

UNIFORMED
FIRE DEPARTMENT, CITY OF NEW YORK
FIRE OFFICERS
LOCAL 854, INTERNATIONAL ASSN. OF FIRE FIGHTERS, AFL-CIO
ASSOCIATION

225 BROADWAY ☆ NEW YORK, NY 10007 ☆ SUITE 401
TEL: (212) 293-9300 ☆ FAX: (212) 292-1560 ☆ EMAIL: WWW.UFOA.ORG

July 12, 2005

Nicholas Scoppetta
Commissioner
FDNY
9 Metrotech, 8W-6
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Dear Commissioner Scoppetta:

I am writing this letter in response to our meeting on July 7, 2005. First, I want to thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and your staff regarding response times. I believe it is much more productive to discuss issues together instead of exchanging blows in the press.

After reviewing the draft letter you sent me and discussing it with my board and counsel, I cannot sign onto it at this time. However, there are key points in the letter that this union agrees with and I am willing to send a letter to my membership to address those specific issues. However, as per our phone conversation yesterday, I will not send any letter at this time until you have the opportunity to meet with Steve Cassidy. I told Mayor Bloomberg that I wanted to ratchet down the rhetoric in the press and I want to keep that goal in mind as I move forward.

The subjects of prompt transmittal of 10-84 signals, the need for a fast and efficient turnout at all times and the importance of responding to medical emergencies with the same sense of urgency as structural fires are issues that I can and will address with my membership. However, your policy of allowing apparatus to proceed through red lights and stop signs without first stopping is an issue that this union as well as the IAFF will not negotiate or compromise. I do recognize your authority to change regulations but we believe the standards set by NFPA for the safe operation of fire apparatus is critical for the safety of our members. As we discussed last week, this change in regulations probably had little or nothing to do with the increase in response times and I ask you again that reconsider your policy and return to your previous NFPA compliant regulations.



— AFFILIATED WITH —

NEW YORK STATE AFL-CIO

NEW YORK CITY CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL AFL-CIO • MARITIME PORT COUNCIL OF GREATER NEW YORK & VICINITY
UNION LABEL & SERVICE TRADES COUNCIL OF GREATER NEW YORK & LONG ISLAND • NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

At the present time I have two notices posted on the UFOA website regarding response times that I will remove today as a sign of good faith as we begin the process of working together on response times. A review of your letter to me on May 26th and my response to you certainly is an indication that we both have a long way to go to re-establish a working relationship, but I am willing to take the first step. But please understand that I must proceed with caution and will not compromise on any issue that affects the safety of my membership.

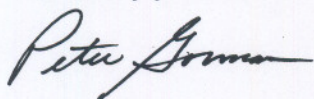
Despite our productive conversation last week, there are several issues that I believe deserve closer analysis. Although there has been a significant reduction in apparatus accidents this year, there have been three intersection accidents recently involving L-27, E-221 and L-106. These accidents resulted in critical injuries to civilians and sent numerous firefighters to the hospital with various injuries. I believe civilian vehicles driving too fast caused all of these accidents but the Department must investigate if the outcome could have been different if the fire apparatus came to a full stop.

The accident that occurred on July 2nd involving L-120 was quite different, but could be an opportunity for labor and management to work together to address apparatus safety. This accident did not involve another vehicle and is the type of accident that can and should be avoided in the future. I was surprised at the Department's casual attitude regarding this accident. After our meeting last week, Chief Cassano indicated to me that he was considering transferring the lieutenant for allowing the "buff" to ride, but there would be no repercussions for the accident itself. I acknowledge your right to discipline the officer for this infraction but you are ignoring a much bigger problem. Let me be clear that I am not suggesting punishment for the officer or the chauffeur but I don't think ignoring the fact that an apparatus flipped and rolled over almost 360 degrees and injured 6 firefighters is good policy. I do not know if those firefighters were belted or not but certainly that too is a safety issue that can be jointly addressed by labor and management. That accident could easily have killed a firefighter and any civilian crossing the street at the time. My suggestion would be to make a training video with the officers and members of L-120 stressing the need drive responsibly, slow down at intersections and the importance of wearing seat belts at all times. Such a message, delivered by our own members would send a powerful message, especially if it were done cooperatively with labor and management.

I will send you a draft of a letter that could be sent by the UFOA and I am still willing to send a joint statement, but I would like to do it in cooperation with the UFA, if that's possible.

I thank you again for the opportunity to meet with you last week and hopefully we can move forward on this and other issues in the future.

Sincerely yours,



Peter L. Gorman
President

cc: Peter Hayden, Chief of Department
Salvatore Cassano, Chief of Operations
Frank Cruthers, First Deputy Commissioner
Frank Gribbon, Deputy Commissioner
for Public Information