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Please find on the following pages a concise chronology of events relevant to the design, and construction of the LIGO Observatories and the commissioning and observation with the initial and enhanced detectors.

		1970s
1970s		Feasibility studies and early work on laser interferometer gravitational-wave detectors
1979		National Science Foundation (NSF) funds Caltech and MIT for laser interferometer R&D
		1980s
1989	December	Construction proposal for LIGO submitted to the NSF
		1990s
1990	May	National Science Board approves LIGO construction proposal
1991	March	LIGO project receives 19 site proposals from 17 states
1991		Caltech 40-meter interferometer operated with LIGO displacement sensitivity
1991	Fall	Congress approves first year funding for LIGO
1992	February	NSF selects LIGO sites: Hanford, Wash., and Livingston, La.
1992	May	LIGO Cooperative Agreement signed by NSF and Caltech
1993	Summer	NSF review panel endorses technical status of LIGO
1993	Summer	Start of LIGO vacuum system engineering design
1993	August	Contract for beam tube design signed
1994	July	Groundbreaking at Hanford site
1994	October	Louisiana site land transfer and leasing agreement executed
1995	July	Groundbreaking at Livingston site
1995	Fall	Contract for vacuum equipment and for vacuum beam tube fabrication signed
1996	Summer	Contracts for construction of buildings and of concrete slab at Hanford site signed
1996	October	Installation of vacuum beam tubes begins at Hanford site
1996	December	Raw glass for mirrors arrives at LIGO
1996	December	Contracts for construction of buildings and beam tube enclosures at Livingston site signed
1997	June	First polished glass arrives at LIGO
1997	July	MIT prototype demonstrates "splitting a fringe" at LIGO sensitivity goal.
1997	August	Buildings at Hanford accepted and occupied by LIGO
1997	August	First of four 10-watt lasers received at LIGO for testing
1997	October	Installation of vacuum beam tubes begins at Livingston site
1997	December	LIGO receives final shipment of raw glass
1998	February	All vacuum beam tube modules at Hanford accepted
1998	May	First completed mirrors arrive at LIGO
1998	September	40-meter interferometer operated with LIGO optical configuration
1998	September	First 10-watt stabilized laser installed at Hanford
1998	September	Installation of seismic isolation system begins at Hanford
1998	October	Buildings at Livingston accepted and occupied by LIGO

1998	October	First beam tube module at Hanford is baked to remove excess water and other chemicals
1998	November	Vacuum system at Hanford accepted by LIGO
1998	November	All vacuum beam tube modules at Livingston accepted by LIGO
1998	December	First fully characterized mirror arrives at Hanford
1999	January	Vacuum system at Livingston accepted by LIGO
1999	February	Installation of seismic isolation system begins at Livingston
1999	May	All beam tube modules at Hanford are baked
1999	June	Coating of mirrors complete
1999	September	First vacuum beam tube module at Livingston completes bake
1999	November	LIGO Inauguration Ceremony
2000s		
2000	May	Completed installation of interferometer components for Hanford 2-km interferometer
2000	June	Completed bake of the beam tube(s) at Livingston
2000	October	Achieved "first lock" on Hanford 2-km interferometer in power-cycled configuration
2001	February	Earthquake in Washington State disrupts commissioning
2001	December	E7 Engineering Run, first coincident operation of all three LIGO interferometers plus GEO600 interferometer in Germany and LSU bar detector
2002	August	First scientific operation of all three interferometers in S1 run operating with GEO600 and TAMA300 (Japan) interferometers
2003	Feb-Apr	Second science run (S2) with improved sensitivity, operating with TAMA300
2003	Nov-Dec	Third science run (S3) operating with GEO600 and TAMA300 interferometer
2004	Mar-June	Installation of active anti-seismic system at Livingston
2004		Upper limits papers using S1 data published in <i>Physical Review</i>
2005	November	Design sensitivity reached; begin year long data run ("S5")
2005-2006		Improved upper limits using data from S2-S4 published
2007	May	Joint observations start with the French-Italian Virgo instrument
2007	October	Science run of one year integrated quality data at design sensitivity completed ("S5")
2007-2009		Initial detectors improved with selected Advanced LIGO technologies ("Enhanced LIGO")
2008	July	First scientific paper using S5 data published
2009	July	Science run ("S6") starts with enhanced initial detectors
2010	October	Science run S6 ends, start of Advanced LIGO installation