

**FOLLOW-UP  
OF THE  
ORANGE COUNTY CODE  
ENFORCEMENT DIVISION  
AUDIT**

**Report by the  
Office of County Comptroller**

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**Report No. 379  
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January 11, 2007

Richard T. Crotty, County Mayor  
and  
Board of County Commissioners

We have conducted a follow-up of our Orange County Code Enforcement Division audit (Report No. 356). Our original audit included the period July 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004. Testing of the status of the previous Recommendations for Improvement was performed for the period January 1, 2006 through June 30, 2006. Our follow-up audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and included such tests as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

The accompanying Follow-Up to Previous Recommendations for Improvement presents a summary of the previous conditions and the previous recommendations. Following the recommendations is a summary of the current status as determined in the review.

During our review, we noted that all of the previous Recommendations for Improvement were implemented. **We commend** the Code Enforcement Division for their efforts. We appreciate the cooperation of the personnel of the Code Enforcement Division during the course of the audit.

Martha O. Haynie, CPA  
County Comptroller

c: Ajit Lalchandani, County Administrator  
Melvin Pittman, Director, Community and Environmental Services Department  
Robert Spivey, Manager, Code Enforcement Division

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF  
PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR IMPROVEMENT**

**FOLLOW-UP OF THE CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION AUDIT  
STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

NO.	PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION STATUS			
		IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	NOT IMPLEMENTED	NOT APPLICABLE
1.	We recommend the Division establishes a policy on a specific time in which to conduct a re-inspection of an initial code violation to determine whether the violation has been corrected.	✓			
2.	We recommend the Division measures the requirement of senior inspectors spending eight hours per week in the field and, if this is not being met, adjust accordingly.	✓			
3.	We recommend the Division ensures lot cleaning cases are processed in a timely manner.	✓			
4.	We recommend the Division implements additional procedures to ensure all files documenting the lot cleaning process are maintained according to Orange County records retention policies.	✓			
5.	We recommend the Division requires that title search requests are approved by a senior inspector prior to being submitted to the administrative section for processing.	✓			
6.	We recommend the Division ensures all invoices presented for payment of legal services are accurate and complete. Further, Code Enforcement should work with the County Attorney's office and the Purchasing and Contracts Division to determine if these services can be bid out.	✓			

# INTRODUCTION

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## INTRODUCTION



Follow-Up of the  
Code Enforcement Division Audit

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### Scope and Methodology

The audit scope was limited to an examination of the status of the previous Recommendations for Improvement from the Orange County Code Enforcement Division audit (Report No. 356). Testing of the status of the previous recommendations was performed for the audit period January 1, 2006 through June 30, 2006.

We reviewed source documents and performed the tests necessary to determine the implementation status of the previous recommendations. Specific methodologies utilized are described in the status of the previous recommendations for improvement.

**FOLLOW-UP TO PREVIOUS  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
IMPROVEMENT**





**1. Procedures Should Be Implemented on the Timing of Re-Inspections of Prior Violations**

During the prior audit, we noted that re-inspections of code violations were not performed in a timely manner. Re-inspections were conducted from 11 to 36 days after a 15-day period given to offenders to correct the most common violations. No internal policy existed specifying a period of time in which to conduct re-inspections.

**We Recommend** the Division establishes a policy on a specific time in which to conduct a re-inspection of an initial code violation to determine whether the violation has been corrected.

**Status:**

Implemented. The Division established a policy of performing re-inspections no later than 30 days from the initial inspection. We tested 25 incidents of code violations and noted that re-inspections are consistently performed in accordance with the policy.

**2. Senior Inspector Field Time Requirement Should Be Measured to Determine Adequacy**

During the prior audit, we reviewed senior inspector Daily Activity Logs and found that only one of the three inspectors consistently spent eight hours per week in the field as required by Senior Officer Monitoring Procedures.

This requirement should be reviewed periodically to determine whether or not it is being met.

**We Recommend** the Division measures the requirement of senior inspectors spending eight hours per week in the field and, if this is not being met, adjust accordingly.



**Status:**

Implemented. The Division requires Senior Inspectors to spend at least eight hours in the field each week. We reviewed Daily Activity Logs for three weeks during the audit period and noted documentation of compliance with this procedure for all of the senior inspectors except one that did not submit the daily logs for some of the sample days selected. Division management's observation of this inspector's daily activities supplemented its use of computer-based activity logs to ensure the eight-hour benchmark was met. However, documentation that the requirement was met was not maintained. The Division should ensure that these reports are prepared for all inspectors to document time spent in the field.

**We Recommend** the Division requires all senior inspectors to submit activity logs.

**3. Lot Cleaning Cases Should Be Processed in a More Timely Manner**

During the prior audit, we noted that lot cleaning cases were not timely processed. In one-third of the cases reviewed, lapses exceeding 60 days from the date billing letters were sent to property owners requesting reimbursement for lot cleaning until property liens were approved by the BCC existed. The delays ranged from 62 to 125 days, but for one case there was a delay of 313 days between the date of the billing letter and the resolution.

**We Recommend** the Division ensures lot cleaning cases are processed in a timely manner.

**Status:**

Implemented. We reviewed twenty cases submitted to the BCC for lien assessment during the audit period and noted that the Division's responsibilities in preparing assessments were timely performed.

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**4. Procedures for Retention of Lot Cleaning Files  
Should Be Enhanced**

During the prior audit, the Division was unable to provide us with four of seventeen lot cleaning case files requested for review. Three of the files that could not be located had been closed out and noted as sent to the warehouse for retention. All of the files requested had been active at some time during our audit period.

Closed files are required to be archived by Section 2.06.01, Disposition of Public Records, Orange County Administrative Regulations.

**We Recommend** the Division implements additional procedures to ensure all files documenting the lot cleaning process are maintained according to Orange County records retention policies.

**Status:**

Implemented. The Division provided all lot cleaning case files requested during this follow-up and has developed procedures to enhance compliance with Administrative Regulation 2.06.01.

**5. Requests for Title Searches Should Be Approved  
by a Senior Inspector**

During the prior audit, we found that title search requests were not approved by a senior inspector prior to processing the request. Most commonly, title searches are requested when a structure is unsafe, in a dilapidated condition, and should be demolished. Notices are mailed to the owner and all parties with an interest in the property. Reviewing the matter with a senior inspector could result in a determination that the service is not necessary; thereby avoiding additional costs to the County.



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**We Recommend** the Division requires that title search requests are approved by a senior inspector prior to being submitted to the administrative section for processing.

**Status:**

Implemented. We reviewed twelve title search requests during the audit period. A senior inspector had reviewed each of these requests prior to processing.

**6. Controls Over the Payment of Invoices for Legal Services Should Be Strengthened**

During the prior audit, we noted several instances where monies disbursed for legal services were not in accordance with the terms agreed upon between the County and the vendor. Each disbursement reviewed represented payment of one or more invoices. These instances included:

- Hours expended for services rendered were not included on the three invoices submitted for payment for legal counsel to the Code Enforcement Board.
- The number of photocopies was not indicated on invoices submitted for payment and the price charged was not evenly divisible by the amount to be charged for copies stated in the contract. In addition, approved hourly rates were not stated on invoices for the paralegal or the attorney and there was no rate listed for a paralegal in the contract to verify amounts paid were correct.

In addition, the Division had used the same attorney since 1994 without going out to bid. Without periodically bidding out services, the Division was not ensuring they were receiving the best service at the best price.

**We Recommend** the Division ensures all invoices presented for payment of legal services are accurate and complete. Further, the Division should work with the County Attorney's

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**STATUS OF PREVIOUS  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR IMPROVEMENT**



Follow-Up of the  
Code Enforcement Division Audit

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office and the Purchasing and Contracts Division to determine if these services can be bid out.

**Status:**

Implemented. We reviewed three disbursements covering five invoices and noted that all payment requests included attorney and paralegal hours worked, hourly rates, and the number of photocopies. The Division's contract for legal counsel services to the Code Enforcement Board was submitted for public bidding in February 2006.