

# Condominium Maintenance Companies: The Good, The Bad, and THE WASTE OF MONEY



Condominium associations have a big task - *keeping the building maintained and trying to keep the costs down*. I often get called in for Maintenance and Safety Inspections for condo associations – many times to "check up" on the association's maintenance company and the job they are doing (or NOT). Sometimes, we even get hired to inspect common areas of individual condos/townhouses for individual condo owners - who tire of poor repairs by their maintenance company and the repeated issues and problems they create (or IGNORE).

## Let's start out by discussing exactly what a Maintenance Company should do:

First, **regular inspections** of the common areas are **needed** in order to FIND problems and any needed repairs and maintenance. If you don't do this, maintenance issues over time are likely to become more EXPENSIVE repairs or replacements.

**For Example:** A "simple" leak from rotted window trim or missing flashings is noted (or reported by a Condo Occupant) – This is typically treated one of 3 ways:

- The area is scheduled for repair, and full repairs are performed. Areas that appear to have had any major water entry are opened and checked as part of the repair to determine if any hidden damage has occurred.
- The area is scheduled for repair, and the area is patched and sealed to stop the leak. *This type of repair will need REPEATED re-repairs and ultimately additional damage or growths from the on-off leaks will likely need to be opened up and repaired.*
- No maintenance inspections are performed, and the area is VERY LIKELY to need more serious repairs (by the time the issue is noticed). *Growths and hidden damage are also VERY LIKELY along with the additional cleanup/replacement costs.*

*The added repair costs as well as the additional damage caused by delaying maintenance and repairs will all add up – and hit EVERYONE in the complex in the pocketbook (typically via raised condo fees or assessments).*

**Obviously, it is MUCH MORE COST EFFECTIVE to find and deal with the issues Rather than saving a little money now – only to have bigger costs later..**

This is where a maintenance company comes in. By properly scheduling regular inspections and then carefully scheduling the needed repairs according to need and costs, the maintenance company that properly inspects the property and correctly schedules and budgets repairs can ultimately save on repair expenditures.

**This would benefit nearly all condominium associations – no matter the size.**

## What should be Inspected?

A maintenance company's regular inspections should typically include (*at minimum*):

- [Common area inspections](#)
- [Parking and walkway inspections](#)
- [Siding and trim inspections](#)
- [Foundation, grading, and drainage inspections](#)
- [Entrance and balcony inspections](#)
- [Window and door inspections](#)
- [Roofing inspections](#)
- [Chimney Inspections](#)
- [Fire Escape and Egress Inspections](#)
- [Other common area inspections](#) (*pools, other additional amenities or systems*)



Click on each section above to go directly to detailed lists of what maintenance companies should typically be including in their regular inspections in order to do their job thoroughly.

## How often should inspections occur?

Maintenance and Safety Inspections should at minimum be performed **ANNUALLY**. Depending on the conditions, materials, and environmental factors, some areas or systems **MAY NEED MORE FREQUENT INSPECTIONS**. (*Inspection frequencies are determined and adjusted according to conditions found on the property*)

## When are inspections **ALWAYS NEEDED**?

After any extreme weather event, natural disaster, nearby fire, or damage occurs there should **ALWAYS** be a Maintenance and Safety Inspection. Even if no damage or problems are reported by condominium owners – There may be **unknown damage** (*such as damage to roofs and other inaccessible or “not looked at” areas – that could leak or cause later issues if not detected and fixed*).

Please Note: This document does not attempt to convey any legal advice, and is general in nature.

This document does not claim to be all inclusive and additional research and consultation is advised. No amount of maintenance or inspection can predict the future and additional, unexpected or sudden expenses and repairs are always possible on any property or complex.

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## Typical Condominium Association Maintenance and Inspection Costs

**Disclaimer:** The costs provided here are estimates and can vary significantly based on factors such as location, building size and age, number of units, climate, and the specific services required. It's essential to obtain quotes from local service providers for accurate cost estimates.

### Factors Affecting Costs:

- **Building Size and Age:** Larger, older buildings typically have higher maintenance costs due to potential repairs and increased energy consumption.
- **Number of Units:** More units generally mean higher costs for common area maintenance and administration.
- **Location:** Costs vary by region due to differences in labor, material, and utility prices.
- **Amenities:** The presence of amenities like pools, gyms, or tennis courts increases maintenance expenses.
- **Climate:** Extreme weather conditions can impact maintenance needs and costs.
- **Maintenance Frequency:** More frequent inspections and maintenance can lead to higher costs but prevent larger issues.

### Typical Maintenance and Inspection Costs: *(Vary by area and building)*

#### Building Maintenance:

- **Roofing:** \$5-15 per square foot for repairs; \$3-8 per square foot for replacement.
- **Exterior Painting:** \$2-4 per square foot.
- **Window Replacement:** \$300-\$800 per window.
- **HVAC System Maintenance:** \$100-\$200 per unit annually.
- **Elevator Maintenance:** \$500-\$1,000 per elevator monthly.
- **Plumbing Repairs:** Varies widely based on issue.
- **Electrical Repairs:** Varies widely based on issue.
- **Pest Control:** \$50-\$200 per treatment.
- **Fire Safety Equipment Inspection:** \$500-\$1,000 annually.



#### Grounds Maintenance:

- **Lawn Care:** \$50-\$100 per visit.
- **Landscaping:** \$2-5 per square foot for installation; \$50-\$100 per visit for maintenance.
- **Pool Maintenance:** \$2,000-\$5,000 annually.
- **Snow Removal:** \$200-\$500 per event.
- **Trash and Recycling:** Varies based on service provider and volume.



#### Inspections:

- **Building Inspections:** \$500-\$2,000.
- **HVAC Inspections:** \$100-\$200 per unit.
- **Elevator Inspections:** Required by local regulations, costs vary.
- **Fire Safety Inspections:** Required by local regulations, costs vary.
- **Pest Control Inspections:** Included in pest control contract.



#### Additional Costs:

- **Insurance:** Covers property damage and liability.
- **Utilities:** Electricity, water, gas, and sewage.
- **Management Fees:** If a property management company is hired.
- **Legal and Accounting Fees:** For record-keeping, contracts, and legal advice.
- **Reserve Funds:** Money set aside for future capital expenditures.

It's **CRUCIAL** to create a **detailed** annual budget that includes these costs and **allocates funds** for **unexpected expenses**. Regular inspections and preventive maintenance can help control costs in the long run.



## Comprehensive Inspection List for Condominium Common Areas

A well-maintained condominium complex requires regular inspections to identify potential issues and prevent costly repairs. The following outlines key areas to focus on:

### Exterior Components

- **Building Envelopes:**
  - Exterior walls, foundations, and basements: Check for cracks, water infiltration, and structural integrity.
  - Roof: Inspect for leaks, damaged shingles, gutters, downspouts, and proper drainage.
  - Siding and trim: Assess for damage, paint deterioration, and caulking.
  - Windows and doors: Check for seals, operation, and weatherproofing.
- **Landscaping and Grounds:**
  - Trees and shrubs: Evaluate health, pruning needs, and potential hazards.
  - Lawn and gardens: Inspect for proper irrigation, fertilization, and weed control.
  - Walkways and patios: Check for cracks, uneven surfaces, and safety hazards.
  - Fences and gates: Assess condition, security, and operation.
  - Outdoor lighting: Verify functionality and safety.
- **Parking Areas:**
  - Pavement: Inspect for cracks, potholes, and drainage.
  - Parking lot lines: Ensure visibility and clarity.
  - Lighting: Check for functionality and safety.
  - Signage: Verify accuracy and condition.



### Common Area Interiors

- **Hallways and Staircases:**
  - Flooring: Check for wear, damage, and safety hazards.
  - Walls and ceilings: Inspect for cracks, stains, and damage.
  - Lighting: Verify functionality and safety.
  - Handrails and railings: Assess condition and security.
  - Fire safety equipment: Inspect extinguishers, smoke detectors, and emergency lighting.
- **Elevators and Escalators:**
  - Regular inspections by certified technicians.
  - Emergency systems: Test alarms, phones, and lighting.
  - Car interiors: Check for cleanliness, vandalism, and equipment functionality.
- **Recreational Facilities:**
  - Pools and spas: Inspect water quality, equipment, safety features, and cleanliness.
  - Fitness centers: Check equipment maintenance, cleanliness, and safety.
  - Clubhouses and community rooms: Verify HVAC, lighting, furniture, and kitchen equipment.
  - Playgrounds: Inspect equipment for safety, age, and proper installation.

## Inspection List for Condominium Common Areas *(continued)*

### Building Systems:

- **HVAC Systems:**
  - Check for proper operation, filter maintenance, and energy efficiency.
  - Inspect ductwork for leaks and insulation.
  - Balance system for even distribution of air.
- **Plumbing Systems:**
  - Inspect pipes for leaks, corrosion, and proper drainage.
  - Test water pressure and temperature.
  - Check toilets, sinks, and faucets for functionality.
- **Electrical Systems:**
  - Verify circuit breaker panels, outlets, and lighting.
  - Inspect for ground faults and potential hazards.
  - Test emergency power systems (if applicable).
  - Smoke detectors and fire alarms: Check battery life and functionality.
- **Fire Safety Systems:**
  - Inspect fire extinguishers, sprinkler systems, and fire alarms.
  - Conduct fire drills as required.
- **Security Systems:**
  - Test access control systems, cameras, and alarms.
  - Verify lighting and landscaping for security.



### Additional Considerations:

- **Regular frequency of inspections:** Determine inspection schedules based on component age, condition, and local regulations.
- **Documentation:** Maintain detailed records of inspection findings, repairs, and maintenance history.
- **Compliance:** Ensure adherence to local building codes, fire safety regulations, and accessibility standards.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Develop and implement emergency plans for various scenarios.

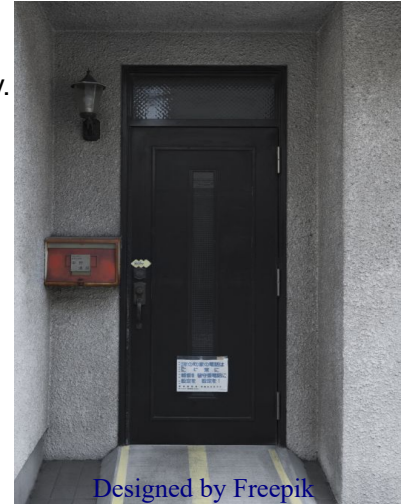
**By conducting thorough and regular inspections, condominium maintenance companies can effectively identify and address potential issues, prolong the life of building components, and enhance the overall safety and value of the property.**

## Entrance and Balcony Inspections for Condominium Common Areas

### Entrance Inspections:

#### Doors and Frames:

- Check for damage, wear and tear, proper alignment, and sealing.
- Inspect for security hardware (locks, handles, hinges) condition and functionality.
- Verify automatic door operation (if applicable).
- **Door Hardware:**
  - Inspect doorbells, intercom systems, and security cameras for functionality.
  - Check for proper lighting around entrance areas.
- **Flooring:**
  - Assess for wear, damage, cracks, and slip hazards.
  - Verify proper drainage and water removal systems.
- **Walls, Ceilings, and Trim:**
  - Check for cracks, water damage, paint peeling, and overall condition.
- **Signage:**
  - Ensure all signage is clear, legible, and up-to-date.
- **Lighting:**
  - Verify proper lighting levels, bulb functionality, and emergency lighting.
- **Security Systems:**
  - Inspect security cameras, access control systems, and alarm systems.



### Balcony Inspections:

- **Flooring:**
  - Check for cracks, uneven surfaces, loose tiles, and overall condition.
  - Inspect for proper drainage and water runoff.
- **Railings:**
  - Verify railing height, stability, and condition.
  - Check for rust, corrosion, and loose connections.
- **Balcony Slabs:**
  - Inspect for cracks, spalling, and deterioration.
- **Waterproofing:**
  - Assess waterproofing membranes, sealants, and flashing for damage.
- **Drainage:**
  - Check for clogged drains, proper slope, and water runoff.
- **Safety Features:**
  - Verify the presence and condition of smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
- **Exterior Finishes:**
  - Inspect walls, ceilings, and trim for cracks, paint peeling, and damage.
- **Plantings and Containers:**
  - Check for plant health, proper drainage, and container stability.
  - Assess for potential hazards (e.g., dead plants, loose soil).



### Additional Considerations:

- **Regular Inspection Schedule:** Establish a routine inspection schedule based on building age, climate, and usage.
- **Documentation:** Maintain detailed inspection reports with photographs for each entrance and balcony.
- **Compliance:** Adhere to local building codes, safety regulations, and accessibility standards.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Develop and implement emergency response plans for balcony collapses or other hazards.
- **Preventive Maintenance:** Address issues promptly to prevent further damage and ensure resident safety.

By conducting thorough inspections and addressing maintenance needs, condominium associations can maintain safe and attractive entrance and balcony areas for residents and guests.



## Inspections for Other Common Area Amenities

The specific inspections required will vary based on the amenities offered by your condominium complex. However, here's a general overview of potential inspection areas:

### Swimming Pools and Spas:

- Water Quality:** Check pH levels, chlorine or salt levels, alkalinity, and calcium hardness.
- Equipment:** Inspect pumps, filters, heaters, chlorinators, and automatic cleaners for proper operation.
- Safety Features:** Verify presence and condition of lifeguards (if applicable), safety ladders, life rings, first aid kits.
- Deck and Surrounding Area:** Check for cracks, uneven surfaces, and proper drainage.
- Plumbing:** Inspect pipes, drains, and overflow systems for leaks or blockages.



### Fitness Centers:

- Equipment:** Inspect cardio equipment (treadmills, ellipticals, etc.), weight machines, free weights, and other fitness accessories for safety and functionality.
- Flooring:** Check for wear and tear, safety hazards, and cleanliness.
- Ventilation:** Ensure proper air circulation and temperature control.
- Restrooms and Locker Rooms:** Inspect cleanliness, plumbing, and ventilation.



### Clubhouses and Community Rooms:

- Interior Condition:** Check for damage to walls, ceilings, floors, and furniture.
- HVAC System:** Inspect for proper heating, cooling, and ventilation.
- Kitchen Equipment:** Inspect appliances (refrigerators, ovens, microwaves) for cleanliness and functionality.
- Restrooms:** Check for cleanliness, plumbing, and ventilation.
- Furniture and Fixtures:** Inspect for damage or wear and tear.



### Outdoor Amenities:

- Playgrounds:** Inspect equipment for safety, stability, and proper installation.
- Tennis Courts, Basketball Courts, and Other Sports Facilities:** Check for surface condition, net and equipment integrity, and safety hazards.
- Grilling Areas:** Inspect grills for cleanliness, gas leaks, and proper ventilation.
- Outdoor Furniture:** Check for damage, cleanliness, and stability.



### Additional Amenities (Vary by Complex):

- Saunas and Steam Rooms:** Inspect for cleanliness, equipment functionality, and safety features.
- Business Centers:** Inspect computers, printers, and office equipment for functionality.
- Car Wash Areas:** Inspect equipment for proper operation and cleanliness.
- Pet Washing Stations:** Inspect for cleanliness and equipment functionality.

### General Considerations for All Amenities:

- Safety:** Prioritize safety inspections to prevent accidents and injuries.
- Cleanliness:** Maintain a high level of cleanliness in all common areas.
- Maintenance:** Perform regular preventive maintenance to extend the life of equipment and prevent breakdowns.
- Compliance:** Adhere to local regulations and safety standards.
- Documentation:** Keep detailed inspection reports and maintenance records.

**Remember: This is a general list, and the specific inspections required will depend on the amenities offered by your condominium complex. It's essential to tailor your inspection checklist to your specific needs and to consult with industry experts for guidance.**

## Foundation, Grading, and Drainage Inspections

Regular inspections of a condominium complex's foundation, grading, and drainage systems are crucial to prevent costly repairs and ensure the structural integrity of the buildings.

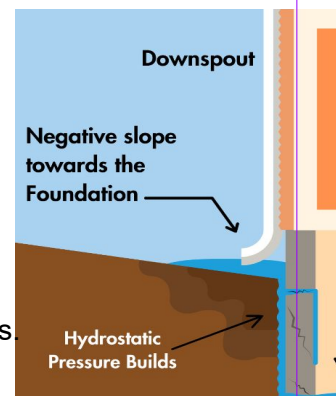
### Foundation Inspections:

- **Visual Inspection:**
  - Check for cracks, bulges, or bowing in foundation walls.
  - Inspect for signs of water infiltration, such as dampness, efflorescence, or mold.
  - Observe the foundation for uneven settling or tilting.
  - Examine the condition of expansion joints and control joints.
- **Under-Building Inspection:**
  - Access crawl spaces or basements to inspect foundation walls from the interior.
  - Check for signs of water damage, pest infestation, or deterioration.
  - Examine the condition of piers, columns, and beams supporting the foundation.
- **Soil Conditions:**
  - Assess soil moisture levels and drainage around the foundation.
  - Look for signs of erosion or soil instability.



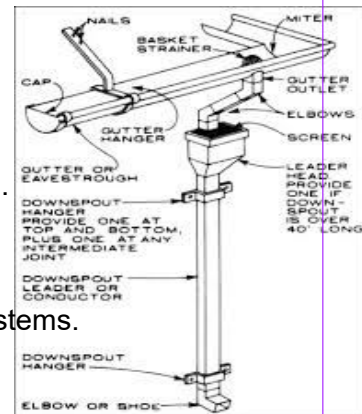
### Grading Inspections:

- **Slope Analysis:**
  - Verify proper slope away from building foundations to prevent water accumulation.
  - Check for erosion or washouts on slopes.
  - Inspect for drainage channels and their functionality.
- **Walkways and Driveways:**
  - Assess the slope of walkways and driveways to ensure adequate drainage.
  - Check for uneven surfaces, tripping hazards, or cracks.
- **Landscaping:**
  - Evaluate the placement of plants and shrubs to prevent water damage to foundations.
  - Inspect for proper grading around retaining walls.



### Drainage Inspections:

- **Roof Drainage:**
  - Check the condition of gutters, downspouts, and splash blocks.
  - Verify proper drainage away from the building foundation.
- **Ground Drainage:**
  - Inspect storm drains, catch basins, and drainage pipes for obstructions or damage.
  - Assess the efficiency of drainage systems in removing water from the property.
- **Water Accumulation:**
  - Look for ponding water in any areas of the property.
  - Identify potential sources of water infiltration, such as leaking pipes or sprinkler systems.



### Additional Considerations:

**Seasonal Inspections:** Conduct inspections after heavy rains, snow melt, or extreme weather events.

**Documentation:** Maintain detailed records of inspection findings, including photographs.

**Preventive Maintenance:** Address issues promptly to prevent further damage and costly repairs.

**Professional Assessment:** Consider consulting with a structural engineer or geotechnical expert for complex issues.

**By diligently inspecting and maintaining the foundation, grading, and drainage systems, condominium associations can significantly reduce the risk of structural damage and ensure the long-term value of their property.**



## Siding and Trim Inspections

Regular siding inspections are crucial to maintaining the exterior integrity and aesthetic appeal of a condominium complex. Here's a detailed checklist for inspecting siding on multiple buildings:

**Before inspection, identify the type of siding used on the buildings. Different materials require specific inspection methods.**

### Common Types of Siding:

- Wood
- OSB
- Fiberboard
- Texture 1-11

- EIFS
- Vinyl
- Fiber cement
- Asbestos cement

- Aluminum
- Stucco
- Masonry Block
- Brick

*Note: Not all siding types listed*

### Siding Comparison Table

Siding Type	Lifespan (years)	Common Problems	Pros	Cons
<b>Wood</b>	50-75+	Rot, insect damage, warping, cracking	Natural beauty, durability, repairable	High maintenance, cost, fire risk
<b>OSB (Oriented Strand Board)</b>	20-30	Water damage, swelling, delamination	Cost-effective, structural strength	Susceptible to moisture and mold growth, not aesthetically pleasing
<b>Fiberboard</b>	15-20+	Water damage, swelling, cracking	Cost-effective	Susceptible to moisture, not durable
<b>Texture 1-11</b>	40-50+	Water damage, cracking, warping	Durable, low maintenance, fire resistant	Less aesthetic options, can be heavy
<b>EIFS (Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems)</b>	20-50	Water damage, cracking, mold growth	Energy efficiency, aesthetic versatility	Susceptible to water damage, potential for hidden moisture issues, needs regular inspection
<b>Vinyl</b>	25-40+	Fading, cracking, impact damage	Low maintenance, cost-effective, durability	Not environmentally friendly, can melt in extreme heat
<b>Fiber Cement</b>	50+	Cracking, fading, impact damage	Durable, fire resistant, low maintenance	Costly, heavy, potential for cracking
<b>Asbestos Cement</b>	50+	Asbestos exposure, cracking, fading	Durable, fire resistant, low maintenance	Contains harmful asbestos, difficult to remove
<b>Aluminum</b>	30-50+	Denting, fading, corrosion	Durable, low maintenance, fire resistant	High cost, noise amplification, potential for damage
<b>Stucco</b>	50+	Cracking, water damage, mold growth	Durable, fire resistant, aesthetic versatility	Labor intensive, prone to cracking, can be heavy, needs regular inspection
<b>Masonry Block</b>	50+	Efflorescence, cracking, water damage	Durable, fire resistant, low maintenance	High cost, labor intensive, less aesthetic
<b>Brick</b>	50+	Efflorescence, cracking, water damage	Durable, fire resistant, low maintenance, aesthetic appeal	High cost, labor intensive

*ALL AVERAGE LIFESPANS DEPEND ON MANY FACTORS AND WILL VARY WIDELY. (INSTALLATION/MAINTENANCE/ETC.)*

## Siding Inspection Checklist

### General Inspection

- **Visual Assessment:**
  - Check for overall condition, including color fading, discoloration, or staining.
  - Look for signs of water damage, such as warping, buckling, or rot.
  - Inspect for cracks, holes, or gaps in the siding.
  - Examine the condition of caulking and sealant around windows and doors.
  - Observe any signs of insect or pest infestation.
- **Material Specific Inspection:**
  - **Wood Siding:** Inspect for peeling paint, rot, and signs of termite damage.
  - **Vinyl Siding:** Check for cracks, holes, or delamination. Look for signs of impact damage.
  - **Fiber Cement Siding:** Inspect for cracks, chips, or delamination. Look for signs of water damage.
  - **Aluminum Siding:** Inspect for dents, scratches, and corrosion. Check for proper fastener condition.
  - **Stucco Siding:** Examine for cracks, peeling, or delamination. Look for signs of water penetration.

### Detailed Inspection:

- **Siding Attachment:**
  - Verify that siding is securely fastened to the building.
  - Check for loose or missing nails or screws.
  - Inspect flashing and trim for proper installation and condition.
- **Water Management:**
  - Assess the condition of gutters and downspouts.
  - Verify proper drainage away from the building foundation.
  - Check for water infiltration around windows, doors, and other openings.
- **Sealants and Caulking:**
  - Inspect for cracks, gaps, or deterioration of caulking and sealant.
  - Check for proper application around windows, doors, and siding joints.
- **Trim and Fascia:**
  - Examine trim and fascia for rot, decay, or paint peeling.
  - Verify proper attachment and condition.
- **Soffits and Ventilation:**
  - Inspect soffits for damage or obstructions.
  - Ensure adequate ventilation in the attic space.

### Documentation and Reporting:

- **Detailed Inspection Reports:** Create comprehensive reports documenting the condition of the siding on each building.
- **Photographs:** Take photos of any damage or areas of concern.
- **Prioritize Repairs:** Identify urgent repairs and develop a maintenance schedule for addressing other issues.
- **Communicate with Homeowners:** Inform homeowners about the inspection findings and necessary repairs.
- **Additional Considerations**
- **Frequency of Inspections:** Determine the appropriate inspection frequency based on siding material, building age, and local climate conditions.
- **Seasonal Inspections:** Conduct more thorough inspections after severe weather events, such as hailstorms or hurricanes.
- **Maintenance Plan:** Develop a preventive maintenance plan to address identified issues and prevent future problems.
- **Professional Assessment:** Consider consulting with a siding expert for complex or severe damage.

By following this comprehensive inspection checklist, condominium maintenance companies can effectively protect the exterior of buildings, enhance property value, and ensure the safety and comfort of residents.

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## EXAMPLES OF SIDING TYPES

CLICK ON PICTURES TO SEE ORIGINAL LINKS – IMAGES GATHERED FROM WEB – ORIGINAL SOURCE IS LINKED TO EACH IMAGE – CLICK TO READ ARTICLES ONLINE

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## Roofing Inspections

A well-maintained roof is crucial for protecting the entire building from water damage and structural issues. Regular inspections are essential to identify potential problems early on and prevent costly repairs.

**Before diving into the inspection process, it's important to understand the different types of roofs commonly found on condominiums:**

### Types of Roofs:

- **Flat roofs:** Often used in commercial buildings but can be found on some condominiums.
- **Sloped roofs:** More common in residential and condominium buildings, these can be further classified by their covering material (asphalt shingles, metal, tile, etc.).

## Comprehensive Roof Inspection Checklist

### General Inspection:

- **Overall condition:** Check for visible damage, such as missing shingles, cracks, punctures, or blisters.
- **Flashing:** Inspect around chimneys, vents, skylights, and other roof penetrations for proper sealing and condition.
- **Gutters and downspouts:** Ensure they are clean, free of debris, and functioning correctly.
- **Drainage:** Check for water pooling on the roof and verify proper drainage.
- **Ventilation:** Inspect attic vents to ensure proper airflow and prevent moisture buildup.
- **Skylights and roof windows:** Check for seals, leaks, and overall condition.

### Specific Roof Types:

- **Asphalt Shingle Roofs:**
  - Granule loss: Excessive granule loss indicates potential shingle deterioration.
  - Cupping or curling shingles: These signs indicate shingle damage and potential leaks.
  - Shingle blistering: This can be caused by moisture buildup and requires attention.
- **Metal Roofs:**
  - Corrosion: Inspect for rust or corrosion on metal panels.
  - Fastener condition: Check for loose or missing fasteners.
  - Sealant integrity: Verify the condition of seals around penetrations.
- **Tile Roofs:**
  - Cracked or broken tiles: Replace damaged tiles promptly.
  - Securement: Ensure tiles are properly fastened and not shifting.
  - Underlayment: Check for damage or deterioration of the underlayment.
- **Flat Roofs:**
  - Ponding water: Check for areas where water accumulates.
  - Membrane condition: Inspect for cracks, punctures, or blisters in the roofing membrane.
  - Drainage: Verify the proper functioning of drains and gutters.



### Additional Considerations:

- **Attic Inspection:** Check for signs of water damage, insulation condition, and proper ventilation.
- **Photographs:** Document inspection findings with photos for future reference.
- **Seasonal Inspections:** Conduct inspections more frequently during severe weather seasons (e.g., spring after winter storms, fall before winter).
- **Maintenance Records:** Keep detailed records of inspections, repairs, and maintenance performed.

## Frequency of Inspections

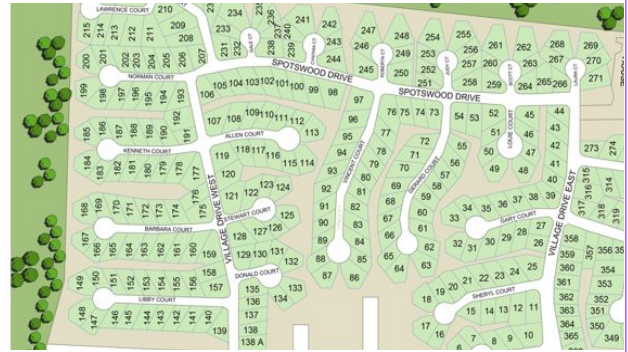
The frequency of roof inspections depends on factors such as roof age, material, climate, maintenance, and building condition. Generally, annual inspections are recommended, with more frequent inspections after severe weather events.

**By following a comprehensive inspection checklist and addressing issues promptly, condominium maintenance companies can help protect the building and maintain its value.**

## Grounds, Parking, and Walkways Inspections

### Grounds:

- **Lawn Areas:**
  - Regular mowing, edging, and trimming.
  - Check for weeds, diseases, pests, and brown patches.
  - Inspect for proper drainage and erosion control.
  - Evaluate soil health and fertilization needs.
- **Landscaping:**
  - Inspect shrubs, trees, and flowers for health and proper growth.
  - Prune and shape plants as needed.
  - Check for dead or diseased plants and replace as necessary.
  - Monitor mulch levels and replenish as needed.
- **Irrigation System:**
  - Inspect sprinkler heads for proper coverage and function.
  - Check for leaks, broken pipes, and clogged lines.
  - Adjust watering schedules based on weather conditions.
- **Outdoor Amenities:**
  - Inspect playgrounds for safety hazards, equipment condition, and proper surfacing.
  - Check picnic areas, grills, and outdoor furniture for cleanliness and damage.
  - Maintain pools and spas according to health department regulations.
  - Inspect outdoor lighting for functionality and safety.



### Parking Areas:

- **Pavement:**
  - Check for cracks, potholes, and uneven surfaces.
  - Inspect for oil stains and other damage.
  - Evaluate pavement markings for visibility and compliance.
- **Drainage:**
  - Inspect storm drains for obstructions and proper function.
  - Check for ponding water and erosion.
- **Lighting:**
  - Verify lighting functionality and safety.
  - Check for light fixture damage and proper aiming.
- **Signage:**
  - Inspect parking signs for clarity and condition.
  - Ensure proper placement of parking restrictions and visitor parking areas.
- **Security:**
  - Monitor for unauthorized vehicles or suspicious activity.
  - Inspect security cameras and access controls.



## Grounds, Parking, and Walkways Inspections (continued)

### Walkways and Paths:

- **Surface Condition:**
  - Check for cracks, uneven surfaces, and tripping hazards.
  - Inspect for weeds and plant growth.
- **Drainage:**
  - Verify proper drainage to prevent erosion and water accumulation.
  - Inspect for clogged drains and gutters.
- **Lighting:**
  - Ensure adequate lighting for safety, especially at night.
  - Check for light fixture damage and proper aiming.
- **Safety Features:**
  - Inspect handrails for stability and condition.
  - Verify the presence and condition of slip-resistant surfaces.
  - Check for obstructions and tripping hazards.



### Additional Considerations:

**Seasonal Maintenance:** Adjust inspection and maintenance routines based on the time of year.

**Emergency Preparedness:** Have a plan in place for addressing storm damage, vandalism, or other emergencies.

**Compliance:** Ensure compliance with local regulations and HOA guidelines.

**Resident Feedback:** Regularly gather feedback from residents to address concerns and improve the common areas.

**By conducting regular inspections and addressing issues promptly, you can maintain the safety and aesthetic appeal of your condominium complex's grounds, parking areas, and walkways.**



## Chimney Inspections for Condominium Maintenance Companies

Chimney inspections are crucial for fire safety and preventing property damage. For condominium complexes, they become even more critical due to the shared nature of the building and the potential impact on multiple units.

### Key Inspection Areas

#### Exterior Chimney Structure:

- **Condition of Masonry:** Check for cracks, spalling, efflorescence (white powdery substance), or loose bricks.
- **Mortar Joints:** Inspect for deterioration, gaps, or missing mortar.
- **Chimney Cap:** Ensure it's in place, not damaged, and properly secured.
- **Flashing:** Verify that it's intact and effectively preventing water infiltration.
- **Chimney Crown:** Inspect for cracks, erosion, or damage.
- **Stains or Discoloration:** Look for signs of water damage or leaks.

#### Interior Chimney Components:

- **Firebox:** Check for cracks, damage, or deterioration.
- **Smoke Chamber:** Inspect for creosote buildup, obstructions, or damage.
- **Damper:** Verify its operation and condition.
- **Flue Liner:** Examine for cracks, deterioration, or obstructions.
- **Chimney Sweep Access Doors:** Ensure they are accessible and secure.

#### Creosote Buildup:

- Assess the amount of creosote buildup in the chimney and flue.
- Determine the need for cleaning based on the level of buildup.

#### Chimney Draft:

- Test the chimney draft to ensure proper ventilation.
- Check for downdrafts or backdrafting issues.

#### Animal Infestation:

- Look for signs of bird nests, squirrel activity, or other wildlife intrusion.

### Inspection Frequency

#### Annual Inspections:

**Recommended for all chimneys**, especially those in frequent use.

#### Additional Inspections:

Consider more frequent inspections for *chimneys with heavy use, signs of deterioration, or after severe weather events or accidents/damage.*

### Documentation

- **Detailed inspection reports** should be maintained for each chimney.
- **Photographs** of any issues or repairs should be included.
- **Repair and maintenance records** should be kept for future reference.

### Additional Considerations

- **Shared Chimneys:** In buildings with multiple units sharing a chimney, coordinate inspections and maintenance to prevent conflicts and ensure the safety of all residents.
- **Fireplace Inserts:** Inspect inserts for proper installation, condition, and clearance.
- **Gas Fireplaces:** While less common, gas fireplaces should also be inspected for proper ventilation and safety.
- **Compliance with Regulations:** Ensure all chimney work complies with local building codes and safety standards.

**Note:** It's essential to hire certified chimney sweeps to conduct thorough inspections and cleanings. They have the expertise and equipment to identify potential hazards and perform necessary repairs. By following these guidelines, condominium maintenance companies can help ensure the safety and longevity of their buildings' chimneys.

# Condominium Maintenance Companies: The Good, The Bad, and THE WASTE OF MONEY

## Understanding Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Chimney Inspections

Chimney inspections are essential for maintaining the safety and efficiency of your fireplace or wood-burning appliance. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) outlines **3 levels** of chimney inspection, each increasing in depth and invasiveness.

### Level 1 Chimney Inspection

**Scope:** A basic visual inspection of accessible chimney components.

**Includes:**

- Exterior chimney condition
- Visible portions of the chimney interior
- Creosote buildup
- Chimney cap and flashing

**When Needed:**

- Annual maintenance
- No visible signs of damage or issues

### Level 2 Chimney Inspection

**Scope:** A more in-depth inspection that includes access to attic, crawlspaces, and basement areas.

**Includes:**

- Everything in **Level 1**
- Inspection of chimney components from attic and basement
- Assessment of chimney's structural integrity

**When Needed:**

- After a chimney fire
- When purchasing a home
- When selling a home
- When making significant changes to the fireplace or chimney system
- If **Level 1** inspection reveals potential issues

### Level 3 Chimney Inspection

**Scope:** The most invasive inspection, requiring the removal of portions of the chimney or building structure.

**Includes:**

- Everything in **Level 1** and **Level 2**
- Access to concealed areas of the chimney
- Detailed assessment of structural integrity

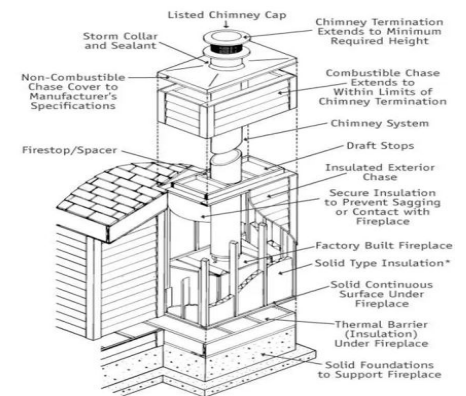
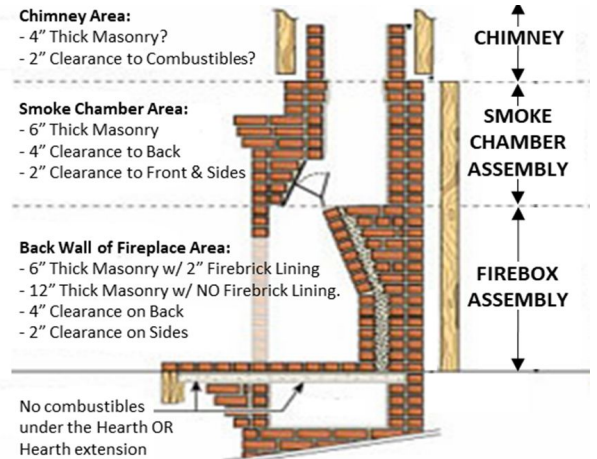
**When Needed:**

- When serious structural issues are suspected
- After severe weather damage
- If **Level 1** or **Level 2** inspections reveal hidden problems

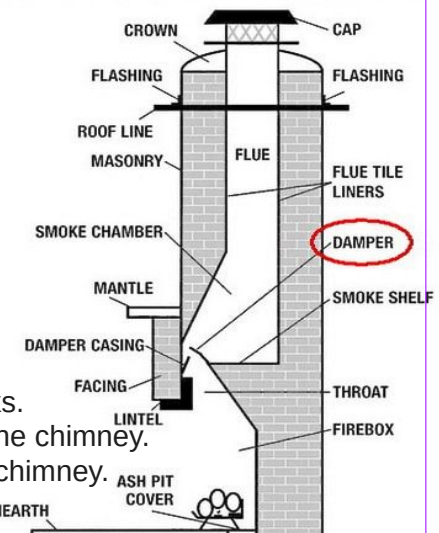
### Signs You Might Need a Chimney Inspection:

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| • <b>Creosote buildup:</b>   | Excessive creosote can be a fire hazard.                       |
| • <b>Smoke backdrafting:</b> | Difficulty starting a fire or smoke filling the room.          |
| • <b>Chimney damage:</b>     | Visible cracks, crumbling mortar, or missing bricks.           |
| • <b>Animal infestation:</b> | Evidence of birds, squirrels, or other animals in the chimney. |
| • <b>Unusual noises:</b>     | Cracking, popping, or rumbling sounds from the chimney.        |
| • <b>Water damage:</b>       | Signs of leaks or moisture around the chimney.                 |

**Remember:** It's always best to consult with a certified chimney sweep to determine the appropriate level of inspection for your specific situation. Regular inspections can help prevent fires, protect your property, and ensure the safe operation of your fireplace or chimney system.



### FIREPLACE - CHIMNEY DIAGRAM



## Fire Escape Inspections in Massachusetts

### Understanding the Requirements

Fire escapes are critical safety features in multi-unit residential buildings. In Massachusetts, **specific regulations govern their inspection, maintenance, and certification**. The primary governing body is the Massachusetts State Building Code, specifically Chapter 1001.3.3. **Typically, an inspection and report from a Licensed Professional is REQUIRED to be done (and officially filed) every 5 years at minimum.**

### Inspection Process:

#### 1. Visual Inspection:

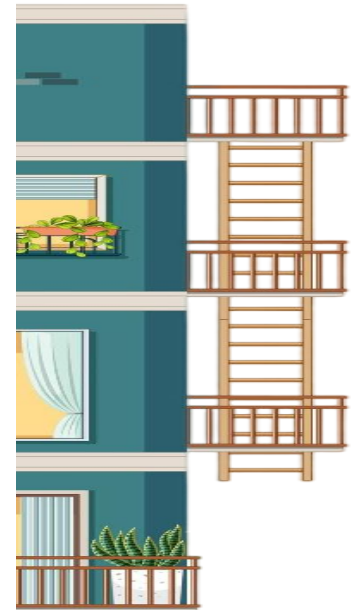
- A qualified inspector will thoroughly examine the fire escape for visible signs of damage, wear, or deterioration. This includes:
  - Checking for rust, corrosion, or cracks in the metal components.
  - Assessing the condition of stairs, landings, and railings.
  - Verifying the integrity of the fire escape's attachment to the building.
  - Inspecting the condition of any drop ladders or platforms.
  - Ensuring that the fire escape is free of obstructions.

#### 2. Structural Integrity Assessment:

- The inspector will evaluate the fire escape's overall structural soundness:
  - Checking for proper load capacity.
  - Assessing the condition of welds and connections.
  - Verifying compliance with building code requirements.

#### 3. Compliance with Building Code:

- The inspector will confirm that the fire escape meets all applicable Massachusetts State Building Code requirements, including:
  - Dimensions of stairs, landings, and railings.
  - Clearances and access to the fire escape.
  - Emergency lighting and signage.
  - Maintenance and repair standards.



### Certification Process:

- **Qualified Inspector:** The inspection must be performed by a Massachusetts Registered Professional Licensed Fire Escape Installer or someone deemed acceptable by the local Building Official.
- **Certification Application:** After the inspection, the inspector will complete a certification application, which typically includes:
  - Detailed inspection findings.
  - Photographs of the fire escape.
  - Repair recommendations (if any).
  - An engineer's report or affidavit (may be required).
- **Permitting:** If repairs are necessary, permits may be required from the local building department.
- **Repairs:** Any required repairs must be completed by a qualified contractor.
- **Final Inspection:** Once repairs are finished, a final inspection is typically required by the building department.
- **Certification Issuance:** Upon successful completion of all inspections and repairs, the certification will be issued.



## Fire Escape Inspections in Massachusetts *(continued)*

### Inspection Frequency:

- **Certification:** Required every 5 years.
- **Regular Inspections:** Recommended at least twice a year by the building owner or manager.

### Penalties for Non-Compliance:

Failure to comply with fire escape regulations can result in significant penalties, including fines and legal actions. In severe cases, building occupancy may be restricted or prohibited.

### Additional Considerations:

- **Local Regulations:** While the Massachusetts State Building Code provides general guidelines, local building departments may have additional requirements or restrictions.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Ensure that residents are familiar with fire escape procedures and that emergency exits are clearly marked.
- **Maintenance:** Regular maintenance is crucial to prevent deterioration and ensure the fire escape's effectiveness.

**It's essential to consult with your local building department for specific requirements and to hire a qualified inspector to assess the condition of your building's fire escapes.**



## Window and Door Inspections for Condominium Complexes

Regular inspections of windows and doors are essential to ensure the safety, energy efficiency, and security of a condominium complex. *NOTE: WINDOWS AND DOORS ARE OFTEN NOT PART OF COMMON AREAS*

### Key Inspection Areas

#### Windows:

- **Glass:** Check for cracks, chips, or fogging.
- **Frames:** Inspect for rot, decay, or structural damage.
- **Sash and Hardware:** Verify proper operation of sashes, handles, locks, and latches.
- **Weatherstripping and Caulking:** Ensure that seals are intact and preventing air leaks.
- **Drainage:** Check for proper water drainage from window sills.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Assess the window's energy rating and consider upgrades if necessary.

#### Doors:

- **Exterior Doors:**
  - Check for proper alignment, operation, and security.
  - Inspect hinges, locks, deadbolts, and door closers.
  - Verify that the door frame is secure and undamaged.
  - Assess the condition of weatherstripping and caulking.
- **Interior Doors:**
  - Inspect for proper alignment, operation, and hardware functionality.
  - Check for signs of wear and tear or damage.

### Inspection Frequency

- **Annual Inspections:** Recommended for all windows and doors.
- **Additional Inspections:** Consider more frequent inspections after severe weather events or if you notice signs of damage.

### Common Issues

- **Water Infiltration:** Look for signs of water damage around windows and doors, such as mold, mildew, or peeling paint.
- **Air Leaks:** Check for drafts or cold air infiltration around windows and doors.
- **Security Risks:** Ensure that all doors have secure locks and deadbolts.
- **Energy Inefficiency:** Outdated windows may contribute to higher energy bills.

### Inspection Tips

- **Visual Inspection:** Examine windows and doors from both inside and outside the building.
- **Functionality Test:** Open and close windows and doors to verify proper operation.
- **Weatherstripping Check:** Feel for drafts around windows and doors.
- **Security Assessment:** Ensure that all locks and latches are functioning properly.
- **Energy Efficiency Evaluation:** Consider upgrading to energy-efficient windows if necessary.

### Maintenance and Repair

- **Weatherstripping and Caulking:** Replace damaged weatherstripping and reapply caulk as needed.
- **Hardware Repair:** Repair or replace damaged hinges, locks, or latches.
- **Glass Replacement:** Replace cracked or broken glass.
- **Energy-Efficient Upgrades:** Consider replacing old windows with more energy-efficient models.

By conducting regular inspections and addressing any issues promptly, you can help maintain the integrity, functionality, and energy efficiency of your condominium complex's windows and doors.