

BUILDING *performance* LAB

CUNY INSTITUTE FOR URBAN SYSTEMS
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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Solving the Open Window Problem with Operations & Maintenance Training for Residential Superintendents FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Related Management recently partnered with the Building Performance Lab (BPL), an initiative of the City University of New York Institute for Urban Systems, to offer first-of-its-kind operations and maintenance training for residential building operators representing much of the company's Bronx residential portfolio.

The curriculum, developed by BPL in collaboration with Related facility management staff and co-taught by BPL Director Michael Bobker, covered energy efficient building operations topics with a focus on boiler maintenance and heating systems, as well as building health and safety topics. The emphasis on boilers was by design: improving supers' boiler knowledge reduces costly service calls and helps to solve a classic problem of New York's aging residential building stock – the open windows one sees even in the coldest days of winter, as tenants manage over-heated apartments the only way they can.

The majority of the 42 participants in the four-month class manage older buildings, an average of six stories each – the kind of buildings that “need a lot of TLC,” as Ted Mejia, a Related Facilities Engineer involved in developing the class, put it.

“Reviewing rates of service calls across our portfolio, we noted that some buildings have significantly more than others,” he said. Service calls represent not only out-of-pocket costs to the building's operating budget but a time-sucking reshuffling of priorities, as the super leaves other tasks to schedule and attend the visit.

“We noticed that buildings that don't have as many service calls tend to have supers who are very knowledgeable of boilers,” Mr. Mejia continued. “We saw this class as an opportunity to make our supers aware of new cost-saving measures, get them more engaged with their buildings, and improve general knowledge.”

Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive. All reported they learned useful skills that they believed would make a difference back at the job.

Related Management anticipates cost savings as a result of the training. “Properly maintained boilers run more efficiently, and we know there is savings in that,” Mr. Mejia said. “And knowledge about buildings envelopes is so important.”

Cost savings aside, the true impact of the training may be in what *doesn't* happen at participants' buildings this winter – fewer tenant complaints, fewer outside service calls, and fewer open windows.

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