the reason for such inability.

New York City's Local Law 119 official website data on Emergency responses shows that for the month of September 2025, **Advanced Life Support Ambulances in the Bronx took more than 10 minutes to arrive on 78% of their calls.** This is their worst percentage in the past 2 ½ years of reporting, and trends are not good. Anecdotal stories like that of my son Nicholas, and from other families at previous committee hearings, along with the official statistics direct from the city, all reflect the same problem: ambulances aren't available in NYC in a timely enough manner. In a well run system with sufficient resourcing and staffing this would not be the case.

Int. No. 1229. will be a helpful addition to tracking what is going on with NYC ambulances. While the existing Local Law 119 reporting already reports statistics on **how** long it takes ambulances to arrive at calls, it does nothing to explain **why** they are taking so long. The benefit of 1229 will be that the public can finally see how many ambulances are being taken off the road each day, along with the reason.

However, I do have three suggestions to make the proposed law even more useful:

1. It currently seems to only track the raw number of ambulances per day by EMS station and unit type, but without also breaking those numbers down by individual Unit ID (e.g. 27H) and by which particular shift that unit ID was unable to be staffed: day shift (27H1) vs evening shift (27H2) or night shift (27H3). I believe that knowing which of the 3 daily shifts an individual ambulance unit was unable to be staffed for is important data. FDNY ought to already be collecting and analyzing this level of unit deployment data on a regular basis.
2. The proposed law does not have a specific requirement to aggregate the numbers by borough, which past experience has shown might mask any significant borough-vs-borough response time inequities, for example like we see in the Bronx vs. Manhattan ALS response times.

- The proposed data only has to be provided annually. I think releasing new data every 30 days would be better and more useful, as FDNY already does this for all the response time statistics under Local Law 119. Releasing the data once per year would make it too late to recognize a problem and proactively intervene. By the time the annual data is reported, circumstances will have changed.

This concludes my remarks, Thank you.

Data Addendum:

The data table below shows a negative imbalance in the City's Advanced Life Support (ALS/Paramedic) Ambulance Response Times performance, between the Bronx and all the other boroughs, over the past 2-1/2 years. All data is taken from <https://www.nyc.gov/site/911reporting/reports/local-law-119-compliance.page>. **Further research ought to be done by those in authority to find out why City data shows the Bronx with such a markedly worse ALS response time performance.**

From NYC Local Law 119 Website: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/911reporting/reports/local-law-119-compliance.page>

NYC Advanced Life Support (ALS) Ambulance Response Times Percent of Responses arriving in 10 minutes or less (Higher Percentage is Better)

Month	Citywide Average	Bronx	Total # Bronx ALS Incidents	# Bronx ALS incidents Response Time > 10 minutes	Manhattan	Brooklyn	Queens	Staten Island
10/2025	37%	26%	2,923	2,166	39%	42%	29%	49%
09/2025	36%	22%	2,759	2,152	36%	42%	35%	46%
08/2025	42%	24%	2,711	2,063	44%	51%	38%	49%
07/2025	41%	26%	2,880	2,146	40%	50%	39%	47%
06/2025	41%	25%	2,823	2,126	41%	50%	36%	52%
05/2025	43%	30%	2,875	2,007	50%	50%	39%	50%
04/2025	44%	31%	3,297	2,282	44%	51%	40%	51%
03/2025	44%	29%	3,438	2,455	48%	51%	41%	50%
02/2025	41%	26%	3,212	2,387	46%	47%	37%	47%
01/2025	41%	23%	3,701	2,850	47%	46%	39%	52%
12/2024	43%	26%	3,309	2,439	45%	50%	41%	55%
11/2024	43%	29%	3,162	2,245	46%	48%	40%	51%
10/2024	40%	24%	3,349	2,545	42%	47%	37%	51%
09/2024	40%	22%	3,335	2,601	42%	48%	39%	48%
08/2024	42%	26%	3,755	2,779	43%	52%	38%	57%
07/2024	42%	25%	3,836	2,877	46%	52%	39%	53%
06/2024	45%	39.1%	3,382	2,060	51%	48%	39.0%	51%
05/2024	40%	26%	4,860	3,596	45%	41%	30%	50%
04/2024	40%	31%	4,490	3,098	47%	43%	33%	50%
03/2024	49%	44%	3,597	2,014	54%	52%	43%	53%
02/2024	50%	47%	3,434	1,820	57%	52%	41%	55%
01/2024	47%	44%	3,975	2,226	55%	49%	40%	54%
12/2023	45%	38%	4,366	2,707	51%	48%	37%	51%
11/2023	49%	45%	3,622	1,992	55%	52%	41%	56%
10/2023	48%	42%	3,625	2,103	54%	51%	41%	52%
09/2023	47%	41%	3,482	2,044	52%	51%	40%	54%
08/2023	50%	45%	3,456	1,918	57%	53%	40%	57%
07/2023	49%	44%	3,466	1,951	56%	52%	38%	51%
06/2023	42%	36%	4,252	2,734	51%	44%	34%	53%
05/2023	39%	32%	5,337	3,651	47%	42%	31%	51%
04/2023	41%	32%	4,968	3,403	50%	45%	34%	50%

Color Key:
Worst in the City
2nd Worst in the City

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1452 -> 1455 Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/17/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Brosi

Address: 125 Maiden Lane NY NY

I represent: Uniformed Fire Officers Association

Address: 125 Maiden Lane NY NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1243 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/17/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MICHAEL RODGERS

Address: [REDACTED] NJ

I represent: CRITICAL RESPONSE GROUP

Address: HAMILTON NJ

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1453-1455 Res. No. 0837-2025

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 11/17/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Furhan Ahmad

Address: [REDACTED] New York, NY 10014 Apt 45cs

I represent: FDNY

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christina Fairclay

Address: _____

I represent: NYCEM

Address: 1105 Cadman Plaza East, Bklyn

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christina Fairclay

Address: First Deputy Commissioner

I represent: NYCEM

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carleen McLaughlin

Address: Director of Legislative Affairs

I represent: NYC DEP

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dr. David Prezant FDNY

Address: Chief Medical Officer, Special

I represent: Advisor to the Commissioner on Health

Address: Policy, and Director of the World Trade
Center Health Program

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeremy Brookes

Address: Deputy Commissioner for Support Services

I represent: FDNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Carty

Address: Chief of Safety

I represent: FDNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Paul Miano

Address: Chief of ~~FDNY~~

I represent: FDNY

Address: _____

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kevin Woods

Address: Chief of Fire Operations

I represent: FDNY

Address: _____

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