

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES



How does a building owner prolong the life of their historic building? Through regular building maintenance. For building owners to attract the right entrepreneurs and clientele, regular building maintenance can go a long way. Too often a building is neglected or mishandled, causing deterioration. Experience shows time and again, that appearance is important to a healthy commercial district. With building owners working to create an attractive image, the downtown can benefit.

Regular upkeep will help to offset potential issues in the future. Setting a budget for regular maintenance and replacement is important in preserving the life of the building. The following is a recommended maintenance schedule for building owners:

First Quarter Maintenance

- After extreme weather, such as an ice storm, inspect building's entire exterior for damage and the interior for roof leaks. (30 min)
- Inspect interior of building for leaks during first heavy rain of the season. (30 min)
- Sweep debris from flat or low sloping roofs. (30 min)
- Examine the flashing for a tight fit and proper watershed where any horizontal surface meets a vertical surface (chimney, parapet cap, and roof). (30 min)
- Clean out gutters and downspouts, and inspect for damage that might have occurred during freeze-thaw cycles. (1 hour)

Second Quarter Maintenance

- Check masonry for loose bricks and mortar. Be sure to look at the back of the building as well. (15 min)
- Examine windows for broken glass or putty failure. (15 min)
- Remove any temporary caulk, and permanently fix the damaged wood gaps with an epoxy or wood consolidant. (1 hour plus set time)
- Inspect any metal or cast iron for components of rust; scrape and paint with rust inhibiting paint. (1 hour)
- Examine any painted surface for paint failure (cornice, windows, trim, and storefront) (30 min) Repaint if needed. (2-3 hours)
- Remove plants growing on or close to walls or foundations. (30 min)





Third Quarter Maintenance

- Remove plants growing on or close to walls and foundation. (30 min)
- Visually check for moss or lichen, especially around parapets, sills, and downspouts. (30 min)
- Check grading at foundation to make sure water will drain away from building and not pool. (15 min)
- Inspect basement or crawl space for excessive water during wet weather. (30 min)
- Inspect interior of building for leaks during first heavy rain of season. (30 min)
- Examine roof slope to make sure water is not pooling at any areas on the roof. (15 min)
- Make sure water can flow freely through the gutters and downspouts. Clean out if they are clogged. (30 min)
- Sweep debris from flat or low sloping roofs. (30 min)

Fourth Quarter Maintenance

- Check weather stripping around windows and doors. Install to prevent air filtration. (1 hour, depending on type)
- If applicable, install storm windows for winter. (2 hours)
- Caulk any gaps in damaged wood for a temporary watertight seal. (30 min)
- Inspect basement for crawl space for excessive water during wet weather. (30 min)
- Sweep debris from flat or low sloping roofs. (30 min)

In addition to regular quarterly maintenance, building owners need to plan for maintenance every 5-10 years. These items include:

Every Five Years:

- Inspect repaired linear cracks for open joints. Replace sealant and backer rod as required.
- Inspect penthouses for mortar deterioration.
- Inspect skyward-facing joints at parapet coping units for open joints and replace sealant as required.



Every Fifteen-Twenty Years

- Replace 100% of joint sealant.
- Inspect mortar joints and replace as required.
- Inspect window frame gaskets and replace as required.
- Clean 100% of building facades of general atmospheric soiling.
- Know the life of the roof and plan for replacement.

"For more information on building maintenance, refer to Preservation Brief 47."

A Note for Renters:

Business owners need to look at their lease to determine the responsibilities of the tenant and landlord as it pertains to maintenance. Each contract is different. Business owners can't assume a building owner will make necessary improvements, so knowing the language is vitally important, especially the renter is responsible for some of the improvements.

With its buildings, history, setting, and place within the community, downtown is unique and special. It makes sense to acknowledge these resources and take full advantage of them, to develop the qualities that are already present downtown--qualities a mall or strip will never have. Consult knowledgeable professionals in your community. Other sources of information and expertise include Missouri Main Street Connection, the State Historic Preservation Office, and Missouri Preservation.



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MOMAINSTREET.ORG | P.O. Box 1066, Branson, MO 65615 | (417) 334-3014



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