

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

Fact Sheet, Volume I

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Patricia J. Lancaster, FAIA, Commissioner



MESSAGE FROM COMMISSIONER LANCASTER

When Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg appointed me Buildings Commissioner in 2002, he told me to fix the Agency. For the past four years, my team and I have been working to aggressively reform our organization, giving our employees the technology and training they need to make our services faster, more accountable and transparent. From putting handheld computers in the field to launching eFiling, we have worked tirelessly to make it easier for you to do business with us.

Four years later, I am proud to say that I see a team of individuals who are passionate about New York City's buildings and dedicated to safety. I see people taking the initiative to streamline the processes of their own units and I see inspectors, engineers, architects and experts working together to protect the public from dangers they can't always see.

As we forge ahead, we will work to enhance our enforcement efforts, improve the quality of our services, and further our mission to ensure the safe and lawful use of all of New York City's 950,000 buildings and properties.

Emergency Response

Providing rapid assessments of stability, the Department of Buildings is the second responder for structural emergencies in New York City. Every year, we



respond to more than 12,000 emergencies and assist the Police and Fire Departments to ensure the safety of every New Yorker.

Photoluminescent Regulations for Stairwells

Developed by the Department of Buildings, photoluminescent regulations for exit path markings in high-rise

office buildings have set the standard for the use of photoluminescent materials around the world. Through the use

of photoluminescent signs and strips on stairs, we can help prevent injuries associated with emergency evacuations.

Buildings by the Numbers

950,000	Buildings/Properties in our Jurisdiction
29	Categories of Licenses
5	Borough Offices
	A Year at a Glance
400,000	Inspections
105,000	Customer Service Calls
70,000	Construction Applications
56,000	Violations Served
13,000	Trade Licenses Issued/Renewed
12,000	Certificates of Occupancy Issued

2006–2009 Strategic Plan

In May 2006, Commissioner Lancaster unveiled the Department of Buildings 2006-2009 Strategic Plan, the second phase of her blueprint for transforming the agency into an accountable, efficient and effective municipal building organization.

Looking ahead to the next four years, a new emphasis on quality services, enforcement and technology will accompany our commitment to improve the way we deliver services to the public.

Top Strategic Initiatives:

- Improve Scaffolding Safety
- Adopt a New Building Code
- Automate Inspection Scheduling
- Establish Electronic Document Scanning
- Expand eFiling
- Improve Zoning Compliance
- Streamline Plan Exam Review
- Assure Quality Inspections
- Promulgate New Electrical Code

All of the strategic initiatives have already been launched.

Visit www.nyc.gov/buildings for more information about those initiatives and the 2006-2009 Strategic Plan.

Customer Service

The Department of Buildings is dedicated to continuously improving our customer service. Since 2002, we have placed customer service desks



in each borough office, created plain language brochures, automated our Plan Exam appointment system and introduced eFiling for certain applications.

For more information on the various services and information available to you, visit www.nyc.gov/buildings.

Buildings Information System (BIS) on the Web

Complaints, violations, applications, permits, Certificates of Occupancy, plumbing inspections and much more can now be viewed via the Internet. BIS is a database of the City's more than 950,000 buildings and was launched in 2003 as a part of our ongoing efforts to increase transparency, efficiency and accountability.

To access **BISWeb** online, visit www.nyc.gov/buildings.

MODEL CODE PROGRAM

Continuing our quest to protect the public by ensuring the safe and lawful use of buildings, we are leading a massive effort to overhaul the City's 38-year-old Building Code.

The City's new construction codes will be based on the family of codes developed by the International Code Council. We will modify their standards to reflect new technologies and to provide a model for innovative and safe building design and construction in urban environments. In addition, the new codes will be:

- **Easier to use and understand**
- **Innovative and sustainable**
- **Designed for our high-density urban environment**

The first phase of the legislation was adopted by the City Council and codified in Local Law 99 of 2005. With the ongoing help of more than 400 professionals from industry, labor, and government, the second legislative bill will be presented to the City Council for consideration in early 2007. The new codes will take effect one year from enactment.

DID YOU KNOW?

Amusement Rides

The Department of Buildings' Elevator Unit conducts more than 1,200 safety inspections of permanent and temporary amusement rides throughout the five boroughs every year. While an initial inspection is required, inspections are also conducted after a 90-120 day period of time.

Buildings University

The Department of Buildings offers the public training classes free of charge. For the latest class offerings, visit www.nyc.gov/buildings and sign up for a class today!



Building Green

Did you know that the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority offers financial incentives for building green?

For information on tax credits and more, visit www.nyc.gov/buildings.



Calling All Electricians!

Continuing our efforts to make it easier for our customers to do business with us, electrical permit applications have been added to the Department's eFiling system. Registered electricians can now file applications, make amendments and obtain permits via the Internet. This new feature also allows registered master plumbers, fire suppression piping contractors, oil burner installers and sign

hangers to file select no-change permit renewals online. Visit www.nyc.gov/buildings and click on the eFiling tab to see how eFiling can help make filing easier for you.

New Website: NYC.gov/buildings

In June 2005, the Department of Buildings unveiled a redesigned website providing improved navigation, information architecture and tools that make it easier to find information. The public can also subscribe to our e-mail notifications for service

changes or for information on specific categories.

Sign Up for Buildings News

Visitors to our website can register to receive our weekly newsletter directly to their e-mail address. The e-newsletter includes information about service changes and improvements, legal requirements and useful resources available to you. Go to www.nyc.gov/buildings and click "Sign up for Buildings News" to make sure you are getting the latest information you need.