



Memorandum



Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General
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To: The Honorable Carlos A. Gimenez, Mayor, Miami-Dade County

From:  Christopher Mazzella, Inspector General

Date: March 22, 2013

Subject: Receipt of 90-day Status Report and Case Close-out, Ref. IG12-26,
OIG Final Report Re: *Miami-Dade County Internal Services Department's
Failure to Obtain Building Permits for Work Located in the City of Miami*

The Office of the Inspector General received the Internal Services Department's (ISD) 90-day status report on the above-captioned matter. (Attached) The OIG requested this update when we issued our final report in December 2012. That final report contained ISD's action plan to address the deficiencies detected in our investigation of two construction projects located within the City of Miami.

Upon review of ISD's status report, we find that ISD's recent actions are sufficient to correct the permitting problems of the two projects identified in the report and to improve departmental processes as it relates to future permit determinations. ISD reports that it has prepared internal documents summarizing permitting requirements, educated its staff of Florida Building Code requirements, and modified its processes to ensure that permitting decisions are made by appropriately qualified personnel.

Accordingly, the OIG considers this case closed.

Attachment

cc: Ed Marquez, Deputy Mayor
Lester Sola, Director, Internal Services Department
Charles Danger, Building Official, Miami-Dade County
Mariano Fernandez, Building Official, City of Miami
Charles Anderson, Commission Auditor

ATTACHMENT



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Internal Services

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March 19, 2013

Christopher Mazzella
Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
19 West Flagler Street, Suite 220
Miami, FL 33130

RE: Status Report for the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Final Report (IG12-26) regarding Building Permits in facilities managed by the Internal Services Department

Dear Mr. Mazzella:

Please accept this as the department's response to your request for a 90-day Status Report regarding actions taken in response to the OIG Final Report for Project No. #IG12-26, *Miami-Dade County Internal Services Department's Failure to Obtain Building Permits for Work Located in the City of Miami*.

As detailed in our initial response to the draft report, the department would work to "(a) clarify and educate all relevant personnel in what does and does not require a permit; (b) establish a clear process for how permit compliance decisions are to be made, who is responsible for making them, and how such permitting requirements will be met (on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis, if necessary), and; (c) do whatever may be necessary to eliminate safety or code issues for the specific projects identified in [the OIG's] report." Toward that end, the following actions have been taken or are underway:

1. Correction action in two ISD facilities lacking permits

Staff contacted the Chief Building Official and Building Department Inspections Chief for the City of Miami to review and initiate permitting for the two projects identified in the report (Security Operations Center in the Stephen P. Clark Center, and the employee lounge at ISD Fleet Shop #1). Following those discussions, staff completed and submitted separate Permit Applications to the City for each project, along with the required fees and supporting documentation. The City issued the requested permits, and subsequently inspected the work performed and approved both permits.

2. Process improvements for future permit determinations

As it relates to the process issues described in items (a) and (b) above, I have met with my senior staff to review our internal processes. The vast majority of work performed in ISD facilities complies with the requirements of the Florida Building Code, and is performed in a manner consistent with the procedures of the local Building Officials who administer that Code for the various jurisdictions within Miami-Dade County.

By far, most permitting decisions are made by architectural and engineering professionals and/or construction trade supervisors who are specifically licensed, trained, and qualified. The problems identified in the OIG report can be primarily attributed to situations in which decisions not to obtain permits have been made by staff insufficiently versed in the requirements of the Florida Building Code. As a result, corrective actions have been focused on educating key facilities management and maintenance personnel to Florida Building Code requirements, and on minimizing the number of permitting decisions made without input from licensed staff. As of this date, internal documents summarizing Florida Building Code permitting requirements have been drafted, training sessions held to educate staff in those requirements, and processes modified to ensure that permitting decisions are made by appropriately qualified personnel. Additionally, we continue to review projects in order to determine if a permit is required. If the determination is that a permit is required, we will secure one.

I trust that this will assist you in concluding your review of this issue; however, should you have any questions or require further information, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lester Sola". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Lester Sola, Director
Internal Services Department

- c: Edward Marquez, Deputy Mayor/Finance Director
- Leland Salomon, Assistant Director, Internal Services Department
- Jerry S. Hall, Division Director, Internal Services Department