

**Don't touch me
if you are not qualified!**



**Timely maintenance by qualified
building professionals and contractors only**



Prevention is better than cure

Building defects, especially those on the external building fabrics (such as external wall), may cause serious or fatal accidents! Most of these defects can be identified at an early stage through symptoms detectable by professional inspection. If these symptoms are not timely detected and properly dealt with, parts of the external building elements may suddenly fall off endangering lives of the public. Moreover, the costs involved in repairing would also be increased substantially.

Timely maintenance of buildings not only improves the quality of living environment, but also enhances the property value. Furthermore, the mandatory building inspection scheme (MBIS) has commenced operation on 30 June 2012. Buildings aged 30 years or above are subject to the MBIS. Buildings selected as MBIS target buildings are required to carry out prescribed inspections and the necessary prescribed repair works. Periodic inspection and timely maintenance of buildings will ensure building safety and reduce the costs involved in conducting the MBIS at a later stage.

Typical locations where concrete spillings on external walls are commonly found



Owners' responsibility and liability

Like any other parts of a building, the responsibility for repair and maintenance of the external walls and other elements lies with the owners of the building. The owners may also be held legally liable if loose parts fall from the external walls of a building and cause injuries, loss of life or damage to properties.

What building owners should do?

Building owners should keep watch on the conditions of the external walls, in particular whether the concrete structure of or the finishing on the external wall has shown signs of instability such as cracks, spalling, bulging and loose pieces, and should take steps to rectify the defects promptly so as to eliminate danger and ensure public safety.

If signs of dilapidation are found on the external walls of your building, you should immediately contact the management company or the owners' corporation (OC), and all other owners where there is no OC, to arrange for thorough inspections and necessary repairs by qualified building professionals and contractors as soon as possible.

You should then convene a general meeting of owners to discuss and decide on the following matters:

- Checklist of the repair and maintenance project items
- Appointment of qualified building professionals See notes 1
- Appointment of qualified contractors See notes 2&3
- Method of apportionment of costs among co-owners
- Time and method for collection of fees
- Method of management and supervision of work progress

Appointment of Qualified Building Professionals and Contractors

Qualified building professionals, including authorized persons (AP) or registered inspectors (where applicable #) and registered structural engineers as may be required, should be appointed to carry out thorough investigation, advise on necessary maintenance and repair works including repair methods and procedures, selection of building materials, formulation of schedule of works and the necessary safety measures.

Qualified contractors should be appointed to carry out the maintenance and remedial works proposed by the qualified building professionals who would also be responsible for the monitoring of the progress and quality of works, to ensure that adequate safety measures are provided to protect the public, occupants and the workers.

please refer to the general guidelines on MBIS for details

Some tips on building maintenance

There are many causes for defective external walls. Owners should appoint a qualified building professional to investigate the cause of the defect and rectify the problem at source. For instance, if the concrete spalling is related to water seepage, the water seepage problem should also be addressed in parallel with the concrete repair. Otherwise, the problem of defective external wall will not be properly addressed.

The installation of double scaffoldings, protective screens and catch fans are generally required for the carrying out of external wall maintenance in order to ensure the safety of the workers, occupants and the public.

If owners have financial difficulties, they may consider applying for Buildings Department's Building Safety Loan Scheme or the Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme provided by the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Urban Renewal Authority.

Enquiries

For enquiries, please contact the Buildings Department through:
Telephone Hotline: 2626 1616 (Handled by '1823 Call Centre')
Postal address: G/F, Buildings Department Headquarters, North Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon
Email address: enquiry@bd.gov.hk

Notes

1. Qualified building professionals are building professionals registered and recognized by the Building Authority eligible to undertake the responsibilities and procedures laid down under the Buildings Ordinance, to co-ordinate the whole project, to supervise the works and to certify completion.
2. Qualified contractors are the parties to execute the works. For most of the cases, maintenance and repair works of buildings involve minor works which are subject to the "Minor Works Control System". Registered General Building Contractor (RGBC) or Registered Minor Works Contractor qualified to carry out the works should be appointed to execute the works. In carrying out the works which require prior approval of plans and consent to the commencement of works from the Building Authority (Buildings Department), RGBC must be appointed to carry out the works under the supervision of an AP.
3. The lists of qualified building professionals and registered contractors and their telephone numbers are available at Buildings Department's website (<http://www.bd.gov.hk>) for reference by the public.

**Now I can put
my heart at rest!**
<http://www.bd.gov.hk>