

## Brodgon in Law360: Working With Emergency Services, Tips For Frontline Attorneys

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November 3, 2023 Lauren Brogdon

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PRACTICES Crisis Management

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Haynes Boone Partner [Lauren Brogdon](#) authored an article in *Law360* with Los Angeles Fire Department Battalion Chief Rick Crawford and Yonkers Police Department Commissioner Christopher Sapienza on the need for attorneys to work with first responders on the ground in an effort to mitigate future legal exposure.

Read an excerpt below:

Just two months ago, Maui was ravaged by wildfires that resulted in the deaths of at least 98 people and nearly \$6 billion in damage. Litigation has already been filed, including at least one wrongful death suit filed on Aug. 24 in the Second Circuit of Hawaii.

The suit, *Wells v. Maui Electric Co.*, alleges that the state of Hawaii, Maui County and others are liable for failing to mitigate the fire hazard "despite [a] history of serious fires caused by predictable weather conditions.

This case and other lawsuits will necessarily implicate evidence regarding first responders' actions in evacuating the affected areas and controlling the spread of the fire.

For firefighters, police officers and other emergency responders like those in Hawaii, collaborating with attorneys during incident response can be a double-edged sword. The speed with which first responders must move in emergencies requires a level of trust and synchronization on all fronts to ensure effective operations.

But lawyers representing a corporation or large government entity in a crisis may assume a closed-off, defensive posture. In too many circumstances, the attorneys' first instinct is to keep first responders at arm's length, causing both parties go into self-preservation mode.

A collaborative, proactive approach toward building trust with law enforcement and emergency responders before a crisis can help companies gather vital information and position themselves as cooperators, not adversaries. Developing a cooperative relationship has the added benefit of allowing first responders to focus on the operational necessities of incident command and response.

And because attorneys often deal with the impact of a crisis for years to come — through litigation, regulatory investigations or insurance recovery — working with first responders on the ground is imperative to mitigate future legal exposure.

To read the full article in *Law360*, click [here](#).