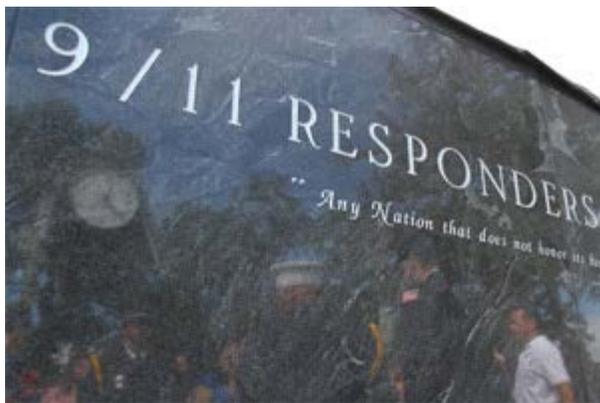


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## NYPD First Responder Wins Appeal for Disability Pension for 9/11 Illnesses

By [F.A. Kelley](#) - March 18, 2015



*NYPD First Responder Wins Appeal for Disability Pension*

A New York state appeals court has ruled in favor of a retired NYPD officer seeking a disability pension for fibromyalgia and other conditions she developed as a result of toxic exposure at Ground Zero.

Annamarie Sheldon's attorney, Jeffrey Goldberg, said her case was based on an amendment to the city's pension law, giving World Trade Center first responders the benefit of the doubt about illnesses presumed to arise from exposure to toxic debris, according to *The Chief*, a newsletter for New York City civil employees. The pension board must present credible medical evidence of another cause if it feels the illness is not related to Ground Zero exposure.

# PUBLIC HEALTH WATCHDOG

Officer Sheldon—a first responder on 9/11—served more than 300 hours at a security post just a block from Ground Zero in the period following the terrorist attack. She was diagnosed with fibromyalgia, heavy metal poisoning, and other conditions in March 2002, *The Chief* reports. Sheldon filed for a disability pension in 2008 but the pension was denied. The medical board of the Police Pension Fund ruled that Sheldon’s illnesses were not caused by WTC toxic exposure and she took ordinary retirement in November 2009.

The symptoms of fibromyalgia include bone and muscle pain, with fatigue, and sleep, memory, and mood problems. These symptoms often begin after physical or psychological trauma, *The Chief* explains.

Under the WTC pension-law amendment, a successful applicant receives a tax-free disability pension equal to three-quarters of his or her final average salary, according to *The Chief*.

The appeals panel wrote that the World Trade Center presumption means that that “unlike ordinary [disability-pension] claimants, first responders need not submit any evidence—credible or otherwise—of causation to obtain enhanced benefits.”