

Get Morning Home Delivery of the Daily News for up to 70% off.  
Call (888) 393-3760

# Atlantic Avenue subway tunnel tour shut down by FDNY; called unsafe



BY [Mike McLaughlin](#)  
DAILY NEWS WRITER

Felvelo for NewsTourists are seen at a Atlantic Avenue Subway Tour in the tunnel which is the world's oldest subway tunnel built in 1844.

Thursday, December 16th 2010, 11:15 AM

Fire department officials halted a popular tour of an abandoned tunnel under Atlantic Ave. yesterday after declaring it a safety hazard.

Transit buff [Bob Diamond](#) started tours of the former [Long Island Rail Road](#) tunnel in 1982, but [FDNY](#) officials said he can't continue because there's only one entrance - via ladder through a manhole near Court St.

"This is not a safe place for the public to be allowed to go," said FDNY spokesman [Frank Dwyer](#). "It's dangerous down there. There's no safe way into and out of the tunnel."

Dwyer said the narrow entrance and ladder would pose a challenge for emergency responders to rescue visitors in the event of an accident.

He also raised concerns about air quality and the

Advertisement

**DEAL OF THE DAY**

Visit [NYDailyNews.com/deals](http://NYDailyNews.com/deals) for savings up to 90%

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

use of generators on the street to power the tunnel's lighting.

The shutdown shocked Diamond, who had scheduled the next tour for 100 people in [Cobble Hill](#) on Sunday and was told by the Daily News of the Fire Department's decision.

"We've been doing tours for 30 years and have literally had thousands of people down there," said Diamond, who founded the [Brooklyn Historic Railway Association](#) after he rediscovered the tunnel in 1981. "We've never had a problem."

The city [Department of Transportation](#) renewed a consent form two years ago allowing him to use the tunnel through 2018, Diamond said.

"It's like the left hand doesn't know what the right is doing," said Diamond, who said city officials never worried about emergency exits before.

But he ran into trouble last Friday when FDNY officials, citing safety concerns, canceled a film screening organized by Rooftop Films that had been slated for the weekend.

Dwyer told The News that all future events are nixed too, but said FDNY officials would possibly lift the ban if Diamond made safety improvements in the tunnel.

The tunnel dates from 1845 and has an arched brick ceiling 17 feet high. The man-made cavern is 21 feet wide and stretches to Hicks St.

Diamond said FDNY officials hadn't told him the underground space was off-limits, and he vowed to continue the tours.

He added that firefighters from a nearby firehouse on Middagh St. have been customers.

"Until someone says something to me," said Diamond, "I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing."

Advertisement



**DEAL OF THE DAY**

Visit [NYDailyNews.com/deals](http://NYDailyNews.com/deals) for savings up to 90%

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™