



New York City Dept. of Buildings rolls out safety initiative for parking garages - by Joe DiPompeo

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As of January 1, 2022, parking garage owners in New York City have a new obligation to meet. According to NYC Local Law 126 of 2021 and RCNY §103-13, they are required to retain the services of a Qualified Parking Structure Inspector (QPSI) to evaluate their garages and file a report every six years.

The NYC Department of Buildings has mandated a crucial condition assessment and filing requirement for all parking structures in Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island. If you own a parking garage in the areas west or south of Central Park in Manhattan, the clock is ticking. You have until the December 2023 deadline to complete the process with a QPSI (Professional Engineer certified by NYC DOB) for inspection and file a compliance report with the NYC Department of Buildings. For parking facilities in upper Manhattan and Brooklyn, the filing period opens in 2024, so it's best to start planning now.

The QPSI will inspect and file a report detailing any unsafe or SREM (Subject to Repair and Maintenance) conditions. You'll have to take immediate action if unsafe conditions are found to secure public safety, such as cordoning off dangerous areas, installing safety netting, and starting repair work. The repairs must be completed within 90 days unless the QPSI indicates a different time frame in the report. SREM conditions must be corrected within the recommended timeframe and be reported again within three years.

Between filing cycles, you'll need to perform an "annual observation" based on the QPSI's checklist and report any hazardous conditions. Failing to file the Compliance Report within 60 days of the assessment incurs a \$1,000 monthly penalty, with an additional \$5,000 per year for not filing. unsafe conditions not fixed within 90 days bring a \$1,000 monthly penalty, and if an SREM condition becomes Unsafe, you'll face a \$2,000 penalty.

Waivers can be requested in case of a change in ownership, state of emergency, bankruptcy, or demolition. So, it's crucial to plan ahead and retain a QPSI as soon as possible to avoid penalties and ensure the safety of your parking structure. With limited QPSI resources and deadlines approaching fast, it's better to be proactive and ensure compliance with the NYC DOB requirements.

The need for periodic inspections of parking garages in NYC stems from the state's aim to ensure their safety and maintenance. In 2018, New York State enacted a rule requiring such assessments state-wide, except in New York City. As a result, the city developed its own rules to regulate parking garages and keep them in top shape.

A QPSI is a licensed engineer with at least three years of parking structure experience, certified by the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) Parking Structure Unit. They are responsible for performing assessments and preparing reports following a prescribed format.

The QPSI's inspection process involves a thorough review of previous reports, structural designs, repair drawings, violations, and other records. The inspector then designs an assessment program

specific to the parking structure based on its type of construction, age, exposure, maintenance history, and more. Physical examination may include sounding, load tests, non-invasive scanning, core extraction, and visual inspection. If the QPSI identifies an unsafe condition, they must promptly notify the owner and DOB and provide advice on appropriate protective measures.

The final report must include a summary of findings and recommendations, classification as Safe, Safe with Repairs or Engineering Monitoring (SREM), or Unsafe, building address and owner contact information, building description, extent and location of physical examinations, procedures used in assessing conditions, and recommendations for public protection (for unsafe conditions). The report must include photographs, an annual observation checklist, a proposed monitoring program, and a repair timeline.

NYC's new parking garage inspection law aims to ensure these structures' safety and maintenance. Following the tips and best practices outlined above, parking garage owners can comply with the requirements and keep their facilities in shape. With an on staff QPSI and NYS Licensed PE's, Structural Workshop is ready to assist owners and managers of parking structures meet their NYC DOB requirements.

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