



## Fire Safety Inspections

### Part 1 of 3 – Pre-Inspection (2020 Code Update)

The Minimum Standards for Administration and Enforcement (19 NYCRR Part 1203) outline the requirements for fire safety and property maintenance inspections and the intervals at which they must be performed. This is the first of three editions of the Code Outreach Program that will outline some common pre- and post- inspection procedures as well as violations and situations commonly encountered by code enforcement officials and building safety inspectors during these inspections.

**Please note:** This Code Outreach Program series is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to be representative of every inspection or scenario. Inspectors will need to consult with their municipal attorney and review their local laws outlining their local enforcement program and review each occupancy individually to determine how to perform each inspection, how to issue violation notices, the required frequency of inspections, and other relevant information.

An important step that is frequently overlooked during fire safety and property maintenance inspections is the pre-inspection stage. Prior to arriving on-site, it can be helpful to understand and review the following:

1. Review the DBSC's Technical Bulletin, "Legal Citations" and the Code Outreach Program, "Applicability of Retroactive Provisions to Legally Occupied Buildings."<sup>1</sup>
2. Inspections must be performed under the Fire Code and Property Maintenance Code in effect at the time of the inspection. Refer to 19 NYCRR Parts 1225 and 1226, and any other relevant Parts, including emergency rules, at the start of the inspection to verify the applicable provisions. Reviewing these documents for the retroactive provisions before arriving on-site is always beneficial.
3. Review the most recent inspection reports to become familiar with the building and past violations, if any.
4. Obtain copies of any third-party inspection reports from the building owner/manager and review them for any noted violations, issues, or corrective actions taken. These reports typically address the inspection of the building's sprinkler systems, fire alarm systems, fire department connections, elevators, generators, fire pumps, commercial kitchen suppression systems, emergency evacuation drill records, annual building staff training, and others.
5. If available, review the building plans, certificate of occupancy, and current or past building permits or operating permits to better understand the building layout and determine the location of any higher hazard areas, elevator rooms, mechanical spaces, areas of public assembly, among others.
6. Where necessary, coordinate with the building owner/manager for a schedule of when the building is occupied. While it can be helpful to inspect a building while it is occupied and under normal use, this may be a challenge for some buildings such as a courthouse, correctional facility, for instance.

Part 2 of this 3-part series focuses on the actual inspection and some common issues and violations encountered during inspections.

<sup>1</sup> Technical Bulletins are located on the Technical Information page of the DBSC website.