

PIPS
GUIDEBOOK
PARKING GARAGE STRUCTURES



SPAR
ARCHITECTS

EVERYTHING YOU NEED

I Preserving the Past, Ensuring the Future

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**PRESERVING
THE PAST,
ENSURING
THE FUTURE**

New York City's **Periodic Inspection of Parking Structures Program**, commonly referred to as **PIPS**, is a recurring compliance requirement affecting covered parking structures throughout the city. Established under **Local Law 126**, the program requires qualified engineering inspection, technical reporting, and continued owner attention to parking structure conditions.

This booklet serves as a practical guide to the PIPS process. It outlines the key steps, responsibilities, inspection methods, report classifications, and follow-up decisions that building owners, boards, property managers, and building representatives may encounter during each filing cycle.

Parking structures are active-use environments exposed to vehicle loading, water, deicing salts, drainage issues, impact damage, and long-term material deterioration. By organizing the PIPS process into clear phases, this guide is intended to help building representatives understand what is required, what to prepare, and how inspection findings can support maintenance, repair planning, and long-term capital decisions.

WE ARE

SPAR





SPAR ARCHITECTS

Scott J. Profeta, RA is the founder and principal of SPAR Architects, a firm specializing in façade restoration, building envelope consulting, and advanced inspection technologies. He established SPAR to carry forward the core principles of the pioneers of historic restoration—preserving the architectural character of existing buildings while integrating modern technology to keep them safe and viable for future generations.

SPAR combines traditional restoration expertise with innovative technology such as rope-access inspections, drone documentation, and precise 3D modeling.

SPAR supports New York City compliance programs, including Local Law 126 parking structure inspections, by helping building owners, boards, property managers, and staff understand inspection findings, reporting obligations, maintenance needs, and repair-planning strategies. Our goal is to translate technical observations into clear next steps for safe, compliant, and well-managed properties.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

CORE SERVICES

PARKING GARAGE INSPECTION

Periodic inspection and reporting of covered parking structures in accordance with **Local Law 126** and PIPS requirements. SPAR provides QPSI-led condition assessment, documentation, report preparation, annual observation checklist preparation, and guidance on follow-up actions such as monitoring, repair planning, or violation response where required.

FISP INSPECTIONS

Periodic exterior wall inspections performed by qualified design professionals, including close-up examination, documentation, and required Department of Buildings filing. Our in-house industrial rope access team allows direct observation of facade conditions without the need to install full scaffolding in many situations.

EXTERIOR RESTORATION

Repair design and construction oversight to address deterioration, water infiltration, and facade stability to restore safe conditions and extend service life. Access strategies, including in-house rope access operations, are coordinated to safely reach areas that are otherwise difficult to evaluate and repair.

ROOF REPLACEMENT

Evaluation and replacement of roofing systems to restore weather protection, improve drainage performance, and protect underlying building components. Work is coordinated with facade conditions and existing envelope details to maintain overall exterior performance.



Scan for all
SPAR Services

OTHER SERVICES

BUILDING CONDITION ASSESSMENTS

Evaluation of exterior and structural components to document conditions and guide maintenance or repair planning.

BUILDING ALTERATION REVIEW SERVICES

Technical review of proposed alterations to ensure envelope compatibility and code compliance.

LEAK INVESTIGATIONS

Targeted investigations to identify sources of water infiltration and building performance failures.

DRONE SURVEY

High-resolution aerial documentation used to supplement inspections and identify conditions in difficult-to-access areas with minimal disruption.

INDUSTRIAL ROPE ACCESS

In-house rope access providing close-up evaluation of elevated and hard-to-reach exterior conditions.

CODE + ZONING REVIEW

Analysis of building code and zoning requirements to support compliance and project planning.

SIDEWALK + VAULTS

Inspection and assessment of sidewalk structures and vault areas for safety and compliance.

SPECIAL INSPECTIONS

Performance and documentation of required special inspections in accordance with NYC Building Code.

COMPL

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PUBLIC SAFETY EXTENDS TO PARKING STRUCTURES





New York City regulates the condition of existing buildings and exterior structures through recurring inspection laws administered by the Department of Buildings. These programs establish defined inspection cycles, filing procedures, classification systems, and follow-up obligations for building owners.

These compliance laws include FISP for exterior walls, Local Law 126 for parking structures and parapets, and Local Law 37 for retaining walls. Each program addresses a different building condition, but the intent is similar: routine inspection, clear documentation, and timely action when deterioration creates risk.

For property managers, owners, boards, and building representatives, understanding how these programs overlap is essential for planning. A building may have façade, parapet, retaining wall, roof, sidewalk, vault, and parking structure responsibilities occurring within the same capital planning period.

PIPS is part of a broader compliance and maintenance framework that helps owners understand the current condition of their property and plan the work required to keep it **safe, functional, and compliant**.

COMPLIANCE

Compliance with NYC Local Laws involves more than a filed report. Inspection findings may lead to annual observation, engineering monitoring, repairs, additional investigation, violation response, or capital planning. Understanding these steps helps owners make informed decisions after the report is complete.

FAMILIARITY

This guide introduces key concepts to help building representatives become familiar with Local Law 126, PIPS terminology, and the general responsibilities associated with parking structure compliance.

INFORMATIONAL

This guide provides an overview of the PIPS process through the lens of the QPSI, outlining how parking structures are reviewed, documented, classified, and reported.

PREPARATION

This guide identifies records, access coordination, garage operations, and owner-side information that may be needed before inspection. Advance preparation helps reduce delays and supports a more complete assessment.



Annual Parking Garage Observation Checklist

Property:

Completed By:

Date:

Annual Checklist Instructions: This annual observation is required in accordance with 1 RCNY §103-13. The annual observation shall include a walk-through of all parking garage levels and any related areas. Each component listed below shall be reviewed and, where conditions are observed, the locations shall be noted in the comments section.

Item	Checked	Comments
SUPPORTED LEVELS		
Concrete Floor Spall		
Concrete Overhead Spall		
Concrete Beam Encasement Spall		
Concrete Column Spall		
Concrete Curb Spall		
CMU Wall Spall		
Damaged Brick Masonry		
Corroded Stair Treads/Stringers		
Floor Drain		
Drain Piping		
Waterproofing Membrane		
Joint Sealants		
Column Guards		

PARKING STRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

Parking structure condition assessment is a key component of compliance and capital improvement planning. It provides building owners, boards, property managers, and asset managers with practical guidance for understanding observed conditions, required reporting, and potential repair or monitoring needs.

A PIPS assessment documents visible deterioration, structural concerns, maintenance issues, and conditions that may require further evaluation. The process helps establish a roadmap for addressing immediate requirements while planning future repairs in a structured and predictable manner.

When used effectively, the PIPS report becomes more than a filing. It becomes a technical reference for maintenance planning, budgeting, repair sequencing, contractor coordination, and long-term structure performance.



WATER INFILTRATION & DRAINAGE

Water infiltration and drainage deficiencies are common contributors to parking structure deterioration. During the PIPS assessment, the QPSI looks for evidence of leakage, ponding, failed joints, damaged waterproofing, clogged drains, staining, corrosion, delamination, and concrete spalling. These conditions can expose reinforcement and structural connections to moisture and deicing salts, accelerating deterioration.

When the source or extent of a condition cannot be determined through visual and physical examination, the QPSI may recommend a separate targeted investigation. This may include probes, concrete cores, GPR or other non-invasive scanning, material testing, or specialty consultant review. These services are not automatically part of every PIPS inspection and are performed when additional information is needed to establish appropriate repair or engineering-monitoring recommendations.

NEW YORK CITY AND LOCAL LAWS



LOCAL LAW 126 PARKING STRUCTURES

Requires covered parking structures to be assessed by a Qualified Parking Structure Inspector (QPSI). Cycle 1 runs through December 31, 2027. After January 1, 2028, condition assessments are required at least once every four years.



Periodic
Inspection of
Parking
Structures per
NYC
Administrative
Code §28-323
and 1 RCNY §103-
13.

LOCAL LAW 126 PARAPETS

Requires annual observation of certain building parapets. Parapet observations are separate from PIPS, but both requirements are part of Local Law 126 and both support ongoing public safety and building maintenance.



Periodic
Observation of
Building Parapets
per 1 RCNY 103-
15.

LOCAL LAW 11 FACADES

Now known as the Façade Inspection Safety Program (FISP). New York City law that requires the periodic inspection by a licensed and qualified Architect or Engineer to inspect the exterior facades of buildings over six stories every five years and submit a compliance report to the Department of Buildings (DOB) for record.



Periodic
Inspection of
Exterior Walls and
Appurtenances of
Buildings per 1
RCNY 103-04.

LOCAL LAW 37 RETAINING WALLS

Requires periodic inspection of applicable retaining walls by a qualified retaining wall inspector. Like FISP and PIPS, the program uses recurring inspection and reporting to document conditions and support timely maintenance or repair.



Periodic
Inspection of
Retaining Walls
per 1 RCNY 103-
09.

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HISTORY, INTENT AND EVOLUTION



WHAT IS PIPS?

PIPS stands for Periodic Inspection of Parking Structures. It is New York City's inspection and reporting program for covered parking structures under Local Law 126, as amended. The current first cycle runs through December 31, 2027. **After January 1, 2028**, each covered parking structure must undergo a condition assessment at least **once every four years**.

The program requires owners of covered parking structures to retain a qualified professional to perform a condition assessment and file a report with the Department of Buildings. The inspection is performed by a Qualified Parking Structure Inspector, or QPSI, who evaluates the structure and determines its classification.

PIPS applies to parking structures because garages are active, exposed, and highly used building systems. They are subject to vehicle loads, traffic wear, water, salts, drainage issues, temperature changes, and material deterioration. These conditions can affect slabs, beams, columns, ramps, joints, waterproofing, appurtenances, and other components.

The purpose of PIPS is to identify conditions before they become more serious, document the structure's status, and establish a clear path for continued maintenance, monitoring, repair, or immediate action where required.

HOW IS A
PARKING
STRUCTURE
INSPECTED?

A PIPS inspection is not simply a visual walk-through. It is a condition assessment performed under the direction of a QPSI and based on the specific parking structure being reviewed.

The QPSI considers the structure's type of construction, material age, exposure, maintenance history, prior repairs, available drawings, and observed conditions. The inspection may include visual review, hands-on physical examination, documentation, sounding, testing, probing, or other methods when needed.

RECORDS REVIEW

Available drawings, prior reports, maintenance records, repair history, violations, and related documentation are reviewed to understand the structure before and during the field assessment.

VISUAL WALKTHROUGH

The QPSI walks the parking structure to observe visible conditions at parking levels, traffic surfaces, ramps, structural framing, drainage areas, joints, appurtenances, and other relevant components.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

A hands-on engineering assessment is performed at representative structural elements, with particular attention to areas showing visible deterioration or distress.

ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATION

Where visual review and physical examination are not sufficient, the QPSI may recommend further investigation to confirm concealed conditions, determine deterioration extent, or support repair and monitoring recommendations.

WHAT IS A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION?

A physical examination is the hands-on portion of the PIPS condition assessment. It goes beyond general visual observation and allows the QPSI to evaluate representative components more directly.

The PIPS condition assessment includes a comprehensive visual review and hands-on examination of representative structural elements. The QPSI determines the appropriate locations and examination methods based on the structure, observed conditions, and professional judgment.

The physical examination may focus on structural elements such as slabs, beams, columns, ramps, walls, joints, visible reinforcement, connections, waterproofing, wearing surfaces, fireproofing, firestopping, drainage areas, and appurtenances.

The intent is to determine whether observed conditions affect the safety, performance, or durability of the parking structure. The QPSI uses professional judgment to identify representative areas, evaluate visible deterioration, and determine whether additional investigation is needed.

A physical examination may include methods such as sounding, probing, testing, close observation, measurement, photographic documentation, or other techniques appropriate to the structure and the conditions observed.

SOUNDING AND TESTING

SOUNDING

Sounding is a hands-on evaluation method used to identify concrete that may be delaminated, hollow, loose, or deteriorated below the visible surface. A hammer, chain, or other appropriate tool is used to compare sound response across slabs, beams, columns, walls, ramps, and other concrete elements. Abnormal areas are documented and may require mapping, repair, temporary protection, or further investigation.

PROBES

Probes are localized openings used when concealed construction or deterioration cannot be adequately evaluated from exposed surfaces. Probe locations and methods are selected by the QPSI based on observed conditions and the information needed to complete the assessment. Probes may expose reinforcement, embedded components, structural connections, waterproofing assemblies, or concealed deterioration.

CORES

Concrete cores, coating samples, laboratory testing, scanning, or other material-evaluation methods may be recommended when additional information is needed. These methods may help evaluate material condition, concealed reinforcement, deterioration depth, moisture-related damage, or the configuration of existing construction. Testing is selected based on project-specific conditions and is not automatically required for every inspection.

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Structural calculations or specialty engineering evaluation may be required when observed deterioration, movement, impact damage, section loss, or concealed conditions raise questions regarding structural capacity or stability. The QPSI determines whether analysis is necessary and identifies the information, testing, measurements, or additional investigation required to support the evaluation.

CONCRETE SOUNDING



IDENTIFYING AND MAPPING DELAMINATION

Concrete sounding is a hands-on evaluation method used to identify areas that may be delaminated, hollow, or deteriorated beneath the visible surface. A hammer, chain, or other appropriate tool is used to compare sound response across slabs, beams, columns, walls, and other concrete elements.

Areas producing an abnormal or hollow response are documented and mapped to show the apparent extent of deterioration. Sounding findings help the QPSI determine whether additional investigation, removal of loose material, repair, monitoring, or temporary protection may be required. Sounding does not establish the full depth or cause of deterioration by itself; probes, testing, or structural analysis may be needed to confirm concealed conditions.

WHEN IS
FURTHER
INVESTIGATION
NEEDED?

Further investigation may be required when visible conditions do not provide enough information to determine cause, extent, severity, or required action.

Examples include widespread cracking, concrete spalling, exposed reinforcement, corrosion staining, ponding, failed joints, water infiltration, unusual movement, impact damage, deteriorated fireproofing, or conditions that suggest concealed deterioration.

In these situations, additional investigation helps answer practical questions:

- Where is the deterioration located?
- How widespread is it?
- What is causing it?
- Is the condition isolated or part of a larger pattern?
- Does it require repair, monitoring, or immediate action?
- Are permits, contractors, specialty consultants, or temporary protection required?

By confirming conditions before repair work begins, owners can make more informed decisions and avoid incomplete or poorly targeted repairs.

PROCESS OF PIPS INSPECTION

PREPARATION & FIELD ASSESSMENT

01

PROJECT SETUP AND OWNER COORDINATION

SPAR confirms the property information, garage configuration, operating conditions, known concerns, filing status, and available access. The owner identifies the project representative, parking operator, and any scheduling, security, tenant, or operational restrictions that may affect the assessment.

02

RECORDS REVIEW

Available structural drawings, prior inspection reports, annual observation checklists, repair records, permits, violations, maintenance logs, photographs, and related documentation are reviewed. These records help the QPSI understand the structure, identify known conditions, and plan the field assessment.

03

ACCESS AND GARAGE PREPARATION

Inspection access is coordinated with the owner and parking operator. Vehicles may need to be relocated, storage removed, locked rooms opened, and lighting or access equipment provided so structural framing, slabs, ramps, walls, joints, drainage areas, and appurtenances can be observed.

04

VISUAL WALKTHROUGH

The QPSI reviews visible conditions throughout the parking structure, including structural elements, traffic surfaces, ramps, walls, joints, drainage components, waterproofing, barriers, railings, connections, and other relevant systems. Conditions are photographed, located, and documented for further evaluation.

EXAMINATION, REPORTING, FOLLOW-UP

05

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Hands-on examination is performed at representative structural elements and areas selected by the QPSI. Examination methods are determined based on the structure, observed deterioration, accessibility, construction type, and professional judgment. Findings help confirm the apparent condition of structural and protective components.

06

ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATION

Where visible review and physical examination do not provide enough information, the QPSI may recommend sounding, probes, scanning, cores, material testing, measurements, calculations, or specialty consultant review. Additional investigation is used to evaluate concealed conditions, deterioration extent, or structural significance.

07

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS AND CLASSIFICATION

Field findings and available records are evaluated to determine the parking structure's condition and required classification. The QPSI identifies observed deficiencies, evaluates their significance, and develops recommendations for maintenance, repair, engineering monitoring, further investigation, or immediate response.

08

REPORTING, FILING, AND NEXT STEPS

The QPSI prepares the technical report, classification, recommendations, supporting documentation, and annual observation checklist for filing with the Department of Buildings. Depending on the findings, the owner's next steps may include routine maintenance, repairs, monitoring, temporary protection, additional investigation, or required follow-up filings.

FILING CYCLE FOR PIPS

FILING CYCLE FOR PIPS

PIPS reports are filed according to DOB-assigned filing cycles. For Cycle 1, the schedule is divided into three sub-cycles based on the parking structure's borough and community district: Sub-Cycle 1A, Sub-Cycle 1B, and Sub-Cycle 1C.

Plan ahead. Inspections may require coordination and time. Treat the filing cycle as a planning milestone, not just a deadline.

Cycle 1 ends 12/31/2027. After 1/1/2028, condition assessments are required at least once every four years.

SUB-CYCLE 1 A

Parking structures located in:
Manhattan Community Districts 1-7

PIPS Timeline:
1/1/2022 – 12/31/2023

SUB-CYCLE 1 B

Parking structures located in:
Manhattan Community Districts 8-12
Brooklyn, all Community Districts

PIPS Timeline:
1/1/2024 – 12/31/2025

SUB-CYCLE 1 C

Parking structures located in:
Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island

PIPS Timeline:
1/1/2026 – 12/31/2027

NYC Administrative Code §28-323.3, as amended by Local Law 71 of 2024.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF STRUCTURES PER PIPS

SAFE

A Safe classification indicates that the parking structure does not have unsafe or SREM conditions identified in the report. A Safe classification does not eliminate the need for future maintenance, annual observation, or continued owner attention.

SREM

SREM means Safe with Repairs and/or Engineering Monitoring. A parking structure classified as SREM is considered safe at the time of inspection, but certain conditions require repair, maintenance, and/or engineering monitoring to prevent deterioration into an unsafe condition.

UNSAFE

An Unsafe classification indicates that a condition may threaten public safety and requires immediate attention. When unsafe conditions are identified, the owner must take action to safeguard the area, correct the condition, and complete required follow-up filings.

A PIPS classification should be understood as a decision point. It tells the owner what type of action is required next: continued maintenance, repair and monitoring, or immediate corrective response.

Source: NYC Department of Buildings, 1 RCNY §103-13.

WHAT INSPECTORS LOOK FOR

CONCRETE CONDITIONS



CONCRETE CRACKING

Cracking is reviewed for its location, pattern, direction, continuity, and relationship to surrounding structural components. Cracks may indicate material shrinkage, movement, loading, corrosion, settlement, or localized distress.



CONCRETE SPALLING AND DELAMINATION

Spalling is visible loss or separation of concrete. Delamination may occur beneath an apparently intact surface and may be identified through sounding. These conditions can expose reinforcement and create loose-material hazards.



EXPOSED REINFORCEMENT

Exposed reinforcing steel is evaluated for corrosion, apparent material loss, and deterioration of the surrounding concrete. Continued exposure to moisture and contaminants may contribute to further cracking, delamination, and spalling.

STRUCTURAL DISTRESS AND MOVEMENT



CORROSION STAINING AND METAL DETERIORATION

Rust-colored staining may indicate corrosion of reinforcement, embedded metal, structural steel, connections, or attached components. The surrounding concrete and apparent moisture source are evaluated to determine whether further investigation is appropriate.



DETERIORATED FRAMING MEMBERS

Beams, columns, slabs, walls, ramps, and other framing components are reviewed for concrete deterioration, corrosion, material loss, deformation, cracking, and previous repairs that may affect their condition.



SETTLEMENT, DISPLACEMENT, AND MOVEMENT

The inspection looks for settlement, displacement, deflection, rotation, misalignment, separation, or unusual movement between structural components. These conditions may require measurement, monitoring, additional investigation, or structural analysis.

JOINTS AND PROTECTIVE SYSTEMS



DETERIORATED JOINT MATERIALS

Expansion joints, construction joints, slab joints, sealants, and adjacent materials are reviewed for openings, tearing, displacement, debonding, leakage, and deterioration. Failed joints may permit water entry or interfere with intended movement.



WATERPROOFING AND WEARING-SURFACE DETERIORATION

Traffic coatings, wearing surfaces, and transitions are reviewed for cracking, wear, blistering, debonding, exposed substrate, ponding, and evidence of leakage. Deterioration may allow moisture and contaminants to reach structural components.



FIREPROOFING AND FIRESTOPPING DEFICIENCIES

Fireproofing and firestopping systems are reviewed for missing, damaged, loose, deteriorated, or disturbed material. Deficiencies may occur at structural steel, penetrations, joints, or previously repaired areas.

SAFETY COMPONENTS AND APPURTENANCES



GUARDS AND RAILINGS

Guards and railings are reviewed for corrosion, looseness, displacement, missing components, damaged connections, and movement. The rule specifically requires their components to be positively secured.



VEHICLE BARRIERS, BOLLARDS, AND IMPACT PROTECTION

Vehicle barriers, curbs, bollards, column protection, and impact-protection systems are reviewed for damage, displacement, deformation, corrosion, and inadequate attachment. Vehicle contact may affect both the protective component and the adjacent structure.



OTHER APPURTENANCES AND ATTACHED EQUIPMENT

The inspection also includes attached elements such as gates, staircases, attendant booths, lighting fixtures, signs, enclosures, parapets, fire-protection components, and electric-vehicle charging equipment.

FROM FINDINGS TO REPAIRS

A PIPS inspection identifies and documents existing conditions, but the filing is only one part of the process. Where repairs are required, the findings must be translated into a defined scope of work that identifies repair locations, materials, construction methods, sequencing, and project priorities.

SPAR uses field documentation, drawings, photographs, testing results, and the QPSI's recommendations to develop a coordinated repair strategy. The objective is to address the underlying causes of deterioration—not simply conceal visible damage—and establish a practical path from investigation through construction and closeout.

Repair planning may include concrete restoration, reinforcing-steel treatment or replacement, crack repair, joint replacement, drainage improvements, waterproofing, traffic coatings, barrier repairs, corrosion protection, and other work appropriate to the observed conditions.

PROTECTED AND CONTROLLED WORK AREAS

WHAT IT ADDRESSES

Repair work can generate dust, debris, noise, and construction traffic within an active garage.

TYPICAL WORK

Temporary partitions, barriers, surface protection, controlled access, and HEPA-filtered equipment help separate construction from occupied areas.

SPAR'S ROLE

SPAR coordinates protection requirements and repair phasing to support safe circulation and **continued garage operations** where feasible.



TEMPORARY SHORING

WHAT IT ADDRESSES

Shoring may be required where deterioration, damage, or construction activity affects a structural component.

TYPICAL WORK

Temporary supports stabilize slabs, beams, or other affected areas while permanent repairs are completed.

SPAR'S ROLE

SPAR evaluates existing conditions, coordinates engineering requirements, and observes relevant stages of the stabilization and repair work.



CONCRETE FLOOR REPAIRS

WHAT IT ADDRESSES

Water, salts, traffic, and vehicle loading can contribute to cracking, spalling, delamination, and reinforcement corrosion.

TYPICAL WORK

Repairs may include concrete removal, reinforcement work, formwork, placement, consolidation, finishing, and curing.

SPAR'S ROLE

SPAR reviews exposed conditions and observes key stages before reinforcement and completed repairs are concealed.



OVERHEAD CONCRETE REPAIRS

WHAT IT ADDRESSES

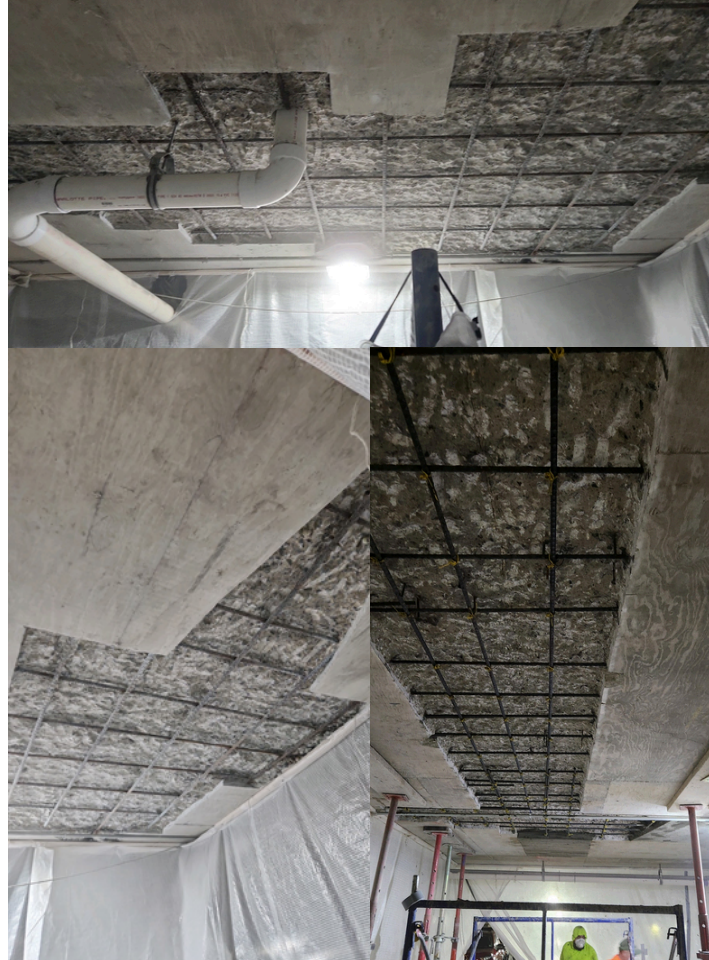
Deteriorated overhead concrete may expose reinforcement and create falling-material hazards above occupied areas.

TYPICAL WORK

Work may include concrete removal, reinforcement repair, supplemental steel, formwork, material placement, and finishing.

SPAR'S ROLE

SPAR coordinates repair details, protection requirements, and field observations throughout the overhead repair process.



STRUCTURAL STEEL REPAIRS

WHAT IT ADDRESSES

Corrosion, section loss, impact damage, or connection deterioration can affect structural steel components.

TYPICAL WORK

Repairs may include cleaning, supplemental plates or members, new connections, anchors, and protective coatings.

SPAR'S ROLE

SPAR evaluates exposed conditions, develops repair details, and observes significant work before assemblies are concealed.



DRAINAGE REPAIRS

WHAT IT ADDRESSES

Failed drains can contribute to ponding, leakage, coating failure, corrosion, and repeated concrete deterioration.

TYPICAL WORK

Repairs may include drain replacement, concrete restoration, new support framing, piping connections, and surrounding surface work.

SPAR'S ROLE

SPAR coordinates the drain, slab, support, piping, waterproofing, and adjacent repair interfaces.



PROTECTIVE COATINGS

WHAT IT ADDRESSES

Protective surfacing helps limit exposure to water, salts, vehicle fluids, and traffic wear.

TYPICAL WORK

Installation may include surface preparation, crack treatment, coatings, sealants, detailing, and restored markings.

SPAR'S ROLE

SPAR reviews key installation stages and completed surfaces for general conformance with the repair documents.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED PIPS QUESTIONS

Navigating PIPS compliance raises practical questions.

What is required? Who performs the inspection? What happens if repairs are needed? What records should owners gather before the assessment?

Whether you manage one garage or a portfolio of parking structures, the basic responsibilities are the same: determine applicability, retain the proper professional, coordinate access, complete the inspection, file the report, and respond to the findings.

The Q&As in this section cover the fundamentals of the program, what inspection results mean, and what steps may be required after the report is filed. Use it as a reference when planning inspections, preparing records, coordinating with garage operators, or discussing next steps with boards and ownership.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

WHAT IS PIPS?

PIPS stands for Periodic Inspection of Parking Structures. It is New York City's inspection and reporting program for covered parking structures.

WHAT DOES THE INSPECTION INCLUDE?

The inspection may include records review, visual walkthrough, physical examination, documentation, and additional investigation where required.

WHICH PARKING STRUCTURES MUST COMPLY?

Covered parking structures must comply with the applicable DOB requirements. Owners should confirm whether each structure is subject to PIPS before the filing window.

WHY DOES PIPS EXIST?

PIPS exists to support public safety by requiring routine assessment, documentation, and follow-up action for covered parking structures.

HOW OFTEN ARE INSPECTIONS REQUIRED?

Cycle 1 runs through December 31, 2027 using DOB-assigned sub-cycles. After January 1, 2028, each covered parking structure must undergo a condition assessment at least once every four years. Owners should confirm the applicable filing window before scheduling.

WHO PERFORMS THE INSPECTION?

A Qualified Parking Structure Inspector, or QPSI, performs the condition assessment and files the required report.

FILING & CLASSIFICATIONS

WHAT IS THE FILING CYCLE?

The filing cycle is the assigned timeframe when the parking structure report must be submitted to DOB. Filing windows should be confirmed through current DOB guidance.

WHERE IS THE REPORT FILED?

PIPS reports are filed electronically through DOB NOW: Safety.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RESULTS?

The possible classifications are Safe, SREM, and Unsafe.

WHAT DOES SREM MEAN?

SREM means Safe with Repairs and/or Engineering Monitoring. It indicates that the structure is safe at the time of inspection but requires repair, maintenance, and/or monitoring.

WHAT HAPPENES IF A STRUCTURE IS UNSAFE?

Unsafe conditions require immediate attention. The owner must safeguard the area, correct the condition, and complete the required follow-up filings.

CAN A REPORT REQUIRE MONITORING?

Yes. A report may identify conditions requiring engineering monitoring, especially where deterioration must be tracked over time.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A REPORT IS FILED LATE?

Late filing may result in civil penalties, violations, or enforcement actions by the Department of Buildings. Owners remain responsible for completing the inspection and filing the report even if the deadline has passed. Delays can also compress timelines for repairs or follow-up work.

REPAIRS & RESPONSIBILITIES

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPLIANCE?

The building owner is responsible for compliance. Property managers, garage operators, consultants, and contractors may assist with coordination and execution.

CAN CONTRACTORS PERFORM THE INSPECTION?

Contractors may assist with access, probes, sounding, openings, or repairs, but the PIPS condition assessment and filing must be performed by the proper qualified professional.

DO REPAIRS HAVE TO BE DONE IMMEDIATELY AFTER INSPECTION?

It depends on the classification and the condition. Unsafe conditions require immediate response. SREM conditions require repair and/or monitoring within the required timeframe.

WHAT RECORDS SHOULD OWNERS KEEP?

Owners should keep prior reports, annual observation checklists, repair records, permits, violation records, maintenance records, drawings, photographs, and amended filings.

WHAT IS THE ANNUAL OBSERVATION CHECKLIST?

The annual observation checklist is prepared by the QPSI specifically for the parking structure. After the report is accepted, it must be completed annually by or under the direct supervision of a QPSI. Completed checklists are kept on site and included with the next cycle's report.

WHAT IF ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATION IS NEEDED?

The QPSI may recommend further investigation such as sounding, probes, cores, scanning, testing, calculations, or specialty consultant review.

PRACTICAL SITUATIONS

WILL VEHICLES NEED TO BE MOVED?

Possibly. Vehicle relocation may be required so the QPSI can observe structural framing, slabs, joints, ramps, columns, walls, and other key areas.

WHAT IF STRUCTURAL DRAWINGS ARE MISSED?

The inspection can still proceed, but missing drawings may require additional coordination, field documentation, DOB record research, or further investigation.

WHAT IF THE GARAGE HAS LEAKS OR PONDING?

Leaks and ponding should be documented and evaluated. Water-related issues can accelerate deterioration and may require repair, drainage correction, waterproofing work, or further investigation.

WHAT IF VIOLATIONS ALREADY EXIST?

Existing violations should be reviewed as part of the compliance strategy. SPAR can assist owners with document research, coordination, and violation response where requested or required.

HOW CAN OWNERS REDUCE LONG-TERM REPAIR COSTS?

Early documentation, routine maintenance, annual observation, timely repair of deteriorated conditions, and coordinated capital planning can help reduce emergency work and avoid unnecessary escalation.

ARE DRONES USED FOR PIPS?

They can be, but it does not replace the inspection methods, field evaluation, or professional judgment required by the QPSI.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Access SPAR's digital reference materials for compliance guidance, project support, and general reference.

SPAR Method

A general overview of SPAR Architects, our services, approach, and capabilities.



FISP Guidebook

Inspection cycle and filing guidance for façade compliance and exterior wall safety requirements.



Alteration Review Guidebook

Industry references, representative clients, and selected project profiles.



Contact Us

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