

Fluke meters helped FDNY find hot wires after attack

Technology at Work

Just over a year ago, international terrorists flew two passenger jetliners into the office towers of New York's World Trade Center. It was only a matter of hours until the towers collapsed into a graveyard of rubble, some of it still many stories high.

In the minutes, then hours and days that followed, thousands of rescue workers from across the U.S poured onto the site, first hoping for miracles, then determined to recover their own lost colleagues and the tragedy's other 2,500 victims.

Rescue on this unprecedented scale is daunting, no matter what the level of dedication. It also is highly dangerous. In New York, the debris was a tangle of concrete, with pockets of unstable footing that could collapse at any minute and remnants of utility service, both live and crushed.

Hook and Ladder Company 129 and Engine 273 of the New York Fire Department, based near Shea Stadium in Queens, were immediately deployed to the unfolding tragedy and lost two members in the collapse. Without

stopping, the units began 24-hour shifts at Ground Zero, later aided by electrical test equipment from Fluke Corporation, donated by the company to help the rescuers look for hazardous live electrical circuits that could be hidden in the debris.

Fluke Corporation team members across the country sprang into action as well. "We immediately began grassroots efforts to support the groups who were sending supplies to support the rescue efforts," said Fluke president Jim Lico. "It wasn't a conscious company decision; our people themselves were compelled to help, and Fluke was more than happy to make that happen."

Fluke's Chuck Gunn and Michelle Yepsen, members of the distributor sales group, originated the equipment donation project. Bob Greenberg of Fluke's product planning group gathered almost 75 digital multimeters, clamp meters and electrical testers, and Fluke flew the meters to Andy Topinka of Thea and Schoen, the company's New York City representatives, who delivered them to the firefighters.

"Andy has friends in the New York City Fire Department," said Fluke's Mark Carter. "The idea was to send meters to the firefighters to be used to look for live circuits and to enable them to set up temporary electrical service."

The meters needed to be easy to use by distracted, tired firefighters. They also needed to be dependable, providing measures of safety even to beginner users in an environment that offered no second chance.



Fluke's meters display accurate, easy-to-understand sets of numbers at resolutions that are easier to view in demanding environments. And Fluke is known for its commitment to safety, offering layers of safety features designed specifically to protect users from unleashed electrical power.

The firefighters "were pleased and thankful for the Fluke DMMs," Topinka said. "They are great guys and true heroes. They routinely run into danger when everyone else is running from it, and Fluke, like the rest of the nation, is pleased we were able to support them."

Rescue workers say they had no choice. There's an inbred deep brotherhood that kept them returning month after month until clean-up operations were completed. It was the support of people around the world, and an unceasing determination to help the families of those who died that helped them carry on, they say.

Today the World Trade Center location no longer is a rescue site. It soon will be home to a memorial to those who died and a new center for commerce and community. It always, however, will serve as a testament to rescue workers such as members of New York's Hook and Ladder Company 129 and Engine 273, who continue to represent the best in us all. From all of us at Fluke, thank you to everyone who took part in the rescue at Ground Zero.

Fluke. *Keeping your world up and running.*

Fluke Corporation

PO Box 9090, Everett, WA USA 98206

Fluke Europe B.V.

PO Box 1186, 5602 BD

Eindhoven, The Netherlands

For more information call:

In the U.S.A. (800) 443-5853 or

Fax (425) 446-5116

In Europe/M-East/Africa (31 40) 2 675 200 or

Fax (31 40) 2 675 222

In Canada (800)-36-FLUKE or

Fax (905) 890-6866

From other countries +1 (425) 446-5500 or

Fax +1 (425) 446-5116

Web access: <http://www.fluke.com/>

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