

City not EPA responsible for Ground Zero

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Former EPA chief Christine Todd Whitman says the order for Ground Zero workers to wear respirators during the Sept. 11 cleanup had to come from New York City.

In a "60 Minutes" interview airing Sunday, Whitman says the EPA didn't have the authority to enforce rules at Ground Zero but it did warn city officials about the dangerous air quality in lower Manhattan, the Newark (N.J.) Star-Ledger reports.

Whitman, a former New Jersey governor, says the EPA was very firm in what it communicated.

Officials from both the EPA and the Occupational Health and Safety Administration were at Ground Zero during debris removal but records show their role was an advisory one.

Whitman's comments in the interview come amid accusations the EPA issued misleading assurances about air quality at the World Trade Center site following the terrorist attack five years ago.

A study released by doctors at Mount Sinai Hospital shows 70 percent of those who worked at the site suffer from new or worsened breathing problems.

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