

The Inspector SpeaksSM

Tips for Inspecting and Maintaining a Commercial Property: The basics

Here are the essential elements of a commercial building and the key items to inspect when evaluating the physical condition of any substantial structure. Remember that further investigation is always warranted when unfamiliar or unexplainable circumstances raise an element of concern. The following itemization is by no means intended to be exhaustive, however, a clean bill of health would be hard to come by without satisfactory examination of the majority of these components.

Roof

- Are walkboards in place?
- Is there evidence of remodeling; trash and debris?
- Are pitch pockets sealed?
- Is the facade/mansard connection sealed and secure?
- Are curbs/joints/flashings sealed?
- Are window washing outriggers and supports tight?
- Check vents and drains and look for "ponding".
- Check membrane for blisters.
- Are there any bare spots in roof aggregate covering?
- Is there any evidence of ultraviolet damage to roof materials?
- Is the mansard wall exposed masonry sealed?
- Are lights, antennae and ductwork all properly fastened and connected?
- Is the HVAC equipment discharging condensate?
- Is a safety rail at roof edge necessary?
- Is the roof access hatch operating properly?

Building Core

- Check condition of stairs, railings and handrails.
- What is the condition of walls, cove base and wax build-up?
- Check emergency lighting for battery test.
- Be sure standpipe covers are intact.
- Are fluorescent light bulbs uniform (all cool white or all warm white) and are lenses intact?
- Check water fountain operation.
- Check fire extinguishers for current

inspection tags.

- Check carpet condition for unsafe hazards.
- How do ceiling tracks, wall surfaces, accessories, HVAC grills look in terms of cleanliness?
- Are trash removal and cleaning services adequate for demands on building?
- Are janitor, electrical and telephone closets clean and free of subcontractor debris?
- Are baths clean, well lighted and all fixtures operating properly?
- Are lighting controls, sensors, smoke detectors and sprinkler heads properly maintained?
- Is graffiti and vandalism a problem?

Mechanical Plant

- Check for cleanliness, adequate lighting and safety.
- Are belt guards in place?
- Are valves and pipes marked and/or tagged, and direction of flow labeled?
- Are test tags in place on valves and fire extinguishers?
 - Are there any leaks, brown spots, etc.?
- Check log book for maintenance records.
- Do any filters need replacement?
- Check sump pans under cooling towers.
- Are there leaks in air changers or pump assemblies? Water cooled bearings should drip a little.
- Check for proper temperature of return air (approx. 78°).
- Check for proper temperature of chilled air (approx. 42°).
- Check for proper temperature of heated air (approx. 125°).
- Check engineer's office for certificates, reports, notices, work standards and schedules.
- Listen for earring sounds, worn belts.
- Be sure condensate discharge pumps are operating properly.
- Check utility supply connections.
- Check emergency generator operation.

Elevator

- Are controls marked for easy operation?
- Are disconnect controls easily locatable?
- Check oil drip pan under bearings.
- Check for oil rags, trash, dirt in elevator room.
- Is elevator penthouse roof in good condition?
- Are there drafts of dust in elevator shaft?
- Are intake louvers unobstructed?
- Is the elevator penthouse properly heated and cooled?
- Does the elevator penthouse have a telephone?
- Is the elevator certificate current and on display?
- Is the elevator properly levelled at each floor?
- Are the doors uniformly operating and clearly labeled?

Tenant Suites

- Check condition of tenant finish items – walls, floors, ceilings.
- Check lighting and covers over mechanical vents.
- Check for adequate wiring and ventilation for large computers or copiers.
- Be certain that unsafe extension cords, space heaters or unsafe appliances are not in use.
- Check adequacy of housekeeping efforts and trash removal.
- Check storage rooms and kitchen areas for unsafe/ unsanitary conditions.
- Check return air grills to be sure no objects would obstruct pressurization.
- Check for proper implementation of insect and pest control.
- Check for presence of fire extinguishers.
- Check operation of windows and doors.

Lobby

- Should project clean, polished, uncluttered environment.
- Check for even lighting – possibly recommend filters or reducers.
- Check all metallic thresholds for rust or wear.
- Check condition of plants.
- Inspect glass, caulking, weatherstripping.
- Check security system and all exposed



NATIONAL INSPECTION SERVICES

Stuart Professional Park | 1136 East Stuart Street, Suite 4204 | Fort Collins, Colorado 80525-1193
(970) 482-1976 | (970) 482-3388 fax | 800-248-1976 | www.nationalinspection.net

© Copyright 2008. National Inspection Services

The Inspector SpeaksSM

Tips for Inspecting and Maintaining a Commercial Property: The basics

devices.

- Check walk mats for safety.
- Are directions, manager's office sign and other signage and arrows in place?
- Check condition of mail drop, ash trays, vending areas, phones, elevator areas.
- Check for tripping hazards.
- Check security guard area, delivery entrance and areas for storage.
- Check for presence of unauthorized materials and handbills cluttering area.
- Are glass hazards marked and sharp or dangerous protrusions removed?
- Are special features such as fountains, maintained and safe for children?

Building Exterior

- Check operation of sprinkler system equipment.
- Does the building skin need cleaning or caulking?
- Are the windows and grounds clean?
- Is the postal address and building identification clear?
- Do directional signs and warning signs serve their purpose?
- Check all exitways for obstructions.
- Do bulbs and globes operate properly?
- What is the condition of walkways, curbs, concrete slabs, spillways, gutters?
- Check all coverplates, grates, mechanical assemblies.
- Continually monitor sunken areas.
- Check all contiguous paving for ponding, potholes.
- Examine planter boxes and inspect for tree hazards.
- Inspect for tripping/slipping/falling hazards.
- Check to see that all landscaping is trimmed and plaza cleaned.

Night Inspection

- Check the premises at night at least once quarterly.
- Do airplane warning lights clearly identify building height?

- Are sparks being discharged from chimneys?
- Monitor waste of energy consumption.
- Check operation of HVAC and electrical systems at night.
- Do sprinklers cycle properly?
- Is security appropriate for evening conditions?
- Is building properly illuminated to prevent accidents?
- Is access restricted to authorized personnel only?
- Are trash receptacles protected to prevent unauthorized use?
- Is the parking area secured to prevent vandalism and crime?

Garage

- Check for proper signage, trash areas.
- Check firepump room – look at labels, pressure hold, rust and leaks.
- Examine physical integrity of concrete and structural elements.
- Check for sprinkler system leaks and check drip leg for condensation.
- Look for water or wall leaks.
- Lack of adequate heat may necessitate heat tape on exposed pipes.
- Check overhead glass for signs of decay.
- Look for concrete spawling and exposed reinforcing bars.
- Are road grates in place for drainage where necessary?
- Is there any evidence of damage from vehicles too high?
- Check cleaning supply room for clutter and hazardous materials.
- Are there any vehicular or pedestrian hazards?
- Do sanitary discharge pipes and traps need insulation?
- Are there rodent breeding areas?
- Examine all exit signs, elevator signs.
- What is condition of swamp pumps?
- Is there excess accumulation of leaked oil and gas?
- Are bumper guards and parking blocks needed?
- Is there any damage to expansion joint material from snow removal equipment?
- Check tenant storage areas for fire hazards or chemical hazards.

- Is there vandalism, litter or graffiti which need attention?
- Is there any evidence of structural movement in any support members?
- Is the garage space properly ventilated and do mezzanine mechanical room hazards exist?

All deficiencies should be jotted down in a notebook which reflects the time and date of inspection. Subsequent inspections will reveal what action, if any, has been taken to implement necessary modifications. All problem areas found during the inspection should be professionally evaluated and estimated by appropriate tradespeople on a timely basis.



NATIONAL INSPECTION SERVICES

Stuart Professional Park | 1136 East Stuart Street, Suite 4204 | Fort Collins, Colorado 80525-1193
(970) 482-1976 | (970) 482-3388 fax | 800-248-1976 | www.nationalinspection.net

© Copyright 2008. National Inspection Services