



The City of New York
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**DOI AND FDNY ARREST 102 INDIVIDUALS SINCE SEPTEMBER IN JOINT CITYWIDE SWEEP
FOR FAILING TO APPEAR ON OUTSTANDING FIRE CODE VIOLATIONS**
--Approximately \$90,400 in fines for fire code violations have 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 arrest of 102 business owners, employees and building owners over 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, which runs from October 5 to October 11, 2008, and stresses the importance of fire safety.

Those arrested face fines for charges of violating the fire code in various ways, including failing to maintain a standpipe, blocking exits, overcrowding in a nightclub and improper fuel storage. The violations were issued for businesses, institutions and multiple dwellings. Among those arrested was a Staten Island deli owner who was ordered to pay \$4,000 bail after allegedly giving a false name to a fire inspector issuing him a criminal summons for an illegal range hood; an employee of a construction company building a hotel on West 37th Street in Manhattan for ignoring a criminal summons for an out-of-service standpipe and two repeat offenders arrested in previous warrant sweeps who are charged again with failing to respond to summonses.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "These warrant sweeps have reminded us all of the importance of fire safety. Individuals who ignore fire code violations may face a rude awakening when they are arrested and charged with a crime. The message should be clear: If you're cited, you must respond and show that you are curing the problem. I thank the DOI investigators and the Fire Marshals for their tireless commitment to this important effort."

Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta said, "The Fire Department has zero tolerance for building owners and managers who do not adhere to the regulations and codes that are designed to keep the public safe. Failure to comply with fire and building codes not only endangers the public, but can also pose serious dangers for firefighters called to respond to emergencies in these buildings. This ongoing initiative with DOI demonstrates that when it comes to building safety in New York City, we mean business."

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In the past two weeks, individuals have been fined a total of approximately \$8,325 for fire code violations and fines levied against those arrested range between \$100 and \$2,000.

The arrests are part of a continuing joint effort by DOI and FDNY Fire Marshals to enforce outstanding arrest warrants against individuals who ignore 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, 335 individuals have been arrested on such warrants and fines of approximately \$90,400 have been ordered. 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 a summons, which is an unclassified misdemeanor. As a result, arrest warrants were issued by a judge.

The latest Citywide sweep began on Thursday, September 25, and continued until Tuesday, October 7, resulting in 29 arrests in the Bronx; 28 arrests in Brooklyn, 21 arrests in Queens; 17 arrests in Manhattan and 7 arrests in Staten Island. DOI and 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.

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. (Please see accompanying chart of those arrested whose cases remain public.)

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 FDNY Bureau of Fire Investigation. 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.

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.

**Get the worms out of the Big Apple.
To report someone ripping off the city, call DOI at (212) 825-5959.**