Building Exterior Inspection Guide

When and Why to Inspect

At least twice annually, it's important to conduct a thorough inspection of the building enclosure to identify signs of deterioration or failure. By correcting minor problems before they become major ones, the prudent building owner or facility manager can extend the lifespan of building components and avoid major capital expenditures. Regular inspection can also identify materials approaching the end of their service life, so that replacement can be scheduled and budgeted in advance. Otherwise, building systems will fail without warning, requiring rushed and, often, unsatisfactory emergency repair.

The Big Deal about Small Repairs

The building enclosure is made up of many components that work in concert to keep the building watertight and secure. If any one of these systems becomes compromised, inter-related building elements are at risk for failure—and costly repair. For instance, what may appear an insignificant open joint at a parapet cap can allow a surprising amount of water to enter the wall. As this water migrates down through the building facade, it rusts steel framing, soaks insulation, and displaces wall surfacing. The water also works its way under the roof membrane, leading to energy loss and leaks. While repair of cap joints is relatively simple, rehabilitating water-damaged roof and wall systems is anything but.

How to Use this Guide

Because the risks of deferred repair work carry a hefty price tag, it's worth investing a few hours on a regular basis to look for signs of trouble. This guide is intended not as an exhaustive list of all possible points of wear, but rather as an overview of typical building systems and common problems. Use the checklists to keep written records of observations, so as to prioritize repairs and anticipate major replacements. Should any concerns arise, diligent record-keeping can assist a design professional in pinpointing the source of the problem and recommending an appropriate rehabilitation strategy.

Roofs
1. Membrane
2. Flashing
3. Vent
4. Chimney
5. Drain
6. Scupper
7. Rooftop equipment
8. Ladder
9. Penthouse / bulkhead
10. Parapet wall
11. Skylight
12. Expansion joint

Facades
13. Foundation wall
14. Masonry
15. Sealant
16. Curtain wall mullions
17. Spandrels

Windows
18. Frame
19. Sash
20. Glazing
21. Wall openings
22. Louvers

Doors
23. Frame
24. Door
25. Latch
## Building Exterior Inspection Checklist

**Building:** ___________________________  **Inspector:** ____________________________  **Date:** __________________

Check all that apply and describe any observed deficiencies. Attach additional documentation and photographs as needed.

### ROOFS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Repairs/modifications since last inspection</th>
<th>Leaks observed or reported</th>
<th>Major damage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### GENERAL CONDITIONS

#### Flashings
- Splits / cracks
- Open seams
- Deformation
- Punctures

#### Penetrations
- Waterproofing damage
- Leaks
- Faulty vents / hatches
- Missing flashing

#### Drainage
- Ponded water
- Clogged drains
- Loose gutters
- Ice dams

#### Accessories
- Broken snow guards
- Bent lightning rods
- Loose railings
- Equipment damage

### LOW-SLOPE ASSEMBLIES

#### Built-up
- e.g. MBR, BUR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Warranty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
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#### Single-ply
- e.g. EPDM, TPO, PVC

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#### Fluid-applied
- e.g. asphaltic, acrylic, epoxy

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<td>Description</td>
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</table>

### STEEP-SLOPE ASSEMBLIES

#### Metal
- e.g. batten, standing seam

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
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<th>Warranty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
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</table>

#### Shingle
- e.g. slate, terra cotta, asphaltic

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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<th>Warranty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
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## FACADES

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Major damage</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## GENERAL CONDITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Coatings</th>
<th>Surface</th>
<th>Intersections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaning / bowing</td>
<td>Peeling / blistering</td>
<td>Dirt / stains</td>
<td>Coping displacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation damage</td>
<td>Substrate damage</td>
<td>Mineral deposits</td>
<td>Expansion joint damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cracks at corners</td>
<td>Failed patch</td>
<td>Bird excrement</td>
<td>Worn flashings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecure elements</td>
<td>Trapped moisture</td>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>Sealant joint failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## MATERIAL-SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

### Masonry

e.g. brick, stone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Type</th>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efflorescence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cracks / spalls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mortar deterioration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Movement / displacement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vegetative growth</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Concrete

e.g. cast-in-place, pre-cast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Type</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corroded rebar / spalls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cracks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rust stains</td>
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<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Glass curtain wall

e.g. vision and spandrel panels

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buckling / bulging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose gaskets</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Corrosion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Loose stops / beads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condensation</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Thin stone veneer

e.g. marble, granite

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<tr>
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<th>Type</th>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cracks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loose anchors</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Other

e.g. EIFS, stucco, metal

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surface defects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Loose fasteners</td>
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## Windows

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<tr>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaks observed or reported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major damage</td>
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### Window Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operability</th>
<th>General Location</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Warranty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed</td>
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<td>Single- or double-hung</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sliding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awning or hopper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casement</td>
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### Common Problem Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>Sash</th>
<th>Glazing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Failed sealant</td>
<td>Weatherstrip damage</td>
<td>Condensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rust or rot</td>
<td>Broken hardware</td>
<td>Cracks / breaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing fasteners</td>
<td>Incomplete closure</td>
<td>Defective seals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Doors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repairs/modifications since last inspection</th>
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### Door Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>General Location</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Warranty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main entrance</td>
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<td>Secondary entrances</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service doors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roof / bulkhead doors</td>
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### Common Problem Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>Door</th>
<th>Hardware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Failed sealant</td>
<td>Racked / warped</td>
<td>Latch / lock faulty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrosion</td>
<td>Impact damage</td>
<td>Weatherstrip damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threshold damage</td>
<td>Incomplete closure</td>
<td>Broken or worn hinges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description