



Department of Investigation

Press Releases

Queens Building Agent Arrested For Falsely Certifying Code Repairs

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THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2000 -- EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the felony arrest of PRASAD PRABHALA, a managing agent, for filing false repair certification forms with the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), fraudulently claiming that housing code violations had been corrected at a Queens apartment building.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, DOI initiated an investigation last October following a complaint by a tenant in the building at 43-33 48th Street, Sunnyside, Queens. The tenant alleged that various housing code violations issued against the six-story building had been removed from HPD records, even though the required repairs had not been done. The code violations, issued by HPD on April 3, 1999, and May 28, 1999, included failure to repair three doors and a lock and to paint the ceiling and walls of a sixth-floor apartment room.

The DOI investigation disclosed that PRABHALA had filed four documents with HPD's Queens Office of Code Enforcement, certifying that the violations had been corrected. As a result of his filings, the violations were removed from HPD records. However, three site inspections, conducted later at DOI's request, determined that the violations had never been rectified.

Commissioner Kuriansky explained that the documents, known as "Certification of Correction of Violations" forms, may be filed by landlords or their agents to certify to HPD that the necessary repairs have been made. If such a form, which contains a warning in bold print that "the making of a false certification is a crime punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment," is filed, the violation is generally removed.

PRABHALA, 60, of Flushing, Queens, was charged with four counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted, he faces up to 4 years in prison.

The investigation was conducted by Brian D. Foley, DOI's Inspector General for HPD, and members of his staff, including Assistant Inspector General Daniel Alejandro and Special Investigator John Bavuso.

The Office of Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown is prosecuting the case. Assistant District Attorney Michael J. Connolly is handling the matter.

Members of the public are reminded that a complaint is merely an accusation and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial in which it is the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

