

Real Estate Journal

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Water infiltration: Building material's archenemy

With many deluged communities still drying out from recent damaging floods, the region braced for another burst of heavy rainfall today that could push swollen rivers over their banks for the third time this month....

The Boston Globe, March 29, 2010

Water infiltration is the arch-enemy of many building materials. Constant exposure can lead to erosion of masonry, sealants, and coatings causing deterioration or worse. Water can enter a building at floor levels, wall bases, and above windows, roofs, and pipes.

As there seems to be no let up to our incessant early spring rains, it is imperative that you perform an investigation to assess any damage to your building. The following checklists can provide some handy guidelines for your building inspection.

Remember the importance of building inspections and maintenance, especially in light of the recent rainy weather. Our climate demands it and so does your investment.



The Water Row section of the Sudbury River, Sudbury, MA.

Masonry Inspection Checklist

- Water Invasion -- Pay attention to areas that may provide an entry point for water such as cracks, seams, and points where masonry joins with other building materials.
- Weep Holes – Inspect to ascertain that the weep holes are not clogged and allow for proper flow.
- Flashing – Ensure that the flashing is installed so that it extends through the wall and has a drip edge.
- Sealants – Inspect for loss of adhesion to determine the sealant's condition around construction joints and windows.
- Mortar Cracks/Deterioration – Inspect for hairline cracks or deteriorated mortar allow water to infiltrate the structure.
- Parapets – Examine carefully paying attention to the connection between the parapet and the roof.

Roof Inspection Checklist

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove debris and/or vegetation from roof surfaces • Assure that there are no areas of ponded water • Check clamping rings on drains for a secure fit • Visually inspect seams to establish that they are watertight (modified, EPDM) • Top off pitch pans • Identify trends in traffic patterns and wear | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that drains are clear • Inspect caulking on metal, flashings and pitch pans • Observe ballast for wind scour (EPDM) • Look for signs of puncture • Examine areas around ventilators for damaged flashings • Examine for excessive cracks or blistering |
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