



## 10-66 – Wood Grid Ceiling Collapse



**Manhattan Box 4-4 1221 - 11/30/2021**

Earlier this morning several members of a truck company were trapped in the front of a 1<sup>st</sup> floor restaurant when the wood grid/sheetrock drop ceiling unexpectedly collapsed. The fire building was a 5-story Old Law Tenement that had undergone multiple alterations. There was no visible fire in the immediate area of the collapse. Fortunately, our members were quickly removed with only minor injuries. Consider the following points taken from *Collapse of Burning Buildings: A Guide to Fireground Safety*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Chapter 12, by DC Vincent Dunn (Retired).

- Ceiling failure is one of the leading causes of firefighter death by collapse.
- **The wood grid suspended ceiling is the most dangerous type of suspended ceiling. This type of ceiling is commonly installed in renovated multiple dwellings.**
- Immediately after a wood grid suspended ceiling fails, there is often an increase in fire. The wood from the suspended ceiling and the exposed floor/roof joist are fuel for the fire.
- **Check for fire in the void above a suspended ceiling prior to entering a room.**
- **When working below a suspended ceiling, stay near large pieces of furniture that can act as shelters in case of ceiling failure.**
- Firefighters that become trapped below a suspended ceiling have very little time to be rescued before the fire and smoke reach them. The first step for the rescue of firefighters trapped beneath a suspended ceiling is to sweep the area with a hoseline and knock down the flames.
- A collapse potential also exists even if fire does not enter the void created by the suspended ceiling. Water runoff can cause a suspended ceiling to fail and fall upon those operating below.

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