



New York City Comptroller
Scott M. Stringer

NEWS

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CLAIMSTAT UPDATE: COMPTROLLER STRINGER ANALYSIS SHOWS DECLINES IN CLAIMS AT NYPD, PARKS, DEP

Personal Injury Police Action Claims Decline 13 Percent, Bucking Decades-Old Trend

Tree-limb Claims against Department of Parks and Recreation Declined Following Restoration of Tree Pruning Budget

Sewer Overflow Claims Fall 20 Percent Citywide

(New York, NY) – New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer today released an updated ClaimStat [report](#) analyzing claims activity in Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015 against five City agencies—the Police Department, Health and Hospitals Corporation, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Sanitation— showing new trends in claims activity.

In a sharp departure from recent years, personal injury police action claims declined nearly 13 percent during the year, with overall claims against the Police Department down 12 percent from FY14. However, several precincts in the Bronx, Manhattan and Brooklyn continue to see high claims activity, even after correcting for crime rates.

The Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 sets aside \$710 million to pay settlements and judgments from lawsuits brought against the City of New York. That is more than \$83 per New York City resident that is devoted to claims, ranging from falling tree limbs and unfilled potholes, to medical malpractice and civil rights violations. By taking a data-driven approach to claims management, ClaimStat is helping City agencies improve service delivery and reduce costs to taxpayers.

“I’m happy to report that claims against the City have declined in many areas,” Comptroller Stringer said. “The NYPD in particular is doing a great job of bringing down the overall number of claims, and their approach should serve as an example for every City agency to follow. I thank Commissioner Bratton for his leadership, and look forward to continuing our close partnership with the Department as we provide them with real-time data to target problem areas.”

Highlights of the report include:

New York Police Department (NYPD)

- **Signs of Success:**

- Personal injury police action claims against the New York Police Department fell by 13 percent year-over-year, from 5,727 in FY14 to 5,007 in FY15.
- Some precincts saw significant declines in claims activity between Calendar Year (CY)* 13 and CY 14, including:
 - The 23rd precinct in East Harlem (from 58 to 43);
 - The 101st precinct in the Far Rockaways (from 44 to 35).
 - The 33rd precinct in Washington Heights (from 53 to 34);
 - The 76th precinct in Red Hook (from 23 to 14); and
- Following the launch of ClaimStat in July 2014, the NYPD and the Comptroller's Office engaged in a first-ever partnership to improve risk management. This initiative has included unprecedented sharing of information between agencies, with the Comptroller's Bureau of Law and Adjustment (BLA) unit providing claims information in real time to the NYPD, while also securing evidence that helps BLA decide whether to resolve worthy or reject frivolous claims far earlier in the claims process.

- **Room for Improvement:**

- Between CY13 and CY14, claims rose in a number of precincts, including:
 - The 44th precinct which covers the Concourse, Highbridge and Mount Eden neighborhoods of the Bronx (from 289 to 394).
 - The 46th precinct in Fordham (from 186 to 215).
 - The 28th precinct in Harlem (from 39 to 64).
 - The 5th precinct in Manhattan's Chinatown (from 30 to 52).
 - The 123rd precinct in Staten Island's Tottenville neighborhood (from 4 to 13).
- Overall, eight of the 15 precincts with the highest number of claims per 100 crime complaints were located in The Bronx.

- **Recommendations:**

The Department could make even more effective use of ClaimStat data by integrating it into their CompStat reviews, thereby increasing accountability at the precinct level.

- **The NYPD reports crime statistics on a calendar year basis. As a result, the Comptroller's ClaimStat report uses calendar years, rather than fiscal years, to compare precincts.*

Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC)

- **Signs of Success:**

- Total claims against Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) rose slightly between FY14 and FY15, going from 876 to 902. There is, however, a general downward trend, with claims declining from 982 in FY13 to 902 in FY15.

- **Room for Improvement:**

- The number of medical malpractice claims at its 11 flagship hospitals grew from 495 in FY13 to 521 in FY15.

- In particular, medical malpractice claims grew at Bellevue (from 57 to 80) and Coney Island (from 31 to 43) hospitals but declined at Harlem (from 34 to 28) and North Central Bronx (from 22 to 6) hospitals from FY13-FY15.

- **Recommendations:**

HHC must continue to track and respond to variations in medical malpractice at its flagship hospitals in order to further reduce claims.

Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks)

- **Signs of Success:**

- The City has provided millions in baseline funding for tree maintenance in the FY16 budget.
- Following a 143 percent spike in settlements and judgments from FY08 to FY13, in FY14, judgments and claims costs dropped from \$29.6 million to \$15.8 million, a decline of 47 percent and the lowest total since FY09.

- **Room for Improvement:**

Claims filed in FY14-FY15 continue to be highest in Queens Community Districts 11 (17 claims) and 13 (22 claims) and the North Shore in Staten Island Community District 1 (21 claims).

- **Recommendations:**

- Parks should use ClaimStat data to help guide Borough Forestry Office practices so that best practices are shared among contractors who help prune trees.
- The City should integrate the potential cost of claims into the cost/benefit analysis of tree planting and maintenance.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

- **Signs of Success:**

- Overall, sewer overflow claims dropped from 589 in FY14 to 446 in FY15.
- The number of claims fell sharply in the neighborhoods of Bergen Beach and Canarsie in Brooklyn Community District 18 (from 328 to 9), and in Staten Island Community District 2 (from 143 to 14).

- **Room for Improvement:**

Several neighborhoods had more than 100 additional claims related to sewer overflows in FY14-FY15 than in FY12-FY13, including East New York, New Lots and Highland Park in Brooklyn Community District 5 (from 11 to 203), and the Howard Beach, Lindenwood, Ozone Park neighborhoods in Queens Community District 10 (from 10 to 570).

- **Recommendations:**

DEP should use claims data to identify hot spots for sewer overflows and prioritize communities that are in need of capital work and partner with City agencies to implement permeable pavement technology to reduce sewer overflows and improve drainage.

Department of Sanitation (Sanitation)

- **Room for Improvement:**
 - Property damage motor vehicle claims against the Department of Sanitation grew by 41 percent from FY12-FY13 to FY14-FY15 (from 1,999 to 2,825). A preliminary analysis suggests that much of the increase in claims is due to above-average snowfall in recent years, requiring Sanitation to put more vehicles and plows on the road, often under challenging conditions.
 - The community districts with the most claims filed in FY14-FY15 included Staten Island Community District 1 on the North Shore (76 claims), Queens Community District 12 in Hollis and Jamaica (68 claims), Brooklyn Community District 12 in Borough Park (56 claims), and the Manhattan Community District 8 on the Upper East Side (44 claims).
- **Signs of Success:**

Some community districts saw declines in claims, including Manhattan Community District 11 in East Harlem (down 6 claims), Brooklyn Community District 17 in Flatbush (down 7 claims), and Queens Community District 14 in the Rockaways (down 9 claims).
- **Recommendations:**
 - The City should ensure that all drivers and passengers are properly trained and wearing seatbelts to reduce personal injury risk, with a particular focus on high claim neighborhoods.
 - The City received a \$20 million U.S. Department of Transportation grant in September to retrofit its vehicles with crash avoidance technology, a recommendation previously made in last year's ClaimStat report. The City should prioritize the retrofitting of sanitation vehicles with crash avoidance technology.

“We stand ready to work with every City agency to make sure they have access to the ClaimStat data that will enable them develop long term strategies that make New York safer, while at the same time saving taxpayer dollars,” Stringer said.

To read the full report, please click [here](#).

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