

## Results of recent crackdown on dangerous & illegal hotels

Written by MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG  
Friday, 20 May 2011 17:05

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CHIEF Policy Advisor John Feinblatt, Buildings Commissioner Robert D. LiMandri and I recently announced the results of a recent crackdown on dangerous illegal hotels.

Since May 1, when a new state law proposed by the Bloomberg administration and sponsored by State Sen. Liz Krueger and Assemblyman Richard Gottfried went into effect, the city's Office of Special Enforcement took action against 15 residential locations that were illegally converted into unsafe hotels.

Imminently dangerous conditions at eight of the locations visited required full or partial vacate orders to be issued at the premises.

Prior to May 1, 2011, enforcement often proved difficult because the law did not define a threshold for permanent or transient occupancy.

The new law closed that loophole and defines transient occupancy as less than 30 days.

Additionally, the law strengthened enforcement by defining the use of any single unit of a residential building for transient guests as illegal.

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Previously, a majority of units needed to be occupied transiently for a building to qualify as illegal.

The Office of Special Enforcement is a multiagency taskforce overseen by Chief Policy Advisor John Feinblatt and led by Director of the Office of Special Enforcement Shari C. Hyman.

The office is dedicated to addressing and improving quality of life and safety conditions around the city, such as illegal hotels, adult use locations, lawless clubs, and trademark counterfeiting bazaars.

In the past, ambiguities in the law hindered our ability to take enforcement actions against illegal hotels.

Now, with clear definitions and tougher standards, we can more effectively take action against dangerous illegal hotels.

Owners of illegal hotels put profits above safety, allowing renters to stay in extremely dangerous conditions and it's disgraceful.

We are going to continue to do all we can to enforce against operators of illegal hotels.

Enforcing against illegally converted apartments and illegal hotels will always be a challenge, but we will continue to look for innovative ways to attack the safety problems posed by landlords that are willing to put lives at risk to make an extra buck.

The effect of the new law we proposed made our sweeps more effective and I want to thank Sen. Krueger and Assemblyman Gottfried for their help in giving us more tools to protect the public.

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“Illegal hotels may be inexpensive to rent, but tenants can end up paying the ultimate price — their life,” said Commissioner LiMandri.

“Any illegal residence can put tenants, neighbors and first responders in serious danger, and landlords must be held accountable for creating unsafe conditions in order to make a profit. I would like to commend the life-saving work of the Office of Special Enforcement, including our inspectors assigned to the unit, for raising awareness about such a critical issue.”

“I am extremely pleased that New York City’s enforcement agencies finally have the tools they need to actively investigate reports of illegal hotel operations and take appropriate action,” said Sen. Krueger.

“Even after having heard countless horror stories from hundreds of constituents over the years, I am shocked and outraged by the conditions the city has unveiled in just the first few weeks of the law going into effect. There is no question that cracking down and closing illegal hotel operations will significantly improve the security and quality of life of countless residents, increase the number of apartments available for actual residents, and help ensure that tourists stay in safe accommodations.”

“It can be a real nightmare when the apartment next door is occupied by one transient after another,” said Assemblyman Gottfried.

“You have strangers coming and going at all hours, with noise, disruption and real safety concerns. For years, my office has received countless complaints from tenants living in residential buildings that are being used as hotels.”

At the McDougal Street Synagogue on St. Mark’s Place in Manhattan, building owners left clients specific instructions on how to try to subvert the new law, noting in a flyer that inspections may occur and “if you inform the public official that your stay is longer than 30 days, then the public official must leave your residence and should not bother you any further” and “don’t give your receipt of payment to them.”