

## Homeland insecurity!



**Dismantle fire and police street alarm boxes?**

**July 1, 1998** The City of New York, during the Giuliani administration, decided to remove all fire and police street call boxes. The fire and police alarm box system (a two way voice alarm reporting system direct to fire and police dispatch headquarters) was considered old, expensive to maintain and "redundant". This decision was based also on the wide spread public use of cell phones and the availability of the 911 system for reporting of fires and police emergencies. Since the decision to remove fire and police street emergency reporting boxes:

1. **September 11, 2001**, terrorist attacked New York City
2. **August 14, 2003**, New York City experienced a “blackout”. Cell phones failed, the 911 system failed, and the fire computer dispatch system failed. The only method of emergency communications that worked during the blackout was the fire and police street (two way voice alarm) call boxes.

Some fire and police call boxes have been removed and some street boxes are still in operation. Today the city has become a terrorist’s target and the reliability of cell phones, the 911 system and the fire computer dispatch system, are in question. Should the Bloomberg administration consider keeping the fire and police street call boxes? I believe it should.

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