

## How to Deal With Contractors & Construction Workers in Your Building



During construction, an often overlooked detail is the relationship tenants may be able to develop with contractors and construction workers in their building. Attempting to develop and maintain a proactive relationship with the contractors and workers can be helpful in making the construction process easier to handle for tenants.

- ***Stay in contact with your landlord as soon as construction starts.***
- ***Follow-up with construction manager to get a better idea of the actual construction work.***

Speaking to the landlord [or property manager] to identify and gain an understanding of the construction manager is a great first step. Obtaining the contact info (i.e., cell phone number) of the construction manager, if possible, is helpful; he/she oversees the project and can be a valuable resource in understanding the scope of the construction work. Ask the construction manager for a timeline of the project(s); it'll help you determine when the work will be completed, as well as when major work will take place. Having the construction manager's contact info can also be helpful in the case of an emergency.

- ***Maintain a positive relationship with the on-site construction workers.***

In addition to establishing contact with the construction manager, being friendly and respectful to all workers on-site can be beneficial, as they may be able to keep you informed and/or assist you with a few issues you'll encounter along the way.

- ***You can get specific details about construction from your landlord or the DOB's website.***

If the construction manager doesn't provide you with contact info, don't be afraid to contact the landlord and insist that information be shared about the work taking place in the building. Ask the landlord for details about the scope of the construction, specific permits/plans that have been filed with NYC's Department of Buildings (DOB), and a project timeline. In the case of permits/plans, you can do your own fact-checking by going on the DOB's website and accessing information on all activity going on in your building (check our "DOB Tutorial" fact sheet for information on how to navigate the DOB's website). These types of informed inquiries will help your landlord understand that you are a well-informed tenant who understands your rights.

- ***Don't sit back if issues persist – contact 311 and get them on record with the DOB.***
- ***If one doesn't already exist, consider forming a tenants association with your neighbors.***

Ultimately, if the landlord and/or construction manager refuse to hear your concerns and work with you – i.e., they don't provide you with necessary info, or you feel they are compromising your health, welfare, or safety with the work they are doing – you should begin calling 311 to report them to the DOB. In the end, if the landlord refuses to work with you, urge them to by pulling together your neighbors to form a campaign that addresses your shared concerns (refer to our “How to Organize a Tenants Association” fact sheet for more information). It's unfortunate, but tenants often have to give up on nurturing a productive relationship with their landlord and take more of an aggressive stance, instead.



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