



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

CITY HALL
NEW YORK, NY 10007
(212) 788-7116

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Contact: 212-788-7116
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ADMINISTRATION ADOPTS PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCIL'S DOB TASK FORCE

*Collaborative effort between Council Task Force and Administration will lead to much needed
DOB reforms*

City Hall – In the continuing effort to reform the Department of Buildings (DOB), the Council was pleased to announce with the Mayor and DOB Commissioner Patricia Lancaster a number of reforms to the Department of Buildings. The recommendations, a number of which were developed by the Council's Task Force on Operations and Improvement of the Department of Buildings, aim to improve the enforcement and inspection capacity of the agency. In addition, the administration announced the allocation of \$6 million in new funding that will go toward, among other initiatives, 67 new inspectors. These inspectors will renew and expand a number of important pilot programs that were due to expire at the end of the year, such as the Zoning Review Program.

These reforms will create safer jobsites for construction workers, increase accountability for negligent contractors and improve the ability of DOB inspectors to oversee construction activity and to respond to New Yorkers' complaints in a timely manner.

These latest recommendations to reform and improve Department initiatives come just after a major overhaul to the New York City Building Code, the first since 1968, and putting in place more stringent self-certification requirements, which passed in February.

Some of the Task Force recommendations that are being implemented by the Administration include:

- **Special Ops Swat Teams to Stop Bad Actors & Repeat Offenders** – a multidisciplinary team of inspectors, engineers, and legal staff, that will identify and address developers, owners, and contractors who blatantly disregard code and zoning regulations.
- **Zoning Review Expansion** – This pilot program has shown that more than 50% of the applications reviewed have failed the zoning review. The Task Force has called on DOB to continue and expand the pilot.
- **Pro-Cert Inspectors** – will allow for the Agency to conduct inspections to tighten the Directive 14 program and hold responsible parties accountable.
- **Excavation Inspections** – to require the Agency to require filing of site-specific plans for excavations, support of adjacent properties and audit structural design plans.
- **Increased Civil Penalties** – increasing the fines for non-compliance in relation to various violations.
- **After Hours Work** – this inspection program is currently based on inspectors voluntarily working overtime. DOB must have dedicated inspector to do after hours work and weekend inspections.

- **Progress Inspections** – Since there is limited oversight once a builder begins construction of a project and because the builder has the ability to alter, change and amend the project without oversight, the Task Force recommends that at least three mandatory inspections take place once a permit is granted.

“The recommendations that came out of the Council’s Department of Buildings Task Force will ensure that the DOB has the ability to enforce the regulations that will make both jobsites and buildings safer, and that our communities are protected,” **said Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn**. “With the City in the midst of a construction boom, we need to remain vigilant, and these recommendations will make DOB a more proactive agency. I want to thank Mayor Bloomberg and Patricia Lancaster for working in collaboration with the Council on these vital reforms. I also want to thank Council Members Oddo, Dilan and Vacca for their tremendous work on this project.”

“The simple fact of the matter is that the Department of Buildings is integral to the lives of every day New Yorkers,” **said Chair of the Council’s Task Force on Operations and Improvement of the Department of Buildings James Oddo**. “With these proposed reforms, we are continuing with the evolution of this agency. When Speaker Quinn created the Council’s Task Force on the Operations and Improvement of the DOB she instructed me this was to be ‘about substance, not sport.’ The Task Force has heeded her call and we have raised the level of discourse with this agency above name calling and complaining. Our cooperation with DOB and the Bloomberg Administration has resulted in a united effort to continue to reform and transform this agency. Simply put, we are all committed to seeing that when our terms are up this agency will be a whole lot better than the one we found.”

“The zoning resolution is a bible when it comes to protecting neighborhoods from hazardous construction and over-development,” **said Council Member James Vacca**. “By recommending that we further control the use of self cert, in addition to the two successful bills that I sponsored and the mayor signed several months ago, we are sending a message that self-cert is a privilege, not a right. The Council’s Town Hall meetings and the actions taken by the Mayor today acknowledge that the Buildings Department is a frontline agency and that transparency and monitoring is crucial if we are to stem future abuse and flagrant disregard of our building code.”

“With the City in the midst of construction boom, we need to be sure that DOB has the tools they need to enforce responsible development,” **said Housing and Buildings Committee Chair Erik Martin Dilan**. “The recommendations of the Council’s Task Force on the Operations and Improvement of the DOB, in conjunction with the Administration’s proposals, will make sure that our buildings are up to code and our construction workers as safe as possible.”

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