

Queens Civic Congress welcomes the step up in enforcement. The magnitude of the violations in Queens clearly indicate a massive problem. And it certainly justifies curbing or, better, ending Self-Certification. Our Zoning and Code Enforcement Committee will continue its vigilance and our Legislation Committee will continue to monitor and proposes legal reforms.

[http://www.nydailynews.com/news/2008/07/06/2008-07-06\\_buildings\\_department\\_steps\\_up\\_its\\_constr.html](http://www.nydailynews.com/news/2008/07/06/2008-07-06_buildings_department_steps_up_its_constr.html)



## Buildings Department steps up its construction site shutdowns

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The number of construction sites the Buildings Department has shut down this year has skyrocketed - especially in boroughs outside [Manhattan](#) that have seen a surge in development by small contractors.

As of the middle of June, the department issued 5,948 stop-work orders citywide - a 44.8% jump from the corresponding period last year. The jump was 65.6% in [Brooklyn](#) and 67.2% in [Queens](#).

"It's a good sign, but there's a lot more to be done," said [City Councilman Tony Avella \(D-Queens\)](#), who is running for mayor in part on a platform that overdevelopment places unprecedented stress on the city.

"The Department of Buildings is finally focused on doing proper enforcement, but I still think it's just a drop in the bucket," he said.

Inspectors can order a job site shut down because of safety issues, unauthorized work and even paperwork violations.

"Development does not have to be at odds with public safety," said [Tony Sclafani](#), spokesman for the Buildings Department. "A stop-work order is an effective tool to protect New Yorkers."

WORK HALTED			
Stop-work orders are skyrocketing this year, with the highest spikes in Brooklyn and Queens:			
Borough	2007	2008	% change
Manhattan	980	1,232	25.7%
Bronx	371	204	-45.0%
Brooklyn	1,246	2,063	65.6%
Queens	1,361	2,275	67.2%
Staten Island	151	174	15.2%

(FIGURES ARE FOR JAN. 1 — JUN. 15 EACH YEAR)  
SOURCE: BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

Stop-work orders fell 45% in the [Bronx](#), which Sclafani said was because of fewer applications, complaints and permits.

"That's something that worries me a little bit," [Councilman James Vacca \(D-Bronx\)](#), another overdevelopment critic, said.

In Manhattan, by contrast, where two fatal crane collapses have killed nine people this year, stop-work orders rose 25%.

[Louis Coletti](#), head of the [Building Trades Employers' Association](#), blamed this on a crackdown by overzealous inspectors.

He said the Buildings Department is right to focus on the boroughs, where small contractors often take shortcuts and hope to escape scrutiny, instead of reputable contractors on Manhattan skyscrapers who can lose millions of dollars if a site is shut down.

"The department has publicly stated that they view disrupting the economic viability of a major project as a viable tool," Coletti said. "A lot of these small operators in the boroughs are fly-by-night operators, and they're willing to take that risk."

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