



Even though protecting your church against water damage does not seem like a pressing issue at the moment, you never know when the unexpected can happen. Therefore, church leaders are encouraged to take a proactive approach and implement a maintenance program by performing regular self-inspections that can identify potential problems that could lead to water damage. The following items should be incorporated into an inspection program to prevent water damage from occurring.

Building Interior

- ❑ Check water (supply and drain) lines annually for proper connections, leaks, and damage.
 - Contact a qualified plumber if concerns are found.
- ❑ Check hoses and water supply lines on appliances for leaks, bulges, cracks, etc. Hoses for washing machines, dishwashers, ice makers, and drinking fountains are under constant pressure. If a leak were to occur, the potential for large amounts of water to be discharged is possible.
- ❑ Check for signs of current or past water damage, such as rotten wood, damaged walls or floors, stained ceiling panels (example photo on the right), dampness, or standing water in the basement.
- ❑ Check caulking around toilets and sinks, and if applicable, showers and tubs.
- ❑ Make sure air conditioning units have clean drip pans and the drain lines are clear of any deposits that could clog.
- ❑ During periods of increased plumbing usage (daycare, Sunday/pre-school, etc.), have someone periodically check sinks and toilets for clogging.
- ❑ Inspect basement walls and floors for cracks that could allow water to enter.
- ❑ Consider installing a water leak detection system.

There are several types on the market, ranging from systems that will sound an audible alarm if the moisture sensor is activated to devices that can detect a leak and automatically shut the water off at the main valve. The more sophisticated units can be tied into the building's fire/security alarm system and/or central station. To determine the best system to install to meet your building's needs, contact a qualified plumber.



Building Exterior

- ❑ Keep gutters, downspouts, and eaves clear of debris to allow for proper drainage of water from the roof. These should be cleaned every spring and fall.
- ❑ Downspouts should extend at least six feet from the building to carry water away from the foundation. This will ensure that water is not draining down the foundation into the drain tile, which could lead to flooding in the basement.
- ❑ Inspect the exterior for cracks in walls, damaged siding, deteriorated trim, loose caulking around windows and doors, and peeling paint.
- ❑ Inspect the mortar joints of masonry buildings. Mortar joints need tuck pointing if any of the following conditions have occurred:
 - Joints have eroded back more than a quarter inch from the face of the unit or beyond the depth of the original joint.
 - Cracks are visible within the mortar.
 - The bond between brick and mortar is broken.
 - The mortar is soft or crumbling
 - Any portion of a mortar joint is missing.
- ❑ Check that the soil grade around the building's foundation provides adequate fall away from the building to excess water to be directed away from the building's foundation.
 - Fill in any low spots to keep water from pooling.
 - Maintain the appropriate soil grade as well.

Protecting your facility against water damage should be a priority for church leaders. It's frustrating to have water damage occur when you were aware of steps you could have taken to prevent it from happening.

Don't wait another day to perform an inspection on your facility. By following the above recommended tips, you will be well on your way to making sure that your building is protected against water damage.



This photo is an example of the wrong way to seal joints in brick. Caulking has been applied to some of the joints. Tuck pointing is needed to repair the mortar joints that have deteriorated by cutting out the old mortar to a uniform depth and placing new mortar in the joints.



This photo shows inadequate slope and drainage around the building's foundation. Allowing water to settle around the base of the foundation can cause serious water damage to the basement/foundation of the building.

(04.09.09)

© 2010 GuideOne Center for Risk Management, LLC. All rights reserved.

This material is for information only and is not intended to provide legal or professional advice. You are encouraged to consult with your own attorney or other expert consultants for a professional opinion specific to your situation.