



AUDIT AT A GLANCE

Development of the New York City Fire Department's Inspection System

What questions did the audit look at?

- ▶ Did the Fire Inspection Revenue and Enforcement System (FIRES) achieve its goals of replacing FDNY's legacy system, streamlining revenue collection, automating mobile inspections process, and implementing a public self-service portal?

Why does it matter for New Yorkers?

In addition to fighting and responding to fires, FDNY is responsible for conducting inspections to ensure that buildings comply with the New York City Fire Code. As part of this mission, FDNY is authorized to issue violations and collect revenue from fines.

The audit examined FDNY's FIRES system, which was implemented to modernize the fire inspection process. While FIRES replaced an outdated legacy system and introduced mobile inspection capabilities and a public self-service portal, the audit found that it did not fully achieve its goals of automating and streamlining operations.

Key inspection and enforcement functionalities were never implemented, forcing staff to rely on manual "paper-and-pen" processes. Also, surveys revealed dissatisfaction among FDNY staff regarding FIRES' usability, and members of the public reported challenges with the system's self-service features.

For New Yorkers, these shortcomings impact the efficiency and effectiveness of fire inspections, potentially delaying efforts to identify and resolve dangerous issues. It is crucial that FDNY address these deficiencies to improve the department's ability to protect lives and property across the City.

What changes did the agency commit to make following the audit?

- ▶ FDNY agreed to conduct refresher training for all FIRES users.
- ▶ FDNY agreed to consider survey results and solicit feedback from users.
- ▶ FDNY agreed to ensure that future systems meet contract requirements before deployment.
- ▶ FDNY agreed to ensure that systems continue to receive updates to improve functionality and optimize workflow.

AUDIT FINDINGS



FIRES replaced FDNY's outdated legacy system.



FIRES did not achieve its major goals of automating processes and improving efficiency.



Approximately one-third of FDNY staff found FIRES difficult to use, time-consuming, and inefficient.



Public users expressed dissatisfaction with the self-service portal.



FIRES operated in an unsupported environment for two years without necessary updates.



Audit Recommendations		Agency Response
1	Consult with legal counsel regarding available contract remedies for FIRES functionalities that were to be provided under the contract but were not developed and tested by GCOM or approved by FDNY.	DISAGREED
2	Consult with BFP and Fire Ops on business needs and fully implement an automated inspection scheduling and routing solution within FIRES based on inspector availability and profiles and require all business units to use for scheduling inspections.	DISAGREED
3	Implement the feature to automatically alert units that an inspection requires scheduling and disable the feature that cancels inspections that are not assigned within a specified time.	DISAGREED
4	Consult with Legal Affairs on business needs and implement functionalities and bi-directional interfaces to automate summons issuance and transmission, track and schedule court dates and inspector appearances through an online calendar, update hearing dispositions, and process appeals.	PARTIALLY AGREED¹
5	Conduct refresher training for all FIRES users.	AGREED
6	Consider survey results, solicit additional feedback from internal and external users, and promptly address concerns related to FIRES' ease of use, functionality, connectivity, and customer service.	AGREED
7	Ensure that future information system development and testing contract requirements are fully met and results are approved and documented prior to system deployment.	AGREED
8	Ensure FDNY information systems continuously receive updates to improve system functionality and optimize business workflow.	AGREED

¹ FDNY acknowledged that “the OATH outbound interface has not yet been fully developed and implemented, which is due to unforeseen circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent reduction in FDNY’s workforce. In the foreseeable future, we aim to allocate and mobilize resources to facilitate the completion of this task.”

However, FDNY stated that the department “implemented both hearing scheduling and appeals functionality that it demonstrated to the auditors and created with the input of the FDNY Enforcement Unit (“EU”). In addition, FDNY stated that “There is a daily inbound interface that updates FIRES enforcement records based on OATH’s events...Once OATH makes a decision, information such as disposition, adjournment, and rescheduled dates are updated in FIRES automatically as intended.”