

Robert D. LiMandri, Commissioner

LOCAL LAW 37 OF 2007 Recent Increase in Illegal Conversion Penalties

In August 2007, Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed Local Law 37 into law, substantially increasing the penalties for illegally converting a manufacturing or industrial space to a residential use. Coupled with changes to the ECB violation system implemented in July 2008 with the enactment of the New NYC Construction Codes, the maximum penalties for a violation now can be as high as \$25,000.

The below graph is an example of the increase in penalties:

Violation Description	Max. Penalty for 1st Offense Under 1968	Max. Penalty for 1st Offense Under LL37 and New Codes
Building in manufacturing district altered for residential use occupied w/o a valid C of O.	\$2,000	\$10,000
Construction or alterations work w/o a permit in manufacturing district for residential use.	\$2,500	\$12,000
Construction work contrary to approved plans in a manufacturing district for residential use.	\$2,500	\$24,000

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT AN ILLEGAL CONVERSION

If you suspect an illegal conversion, call 3-1-1 to have a Buildings Inspector routed to the site to inspect the property. You can also check the legal use of a building by visiting the Buildings Department website and viewing the building's Certificate of Occupancy through the Department's Building Information System (BIS). BIS is accessible on the right-hand side of the Department's homepage.

For more information, call 3-1-1 or visit www.nyc.gov/buildings

WHAT IS AN ILLEGAL CONVERSION?

An illegal conversion is an alteration or modification of an existing building to create an additional housing unit without first obtaining the approval of the NYC Department of Buildings.

Examples of illegal conversions include:

- Using a property zoned for manufacturing or industrial use for residential occupancy;
- Creating a housing unit in a building designated for manufacturing or industrial use;
- Adding an apartment in the basement, attic or garage without obtaining the approval or permits from the Department of Buildings; or
- Creating a rooming house (single room occupancy) or dividing an apartment into single room occupancies.

WHY ARE ILLEGAL CONVERSIONS HARMFUL?

Illegal conversions pose serious safety risks to inhabitants as well as to the City's first responders by creating potentially unsafe living conditions and not complying with Building and Fire codes. They also reduce the quality of life for a neighborhood by putting a strain on essential services and by causing overcrowding. Finally, illegal conversions further reduce the already-limited amount of industrial and manufacturing space necessary to support local business.



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