



**Commissioner's Bulletin
Inspectional Services Department
Boston, MA**

Number: 2009-04

Date: December 31, 2009

Subject: PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED FOR THE PERMITTING OF
ROOFTOP AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS OR ROOF GARDENS

Purpose: This Commissioner's Bulletin is issued to establish procedures for the construction and/or installation of rooftop agricultural systems.

Determination:

Environmental testing has shown that rooftop gardens and landscaping help reduce the amount of pollutants and dust particles in the air and water. Additionally, vegetation on roof tops helps reduce the urban heat island effect by keeping buildings cooler. The City of Boston, therefore, encourages the concept of rooftop agriculture through various means including hydroponic farming.

Definitions:

1. A "Rooftop Garden" is presumed to be accessible to the public.
 - 1.1 Additional requirements will be established, such as
 - 1.1.1 the installation of barriers (railings) (780 CMR),
 - 1.1.2 exits from the rooftop (780 CMR),
 - 1.1.3 total dead and live calculations, in accordance with the Massachusetts State Building Code (780 CMR),
 - 1.1.4 raising of exhausts and plumbing vents (248 CMR),
 - 1.1.5 handicapped access in accordance with the Architectural Access Regulations (521 CMR).
 - 1.2 Roof gardens accessory to residential occupancies other than one or two family dwellings are subject to the requirements of CBC 9-9.13 (certification of roof decks).
2. A "Green Roof" is presumed not to be accessible to the public and access will only be provided for maintenance.

3. Permits and Zoning Requirements

- 3.1 Applicants will need to apply for the appropriate permits at the Inspectional Services Department (ISD).
- 3.2 Plans stamped by a Massachusetts registered architect or structural engineer must be submitted for review by the Plans and Zoning division of ISD.
- 3.3 Two sets of plans must be submitted containing the following information:
 - 3.3.1 the existing roof conditions with the location of all structures, e.g. penthouses, mechanical equipment, chimneys, etc.,
 - 3.3.2 structural information including weight capacity of the roof (snow load, wet and dry plant load) and framing plans if required,
 - 3.3.3 a drawing of the proposed garden/green roof containing all plant and soil information, drainage and/or irrigation systems, and;
 - 3.3.4 any modifications to building systems that are required (raising of vent stacks, etc).

4. Review by Other Agencies

- 4.1 Applications submitted to ISD for any proposed rooftop project shall be accompanied by approvals from any other City of Boston agency having jurisdiction, including, but not limited to, the Environmental Department, the Landmarks Commission, Boston Water and Sewer and the Boston Fire Department.

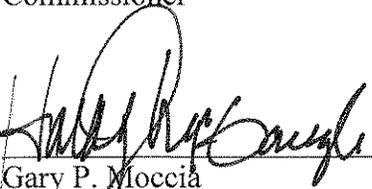
Signed:



William J. Good, III
Commissioner

12-31-2009

Date



for Gary P. Moccia
Inspector of Buildings

12/31/2009

Date