

The FDNY Chief of Safety agreed with the consensus that the only choice was to let the fires, quote, "burn up and out," end quote. The chiefs in the North Tower were forced to make decisions based on little or no information.

(VIDEO BEGINS)

CHIEF PFEIFER: One of the most critical things in a major operation like this is to have information. We didn't have a lot of information coming in. We didn't receive any reports of what was seen from the helicopters. It was impossible to know how much damage was done on the upper floors, whether the stairwells were intact or not. A matter of fact, what you saw on TV, we didn't have that information.

CHIEF HAYDEN: People watching on TV certainly had more knowledge of what was happening a hundred floors above us than we did in the lobby. Certainly without any information, without critical information coming in, the cumulative effect of the information coming in, it's very difficult to make informed, critical decisions without that information. And it didn't exist that day. Our communication systems were down. Our building suppression systems were down, the elevators, we had no video capability throughout the entire operation.

Emergency Medical Service personnel were directed to one of four triage areas around the perimeter of the World Trade Center. In addition, many private hospital ambulances were rushing to the World Trade Center complex. In the North Tower lobby, the chiefs quickly made the decision that the fire in the North Tower could not be fought.

(VIDEO BEGINS)

CHIEF HAYDEN: We realized that, because of the impact of the plane, that there was some structural damage to the building, and most likely that the fire suppression systems within the building were probably damaged and possibly inoperable. We made that conclusion. We knew that at the height of the day there was as many as fifty thousand people in this building. We had a large volume of fire on the upper floors. Each floor was approximately an acre in size.

Several floors of fire would have been beyond the fire extinguishing capability of the forces that we had on hand. So we determined, very early on, that this was going to be strictly a rescue mission. We were going to evacuate the building, get everybody out, and then we were going to get out.

(VIDEO ENDS)

MR. FARMER: The chiefs decided to concentrate on evacuating civilians from the North Tower, although they held various views about whether anyone at or above the impact zone could be saved. As of 9:00 a.m., if only those units dispatched had responded, and if those dispatched units were not "riding heavy" with extra men, 235 firefighters would be at the scene or