



New York City requires annual parapet inspections - by Anthony Volpe

August 27, 2024 - Design / Build



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Starting January 1, 2024, building owners in New York City are mandated to conduct annual inspections of their parapet walls, a measure aimed at identifying and addressing potential safety hazards. This new requirement stems from Local Law 126, enacted in November 2021, which amended the New York City Administrative Code to include specific provisions for the regular observation of parapet walls. The law was introduced in response to concerns over building safety and structural integrity, particularly in relation to older buildings where parapet walls may have deteriorated over time.

Parapet walls, which are the low walls or barriers along the edge of a roof, balcony, or terrace, can pose significant safety risks if not properly maintained. Issues such as cracking, spalling, or even collapse can occur, leading to dangerous conditions for both building occupants and pedestrians below. The annual inspection requirement is designed to ensure that any signs of wear and tear are detected early, allowing for timely repairs and maintenance.

In addition to the parapet wall inspections, Local Law 126 also introduced new standards for the inspection of parking garages, reflecting a broader effort by the city to enhance building safety protocols. By enforcing these regular inspections, the city aims to prevent accidents and ensure that all buildings meet the necessary safety standards, thereby protecting public safety and reducing the risk of structural failures.

Building owners will be responsible for hiring qualified professionals to perform these inspections and submit reports to the city. Non-compliance with the new inspection requirements could result in fines or other penalties, underscoring the importance of adhering to these regulations. As this law takes effect, building owners across the city will need to familiarize themselves with the new requirements and ensure that they are prepared to meet the annual inspection deadlines.

Our Falcon team will provide our expertise to ensure that the inspections are thorough, accurate, and in compliance with the regulatory requirements. Our experts will conduct a thorough structural evaluation of the parapet walls to identify any visible or underlying issues such as cracks, spalling, or leaning that could pose a safety hazard. Based on the findings, we will recommend necessary repairs or maintenance to prevent further deterioration and ensure the structural integrity of the parapet. If any repairs are needed, we can create detailed specifications and drawings to guide the repair work, ensuring that it is done correctly and to the required standards and is completed safely and effectively. After repairs are completed, Falcon will perform a final inspection to confirm that the work has been done properly and that the parapet walls are now safe and secure. Using our team of experts at Falcon can also help develop an ongoing maintenance plan to keep the parapet walls in good condition, minimizing the risk of future issues.

What is required?

With the exception of detached single- or two-family residences, this mandate requires any buildings in New York City having parapets facing sidewalks, public rights-of-ways, or roadways, regardless of

height and the observations must occur annually. Building owners do not need to submit these reports to the DOB, but need to retain them for at least six years and provide them to the DOB if requested.

Hazard Condition?

If observed unsafe, the licensed professional must alert the DOB and promptly install public protection. These unsafe conditions must be corrected within 90 days.

Report needs to include:

- Building information, address and owner contact details
- Name/contact details of the professional performing the observation
- Date of the observation
- Location plan & construction information for the parapets; material, height, and thickness
- Description of general conditions
- Unsafe conditions & actions taken to remedy them
- Repairs since the previous report
- Photos documenting conditions (dated)

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