

The allegations focus on large sites but community groups continue to question DOB enforcement at sites where homes get razed and McMansions rise in their places. The smaller scale of these construction sites in our neighborhoods offers no free pass to DOB to avoid the abuses community member report that the agency glosses over. While the commissioner and the community relations staff respond to complaints brought to the agency, the actions of inspectors and the results of inspection leave our neighborhoods at risk.

<http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local-beat/Corruption-Probe-Weakens-Dept-of-Buildings-Structural-Integrity-57695282.html>

Corruption Probe Weakens Dept. of Buildings' Structural Integrity

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The DOB is more like the MOB, according to shocking new revelations reported today.

At least six inspectors with the city's Department of Buildings have been videotaped taking bribes at construction sites, and some were seen dealing cocaine and prescription pills, according to the New York Post.

The workers, some of whom allegedly have ties to the Luchese crime family, will be arrested later this month, along with about two dozen mafioso, sources told the Post.

"This is going to be big," their source said.

The forthcoming arrests are the result of a two-year probe which spawned a 2007 New Jersey case involving a Luchese squad that ran a \$2 billion-a-year gambling ring and supplied drugs and cellphones to Bloods members in state prisons, according to the Post.

As the investigation sprawled across the Hudson, probers began following buildings inspectors and captured crooked workers taking \$50 and \$100 payoffs to ignore violations. Then, even more shocking, several inspectors reportedly were videotaped selling OxyContin, Vicodin and cocaine while on duty.

Two inspectors are now allegedly cooperating with the investigation, sources told the Post.

As of last week, none of the inspectors under investigation are still employed with the Buildings Department, according to a statement released by Commissioner Robert Limandri.

“The allegations are disgraceful and do not reflect the diligent work of employees at the Department of Buildings. Our inspectors are entrusted to protect the public from unsafe building conditions, and it appears that these inspectors betrayed that trust,” Limandri said in the statement. “In June, the Department began re-inspections of all buildings associated with the inspectors in question, including visiting every site, and we expect to complete that process soon.”

Limandri also noted that the DOB recently launched a new program last month that would track the location of every inspector with global-positioning systems.

While the GPS wouldn't specifically prevent the kind of corruption that is alleged to have occurred in this latest case, Limandri said they “expect this new tracking system will act as a deterrent and hold inspectors accountable for their work.”