



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOI AND FDNY ARREST 86 INDIVIDUALS IN THE PAST TEN DAYS IN JOINT CITYWIDE SWEEP
ON WARRANTS FOR FAILING TO APPEAR ON OUTSTANDING FIRE CODE VIOLATIONS
--Approximately \$179,700 in fines for fire code violations has been ordered since July 2007--**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation ("DOI"), and NICHOLAS SCOPPETTA, Commissioner of the New York City Fire Department ("FDNY"), announced today the arrests of 86 business owners, employees and building owners in the past two weeks on warrants charging them with failing to appear before New York City Criminal Courts on outstanding criminal summonses citing fire code violations. Today's announcement comes during Fire Prevention Week 2009, which runs from October 4 to October 10 and stresses the importance of fire safety.

Those arrested face fines for charges of violating the fire code in various ways, including an out-of-service standpipe, having no emergency exits or fire extinguishers on the premises, and failing to close a fuel tank. The violations were issued for commercial buildings and multiple dwellings. Thus far, fines levied against those arrested range between \$250 and \$1,500.

The arrests are part of a continuing joint effort by DOI and FDNY Fire Marshals to enforce outstanding arrest warrants against individuals who disregard criminal summonses for fire code violations. These joint Citywide sweeps began in July 2007, after DOI found numerous outstanding arrest warrants charging individuals with failing to appear in court to answer the violations. Since then, approximately 551 individuals have been arrested on such warrants and fines of approximately \$179,700 have been ordered.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "We are working with the Fire Department to make sure that individuals answer in court for unsafe conditions, correct them, and pay the appropriate fines. Ignoring safety rules is not an option. Our agencies will continue with this tremendously successful and important effort to help keep New Yorkers safe."

Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta said, "Violations of the fire code are not to be taken lightly and New York City cannot tolerate those who choose not to take them seriously. These unsafe conditions put the public and our first responders at risk. I'm very pleased with the work of FDNY's Bureau of Fire Investigation and the Department of Investigation to bring all 86 of these offenders to justice."

Those arrested were issued criminal summonses by FDNY Fire Inspectors for fire code violations and, in some cases, for failing to comply with the Fire Commissioner's order to correct them. These individuals allegedly then failed to appear before the court to answer the summonses, which are unclassified misdemeanors. As a result, arrest warrants were issued by a judge.

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The latest Citywide sweep began on Tuesday, September 29, and continued through Thursday, October 8, 2009, resulting in 16 arrests in the Bronx; 27 arrests in Manhattan; 16 arrests in Queens, 23 arrests in Brooklyn and 4 arrests in Staten Island. DOI and the FDNY Fire Marshals arrested these individuals at their homes and businesses and other locations on arrest warrants and brought them to the courts to face fire code violations. So far, in the past 10 days, \$6,100 in fines has been ordered.

In court, the individuals paid fines, their cases were adjourned for another date, or the charges against them were sealed after payment of fines or were dismissed.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked FDNY Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta, Chief Fire Marshal Robert Byrnes and the New York City Law Department for their assistance and cooperation in these cases. Commissioner Gill Hearn also thanked the clerks in the New York City Criminal Courts for their assistance.

These Citywide warrant sweeps were conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for FDNY and the Bureau of Fire Investigations of the FDNY. The New York City Law Department is handling the prosecution of these cases in the criminal courts under the supervision of Senior Counsel Sherrill Kurland.

Arrest warrants and criminal complaints are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

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