



Follow-up Review of
Audit of the
Building Code Division's
Elevator Inspections Section

Office of the County Auditor

Follow-up Review

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Report No. 25-17
May 06, 2025



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY AUDITOR

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May 06, 2025

Honorable Mayor and Board of County Commissioners

We conducted a Follow-up Review of our Audit of the Building Code Division's Elevator Inspections Section (Report No. 23-06) dated November 30, 2022. The objective of our review was to determine the implementation status of our previous recommendations.

We conclude that of the 11 recommendations in the original report, six recommendations were implemented, four recommendations were partially implemented, and one recommendation was no longer applicable. We commend management for implementing our recommendations. The status of each of our recommendations is presented in this follow-up report.

Please be advised that the information presented herein is not considered an audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Governmental Auditing Standards. Had we conducted an audit, we may have identified additional findings and concerns.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by the Building Code Division throughout our review process.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Melton".

Bob Melton
County Auditor

cc: Monica Cepero, County Administrator
Andrew Meyers, County Attorney
Dr. Kimm Campbell, Deputy County Administrator
Kevin Kelleher, Assistant County Administrator
Lenny Vialpando, Director, Resilient Environment
Hipolito Cruz, Director, Building Code

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IMPLEMENTATION STATUS SUMMARY

Implementation Status of Previous Recommendations from the Audit of the Building Code Division's Elevator Inspections Section

Rec. No.	PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	NOT IMPLEMENTED	NOT APPLICABLE
1	We recommend management increase outreach and enforcement efforts to encourage building owners to comply with the requirements of Chapter 399.07 of the Florida Statutes and reduce the number of elevators with expired certificates of operation.	✓			
2.A	We recommend management implement a mechanism to adequately track open complaints until resolution.	✓			
2.B	We recommend management ensure inspection reports related to complaints are consistently tied to the complaint	✓			
2.C	We recommend management enhance complaint handling procedures with reasonable complaint investigation timeframes, giving priority to complaints involving life, health, or safety, and ensuring complaints are responded to and resolved within established timeframes.	✓			
3.A	We recommend management review all expired, open permits to ensure the status of each is accurately reflected within the system of record.		✓		

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Rec. No.	PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	NOT IMPLEMENTED	NOT APPLICABLE
3.B	We recommend management implement procedures to ensure elevator permits are closed timely.		✓		
4	We recommend management review and revise the "Elevators, Escalators, and Other Apparatus" fee schedule to ensure it includes fees for all relevant types of work performed.	✓			
5	We recommend management ensure third-party inspector records are appropriately maintained and reviewed to ensure that minimum required documentation for all active third-party inspectors is current when inspection reports are submitted.	✓			
6	We recommend management implement procedures to ensure all required documentation is obtained prior to issuing Certificates of Operation, including signed affidavits by the construction supervisors for new installations required by Florida Statute.		✓		
7.A	We recommend management maintain adequate support for the data reported to the DBPR.		✓		
7.B	We recommend management ensure inspections performed by County inspectors are included in a Quality Assurance Program.				✓

INTRODUCTION

Scope and Methodology

The Office of the County Auditor conducts audits of Broward County's entities, programs, activities, and contractors to provide the Board of County Commissioners, Broward County's residents, County management, and other stakeholders with unbiased, timely and relevant information for use in promoting government accountability and stewardship and improving government operations.

We conducted a Follow-up Review of our Audit of the Building Code Division's Elevator Inspections Section (Report No. 23-06) dated November 30, 2022. The objective of our review was to determine the implementation status of our previous recommendations.

Please be advised that the information presented herein is not considered an audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Governmental Auditing Standards. Had we conducted an audit, we may have identified additional findings and concerns.

Our follow-up review included such tests of records and other auditing procedures, as we considered necessary in the circumstances. The review period was July 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025. However, transactions, processes, and situations reviewed were not limited by the review period.

Overall Conclusion

We conclude that of the 11 recommendations in the original report, six recommendations were implemented, four recommendations were partially implemented, and one recommendation was no longer applicable. We commend management for implementing our recommendations. The status of each of our recommendations is presented in this follow-up report.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

This section reports actions taken by management on the Opportunities for Improvement in our previous review. The issues and recommendations herein are those of the original review, followed by the status of the recommendations.

1. Thirty-three Percent of Elevators were Operating with Expired Certificates of Operation

During our analysis, we noted that for the twelve-month periods, starting May 1 and ending April 30, 2020, 2021, and 2022, approximately 33% of the Certificates of Operation for elevators were not renewed within their deadlines, resulting in over 3,000 elevators operating with expired certificates each year.

We tested 30 elevators with expired certificates of operation and noted that as of October 21, 2021, 28 of 30 elevators were expired an average of 994 days, ranging from 446 to 3,368 days, and were listed as active elevators within POSSE. Eleven of the 28 elevators above did not have an inspection within 365 days as required by Florida Statute 399.061.

We recommended management increase outreach and enforcement efforts to encourage building owners to comply with the requirements of Chapter 399.07 of the Florida Statutes and reduce the number of elevators with expired certificates of operation.

Implementation Status: Implemented.

2. Elevator Complaints were not Consistently Processed Timely and were not Adequately Tracked in POSSE.

During our review of elevator complaint processes, we noted the following:

- A. The Elevator Licensing Section did not have a mechanism to adequately track open complaints.
- B. Investigations of complaints were not consistently tied to the complaint.
- C. Management had not established timeframes to respond to complaints, including those that are considered potentially life, health and safety related. We reviewed 30 complaints and noted the following:

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- i. For 26 complaints, inspections occurred an average of 27 days after the complaint, with a range of one day to 293 days.
- ii. For four complaints, no inspections were required.

We recommended management:

- A. Implement a mechanism to adequately track open complaints until resolution.
- B. Ensure inspection reports related to complaints are consistently tied to the complaint
- C. Enhance complaint handling procedures with reasonable complaint investigation timeframes, giving priority to complaints involving life, health, or safety, and ensuring complaints are responded to and resolved within established timeframes.

Implementation Status:

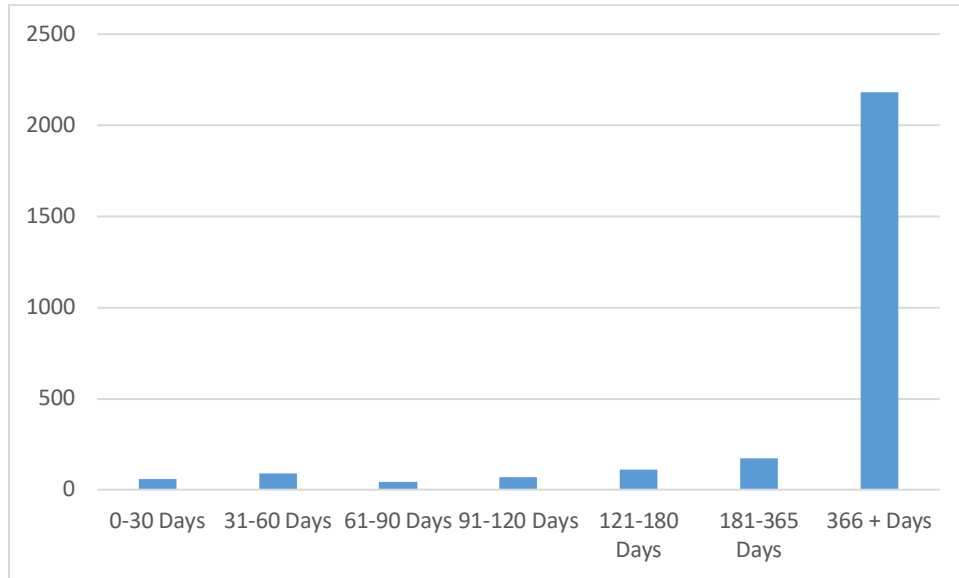
- A. **Implemented.**
- B. **Implemented.**
- C. **Implemented.**

3. Elevator Permits were not Consistently Closed Timely within POSSE, the System of Record.

During our review, we noted that POSSE was not consistently updated timely to reflect the status of elevator permits. Specifically, we noted elevator permits were not consistently closed timely.

We performed data analysis to age all open permits within POSSE into time windows to evaluate how long elevator permits remain open. We noted that approximately 80% of permits are over a year old as shown in Exhibit D. On average, As of August 2, 2021, permits were open approximately 2,700 days with a range of 1 to 5,981 days. Of the 2,180 permits aged greater than 366 days, 1,272 were from before the start of calendar year 2013.

Exhibit D
Aging of Open Permits by Time Window as of August 2, 2021



We selected a sample of 30 permits that were open for more than 365 days and noted the following:

- i. Fifteen of 30 (50%) open permits were not issued extensions, or the extensions were expired.

We then reviewed each of the 15 open permits above and noted the following:

- i. For six of the 15 expired permits management was able to provide a paper copy of the inspection report showing that the permit should have been closed within the system of record.
- ii. For five of the 15 expired permits management was unable to provide a reason why the permits remained open.
- iii. For three of the 15 expired permits, management closed the permit during our review.
- iv. For one of the 15 expired permits, management determined that the elevator was never built and should have been closed.

We recommended management:

- A. Review all expired, open permits to ensure the status of each is accurately reflected within the system of record.
- B. Implement procedures to ensure elevator permits are closed timely.

Implementation Status:

- A. **Partially Implemented.** Management has developed standard operating procedures and a report to facilitate the tracking and monitoring of old, expired, open permits.
- B. **Partially Implemented.** Management has changed the permit expiration and closure process. The new process requires that an inspection be conducted, and an inspection report be submitted to manually expire or close permits. The number of open, expired permits have decreased by 26% since the prior audit from 2,719 to 1,999. Management indicated that they plan to implement a manual process to monitor open permits to ensure they expired and closed timely.

4. Elevator Fees Schedules in the Administrative Code Required Enhancement.

We noted 3 of 30 (10%) elevator permits tested where the assessed permit fee did not agree to the Board approved fee schedule. Specifically, the board approved fee schedule did not include fees for the specific type of work performed.

- ❖ For two of the three exceptions, the permits were for major alterations to escalators, which is not included in the fee schedule, as a result, management assessed the “vertical conveyer fee” of \$205.
- ❖ For one of the three exceptions, the permit was for a residential wheelchair lift, which is not included in the fee schedule. Management assessed the \$410 fee for a residential elevator for the installation of the residential wheelchair lift. Management was unsure why this fee was chosen. We noted that the board approved fee schedule includes a non-residential wheelchair lift fee of \$205.

We recommended management review and revise the “Elevators, Escalators, and Other Apparatus” fee schedule to ensure it includes fees for all relevant types of work performed.

Implementation Status: Implemented.

5. Third-Party Elevator Inspector Qualification Documentation was not Adequately Maintained.

During our review of third-party elevator inspector qualifications, we noted that required qualification documentation for third-party elevator inspectors was not adequately maintained. Specifically, noted the following concerns:

- A. Three of 21 (14%) of third-party elevator inspector files did not include current State of Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation elevator license documentation. Although we were able to validate directly with the DBPR that these inspectors had current licenses, approximately 1,600 inspections were accepted from these inspectors without evidence of an active license on file as shown in Exhibit E below.

Exhibit E

Inspectors Without Current Licenses on File and Inspection Counts

Inspector AO	426
Inspector JF	606
Inspector RR	631
TOTAL	1,663

Prepared by the Office of the County Auditor based on data obtained from
POSSE and Building Code Services records.

- B. One of 21 (5%) of third-party elevator inspector files did not include a copy of Certificate of Liability insurance for the period August 1, 2020, through August 6, 2021. Although we were able to locate proof of insurance for this inspector through file review of other inspectors with the same company, approximately 290 inspections were accepted from these inspectors without proof of insurance on file.

We recommended management ensure third-party inspector records are appropriately maintained and reviewed to ensure that minimum required documentation for all active third-party inspectors is current when inspection reports are submitted.

Implementation Status: Implemented.

6. Certificates of Operation were not Consistently Issued in Accordance with Laws and Regulations.

For seven of 30 (23%) certificates of operation issued for new installations and alterations on commercial properties sampled, management was unable to provide the required affidavit signed by the construction supervisor attesting that the supervisor directly supervised the construction or installation of the elevator.

We recommended management implement procedures to ensure all required documentation is obtained prior to issuing Certificates of Operation, including signed affidavits by the construction supervisors for new installations required by Florida Statute.

Implementation Status: Partially Implemented. Supervisor Affidavits are not consistently signed and dated prior to the issuance of Certificate of Operations. For one of two certificates reviewed, the Certificate of Operation was issued November 26, 2024; however, the Supervisor Affidavit was signed 76 days later, on February 10, 2025.

7. Compliance With Elements of the DBPR Interagency Agreement Required Enhancement.

During our review of compliance activities related to the DBPR Interagency Agreement, we noted the following concerns:

- A. Elevator transaction activity reported to the DBPR could not be adequately reconciled against POSSE, the system of record. Specifically, during our review of transaction categories reported using a sample of 6 months for the period November 2019 to May 2021. We noted that for 72% of the individual, monthly transactions reviewed, the amount reported to DBPR for that transaction differed from the data available in the system of record, POSSE.
- B. Management had established a Quality Assurance Program as required by the Interagency Agreement; however, we noted the following concerns:
 - i. A Quality Assurance Program was implemented in late 2020 according to discussions with management; however, quality assurance inspections are not documented, are not tracked within POSSE, and are not submitted to the DBPR as required by the Interagency agreement.

- ii. The Quality Assurance Program excludes inspections performed by County inspectors; however, the Interagency Agreement did not specifically exempt County Inspectors from the program.

We recommended management:

- A. Maintain adequate support for the data reported to the DBPR.
- B. Ensure inspections performed by County inspectors are included in a Quality Assurance Program.

Implementation Status:

- A. **Partially Implemented.** The Elevator Section is in the process of developing a report to support the data reported to the DBPR.
- B. **Not Applicable.** Management does not include County inspectors in the Quality Assurance Program. Management performs internal oversight to ensure that inspections performed by County Inspectors meet internal standards. Internal oversight includes reviews of inspection reports and site visits.