



THE HOUSEWATCH

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CURATOR'S CORNER

by Sean Britton

In honor of New York City receiving its first snowfall in more than 700 days (about 2 years), this month's Curator's Corner looks back through FDNY history at winter operations. FDNY members do not stop their lifesaving mission due to weather and often must modify their tactics accordingly. An example of this would be frozen or buried hydrants. Snow accumulating around hydrants must be dug out by hand, and in the case of extreme cold, a Thawing Unit may be deployed (there is one located in each borough).



Medical emergencies due to vehicle accidents also increase when snow and ice cover the roads. Stuck vehicles can be abandoned, blocking roads, and leading to increased response times. In a severe snowstorm, the piles of plowed snow often can hamper fire operations. Placement of apparatus is critical at the scene of a fire, and responding units must take more limited roadways into account.

Firefighters are human (a fact we can often forget due to their heroic deeds), and extreme temperatures take a toll on the human body. Hypothermia and frostbite can occur quickly, and Officers and Chiefs must assess situations quickly and rotate units to prevent these situations. An accumulation of ice on ladders and hoses can add significant weight, creating an additional danger to firefighters.

The pictures shown are from the museum's collection and show examples of these situations. For additional images, visit our website (www.nycfiremuseum.org), and browse our online catalog.

