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OIG Releases Audit of DOB Annual Elevator Inspections

The City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG) has released an audit of 2013 elevator inspections finding that the Department of Buildings (DOB) was not in compliance with the municipal code's (MCC) inspection requirements.

According to DOB records made available to OIG,

- 66% of buildings covered by MCC § 13-20-100 did not receive an annual elevator inspection in 2013;
- 62% of violations for inspected elevators cited from January 2006 to December 2013 remained unresolved;
- \$236,355 in inspection revenue went unbilled because DOB failed to enter data in a timely manner or create fee records appropriately.

Our audit examined the two means DOB employs to meet its inspection duties. The majority of buildings with elevators in the City are subject to inspection by DOB staff. Inspections for the remaining buildings are conducted through the Department's Annual Inspection Certification program (AIC). In this program, owners of designated properties—including buildings in the Central Business District, those owned by the City's sister agencies, and select institutions such as hospitals and universities—must arrange for private inspections and submit qualifying forms to the City.

OIG found notable differences in the outcomes of these two annual inspection programs. In one example, while DOB staff inspected only 19.1% of buildings under their purview, Certificates of Inspection were issued for 88.5% of buildings in the AIC program. The 4,094 buildings that DOB staff failed to inspect represent approximately \$772,040 in foregone inspection fees.

“The bottom line of our audit is that DOB has not been meeting its responsibility to ensure that every building receives an elevator inspection as required by the municipal code,” said Inspector General Joe Ferguson. “DOB should re-examine its elevator inspection program from the ground up and consider the merits of expanding its own AIC pilot program, which, our audit revealed, was achieving demonstrably higher inspection compliance rates.”

In its response, DOB commits itself to more timely and complete data processing and to expanding the AIC program in 2015. The Department also commits to improving its sampling

methodology for periodic compliance auditing of AIC buildings, which OIG found was insufficient to assess the effectiveness of the overall program.

The full report, and City's response to the findings, can be found online at the OIG website:

www.ChicagoInspectorGeneral.org

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