

# DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

Rick D. Chandler, Commissioner



## WHAT WE DO

The Department of Buildings (DOB) ensures the safe and lawful use of more than 1,000,000 buildings and properties by enforcing the City's Building Code, the City's Zoning Resolution, New York State Labor Law and New York State Multiple Dwelling Law. The Department enforces compliance with these regulations and promotes worker and public safety through its review and approval of building plans, permitting and licensing functions, and inspections.

## FOCUS ON EQUITY

The Department of Buildings serves to promote the safety of all people that build, work and live in New York City by ensuring the lawful use of buildings and construction sites across the five boroughs.

In addition to code and zoning compliance review, emergency response and professional analysis of accidents to prevent future incidents, the Department has strengthened its education and outreach programs to provide the construction industry, property owners and tenants with a heightened understanding of safety awareness.

The Department is committed to providing efficient service to all New Yorkers by continuously assessing the equitable distribution of resources to meet the safety and permitting needs of residents across all five boroughs.

The Department has incorporated the Build Safe | Live Safe catchphrase to remind New Yorkers of the importance of safety education in protecting themselves and others – even after a property's final Certificate of Occupancy is issued.

## OUR SERVICES AND GOALS

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### **SERVICE 1 Facilitate safe and compliant development.**

- Goal 1a Improve application processing efficiency.
- Goal 1b Promptly review initial construction plans.
- Goal 1c Promptly schedule development inspections.

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### **SERVICE 2 Ensure the safe and lawful use of buildings and properties by enforcing the Building Code and the Zoning Resolution.**

- Goal 2a Promptly address complaints.
- Goal 2b Rigorously enforce construction laws.
- Goal 2c Prevent construction-related fatalities and injuries.

# HOW WE PERFORMED IN FISCAL 2015

## SERVICE 1 Facilitate safe and compliant development.

### Goal 1a Improve application processing efficiency.

Total job filings grew in Fiscal 2015 by 11.4 percent, an increase of 9,382 filings. This rise was primarily due to the 11.5 percent increase in minor alteration job filings. Despite the increase in the number of jobs filed, the average time to complete application processing decreased to 0.07 days from 0.09 days a year ago.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
Jobs filed	65,358	68,911	72,288	82,551	91,933	*	*	Neutral	Up
★Average time to complete application processing (days)	0.32	0.20	0.09	0.09	0.07	0.10	0.10	Down	Down
Building permits issued - Initial	83,151	87,190	88,290	98,302	104,087	*	*	Neutral	Up
Building permits issued - Renewals	37,876	39,321	41,230	44,538	44,774	*	*	Neutral	Up
Certificates of Occupancy issued	7,044	6,642	5,949	5,694	5,289	*	*	Neutral	Down

★ Critical Indicator "NA" - means Not Available in this report ↕ shows desired direction

### Goal 1b Promptly review initial construction plans.

DOB completed close to 84,500 first plan reviews, a 10.1 percent increase. All job categories experienced increases and, in conjunction with the implementation of the 2014 NYC Construction Codes, contributed to longer plan exam review times for all job types. More significantly, the average time to complete first plan reviews of new building applications at both the Borough and Hub offices increased from 8.8 to 14.9 days and from 12.7 to 17.9 days, respectively, alongside a 28.5 percent increase in the number of these reviews.

As part of its action plan, [Building One City](#), the Department will hire more than 150 additional plan examiners over the next few years and will streamline the plan examination process. These steps underscore the Department's commitment to substantially reduce the time taken for plan examination reviews with the goal of completing initial reviews on all major filings within 10 business days from plan submission.

Nearly 59 percent of jobs were professionally certified, continuing an upward trend. The percent of these jobs that were audited by DOB declined to under 14 percent, missing the 20 percent target for the second consecutive year.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
First plan reviews completed	61,507	63,130	69,380	76,669	84,449	*	*	Neutral	Up
★Average days to complete first plan review (Borough offices) - New buildings	14.9	12.6	16.1	8.8	14.9	12.0	12.0	Down	Down
★Average days to complete first plan review (Borough offices) - Major renovation (Alteration I)	11.7	11.3	12.0	11.3	15.2	10.0	10.0	Down	Up
Average days to complete first plan review (Borough offices) - Minor renovation (Alterations II and III)	3.9	3.9	4.2	3.8	4.1	4.0	4.0	Down	Neutral
Average days to complete first plan review (Hub projects) - New buildings	NA	11.5	11.6	12.7	17.9	*	*	Down	NA
Average days to complete first plan review (Hub projects) - Major renovation (Alteration I)	NA	9.5	11.9	11.9	16.2	*	*	Down	NA
Average days to complete first plan review (Hub projects) - Minor renovation (Alterations II and III)	NA	NA	1.4	1.1	2.6	*	*	Down	NA

★ Critical Indicator "NA" - means Not Available in this report ↕ shows desired direction

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
Jobs professionally certified (%)	47.6%	50.3%	55.2%	57.8%	58.8%	*	*	Neutral	Up
Jobs professionally certified that were audited (%)	20.3%	24.8%	20.3%	18.2%	13.8%	20.0%	20.0%	Up	Down
- Audits that resulted in revocation notices (%)	14.8%	9.8%	10.4%	13.1%	14.6%	*	*	Down	Neutral

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### Goal 1c Promptly schedule development inspections.

The Department continued to respond promptly to requests for inspections. At 3.6 and 4.5 days, respectively, the average wait times for construction and plumbing inspections were on par with last year and remained better than their respective targets. At 5.2 days, the Department reduced the average wait time for an electrical inspection by nearly one day, outperforming the target of 6 days.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
★ Average wait time for a construction inspection (days)	NA	NA	4.7	3.4	3.6	4.5	4.5	Down	NA
★ Average wait time for a plumbing inspection (days)	NA	NA	5.1	4.5	4.5	5.0	5.0	Down	NA
★ Average wait time for an electrical inspection (days)	NA	NA	6.3	6.1	5.2	6.0	6.0	Down	NA

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## SERVICE 2 Ensure the safe and lawful use of buildings and properties by enforcing the Building Code and the Zoning Resolution.

### Goal 2a Promptly address complaints.

DOB received 15,827 emergency (Priority A) complaints, an increase of eight percent, and 63,160 nonemergency (Priority B) complaints, a decrease of almost 10 percent. The Department continues to prioritize allocation of its resources to timely respond to emergency (Priority A) complaints, with average response times holding steady at 0.7 days, remaining below the 1-day target. Average response times to Priority B complaints increased from 34.6 to 38.4 days but remained better than the 40-day target. The number of residential illegal conversion complaints received decreased by 7.2 percent to 18,356. DOB inspectors gained access on 40.5 percent of investigated illegal conversion complaints and, of these, violations were written in 37.4 percent of cases, continuing a downward trend.

With the introduction of the Department's [Inspection Ready](#) program the inspection process will be further automated by allowing the agency's inspectorial staff to access more information from the field, thus increasing inspectors' productivity and cutting inspectors' response time. Inspection Ready will also enable online scheduling of development inspections and optimize inspection routing.

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
Priority A (emergency) complaints received	15,182	14,662	14,511	14,654	15,827	*	*	Neutral	Neutral
Priority B (nonemergency) complaints received	67,228	64,402	58,983	70,089	63,160	*	*	Neutral	Neutral
Priority A complaints responded to	15,075	14,540	14,542	14,468	15,420	*	*	Neutral	Neutral
Priority B complaints responded to	63,219	59,236	51,990	63,215	54,688	*	*	Neutral	Neutral

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Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
★Average time to respond to Priority A complaints (days)	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.0	1.0	Down	Up
★Average time to respond to Priority B complaints (days)	28.5	41.1	48.5	34.6	38.4	40.0	40.0	Down	Up
★Residential illegal conversion complaints where access was obtained (%)	46.9%	46.4%	41.6%	44.1%	40.5%	44.0%	44.0%	Up	Down
- Access obtained and violations were written (%)	54.7%	53.5%	50.2%	44.7%	37.4%	*	*	Neutral	Down
Work without a permit complaints where access was obtained and violations were written (%)	67.6%	61.0%	43.9%	32.7%	33.3%	*	*	Neutral	Down

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### Goal 2b Rigorously enforce construction laws.

The Department completed approximately 139,300 construction inspections, two percent fewer than in Fiscal 2014. The number of Environmental Control Board (ECB) violations issued increased from 47,768 to 52,315 while the percent of violations admitted to or upheld at the ECB board rose to a five-year high of 84.5 percent.

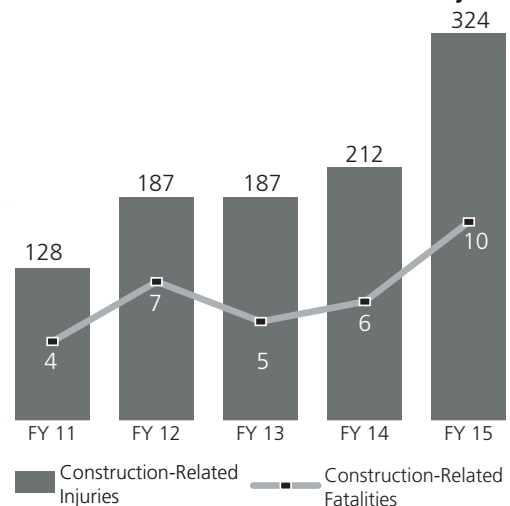
Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
★Construction inspections completed	171,547	141,237	131,444	142,222	139,323	140,000	140,000	Up	Down
Average construction inspections per inspector day	NA	12.9	11.8	10.8	NA	*	*	Up	NA
Construction inspections resulting in violations (%)	17.2%	20.7%	21.3%	19.1%	18.6%	*	*	Neutral	Neutral
DOB violations issued	56,299	82,606	65,189	82,753	65,215	*	*	Neutral	Up
Environmental Control Board violations issued	62,070	53,293	43,320	47,768	52,315	*	*	Neutral	Down
★Violations admitted to or upheld at the Environmental Control Board (%)	78.2%	77.1%	79.4%	82.1%	84.5%	78.0%	80.0%	Up	Neutral

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### Goal 2c Prevent construction-related fatalities and injuries.

Despite efforts to improve safety through continuous educational seminars, the Department's annual Build Safe | Live Safe Conference, community outreach programs, and stricter safety regulations that mandate safe construction practices, construction accidents causing serious or fatal injuries still occur. During Fiscal 2015 the number of construction-related fatalities increased to 10 from 6. The Department also reported 324 construction-related injuries and 314 construction-related accidents, increases of 52.8 percent and 51.7 percent, respectively. Contributing factors include the uptick in general construction activity and in new building construction specifically. Compared to Fiscal 2014, issuance of initial building permits for all job types rose 5.9 percent, with permit issuance for new building construction rising 11.2 percent. Construction activity has increased steadily over the five-year period; since Fiscal 2011 initial building permits have grown by 25.2 percent and by over 50 percent for new buildings.

**Construction-Related Fatalities and Injuries**



Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
Construction-related incidents	422	405	403	459	736	*	*	Down	Up
- Construction-related accidents	119	157	173	207	314	*	*	Down	Up
★ Construction-related injuries	128	187	187	212	324	↓	↓	Down	Up
★ Construction-related fatalities	4	7	5	6	10	↓	↓	Down	Up
Incident inspections resulting in violations (%)	76.5%	77.1%	79.6%	75.2%	70.4%	*	*	Neutral	Neutral

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## AGENCY-WIDE MANAGEMENT

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
Collisions involving City vehicles	48	36	22	33	41	*	*	Down	Down
Workplace injuries reported	32	16	17	15	12	*	*	Down	Down

## AGENCY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
Customer Experience									
Emails responded to in 14 days (%)	62%	50%	37%	65%	51%	55%	57%	Up	Neutral
Letters responded to in 14 days (%)	67%	58%	54%	49%	69%	55%	57%	Up	Neutral
Calls answered in 30 seconds (%)	91%	91%	NA	NA	NA	*	*	Up	NA
Average customer in-person wait time (minutes)	21	20	NA	NA	NA	*	*	Down	NA
Completed customer requests for interpretation	119	61	36	17	66	*	*	Neutral	Down
CORE customer experience rating (0-100)	81	79	83	91	90	82	85	Up	Up

Performance Indicators	Actual					Target		Desired Direction	5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16		
Response to 311 Service Requests (SRs)									
Percent meeting time to first action - Elevator - Defective/Not Working (60 days)	30%	50%	49%	51%	48%	50%	50%	Neutral	Up
Percent meeting time to first action - General Construction/ Plumbing - Contrary/Beyond Approved Plans/Permits (60 days)	86%	68%	70%	80%	81%	72%	72%	Neutral	Neutral
Percent meeting time to first action - General Construction/ Plumbing - Failure to Maintain (60 days)	84%	77%	77%	79%	81%	77%	77%	Neutral	Neutral
Percent meeting time to first action - Illegal Conversion of Residential Building/Space (60 days)	50%	44%	47%	62%	65%	53%	57%	Neutral	Up
Percent meeting time to first action - No Permit - Construction, Plumbing, Cranes & Derricks, Building/Use, Elevator (60 days)	77%	70%	72%	72%	63%	74%	77%	Neutral	Down

## AGENCY RESOURCES

Resource Indicators	Actual					Plan <sup>1</sup>		5yr Trend
	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16	
Expenditures (\$000,000) <sup>2</sup>	\$99.0	\$95.1	\$102.5	\$98.7	\$108.7	\$108.7	\$154.4	Neutral
Revenues (\$000,000)	\$165.2	\$198.2	\$228.0	\$246.1	\$293.0	\$274.2	\$214.9	Up
Personnel	1,094	1,067	1,039	1,073	1,156	1,281	1,475	Neutral
Overtime paid (\$000,000)	\$3.1	\$4.5	\$6.1	\$6.4	\$6.8	\$4.3	\$3.4	Up

<sup>1</sup>Authorized Budget Level      "NA" - Not Available in this report      <sup>2</sup>Expenditures include all funds.

## NOTEWORTHY CHANGES, ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

- Due to technical issues following the implementation of Inspection Ready, Fiscal 2015 data for 'Average construction inspections per inspector day' is not available.
- Fiscal 2014 data for the number of construction-related incidents and injuries as well as for the number of service requests and the percent responded to within designated timeframes has been updated.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional information go to:

- Building One City:  
[http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/downloads/pdf/building\\_one\\_city.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/downloads/pdf/building_one_city.pdf)
- Inspection Ready:  
[http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/html/development/insp\\_ready.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/html/development/insp_ready.shtml)
- Annual reports:  
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/html/about/about.shtml>
- Department Statistics (seven reports, either monthly or weekly):  
[http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/html/codes\\_and\\_reference\\_materials/statistics.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/html/codes_and_reference_materials/statistics.shtml)

For more information on the agency, please visit: [www.nyc.gov/buildings](http://www.nyc.gov/buildings).