



Chapter 4

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

The Board's Responsibilities

Your buildings and land are home to the residents and part of the local community. Keeping the property well maintained enhances the quality of residents' housing, and reflects positively on your organization and its role in the neighbourhood.

Ultimately, responsibility rests with your Board of Directors to ensure maintenance systems and procedures are in place to keep developments clean, orderly and in good condition. Your organization must develop and implement a maintenance plan with an inspection schedule to ensure all maintenance work is completed on time. Review and update the plan annually.

The Board is also responsible for ensuring the people you choose to handle building and grounds maintenance have the experience and expertise to properly care for the facilities, equipment and property. Some organizations with larger portfolios may delegate this responsibility to management staff.

For example, only qualified tradespeople should be used to perform technical tasks, while volunteers could do some landscaping or painting jobs. Set up contracts with tradespeople such as plumbers and electricians, and service contractors who maintain fire alarm, elevator and heating systems. (Chapter seven explains how to set up and monitor a contract.)

In addition, ensure you consult with Regional Operations staff and the Building Envelope Coordinator at BC Housing before starting any structural or building envelope repairs.

Residential Tenancy Act Requirements

The *Residential Tenancy Act* (RTA) applies to non-profit housing societies, and explains resident and landlord responsibilities for maintenance and repairs, as well as the process for arbitration, should a disagreement arise. Keep a reference copy of the Act and the *RTA Regulations* on hand.

a) LANDLORD RESPONSIBILITIES

As landlord, you're expected to maintain the building and property to health and safety standards and to make necessary repairs. If you do not follow through on this responsibility, residents can apply to the Residential Tenancy Office for an order to have the repairs completed and the cost deducted from their rent.



Include terms in your tenancy agreement to explain both resident and landlord responsibilities for maintenance and repairs. Keep in mind that the terms of the RTA will apply under arbitration, even if these conditions aren't defined in the tenancy agreement.

The Residential Tenancy Office has produced a *Guide for Landlords and Tenants in BC*. You can obtain a copy of the guide or more information about the RTA at 604-660-3456 or 1-800-665-8779. Or visit the Residential Tenancy Office website at www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/rto for online assistance and to download forms and the guide.

b) RESIDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the RTA, residents are entitled to expect:

- Maintenance and repair of the development will comply with health, safety and housing standards required by law.
- They will be informed about any work being done in their units.
- Contact phone numbers will be posted in the building for regular and emergency maintenance.

Residents need to understand their maintenance responsibilities under the RTA. Residents are required to:

- Maintain ordinary health, cleanliness and sanitary standards, but are not liable for reasonable wear and tear.
- Repair any damage they or their guests cause.

You can review this information and the tenancy agreement with residents before they move in. Information can also be communicated in a resident handbook, flyers, posters, at meetings, or through a residents' newsletter, if there is one. (Refer to page 31 for information on move-in and move-out suite inspections.)

If residents request permission to redecorate at their expense, you can approve painting or modifying a suite, as long as the modifications don't adversely affect the unit's value or appearance. Discuss changes with the resident so everyone is clear about what will be done, and give approval in writing before the work begins. If you expect the unit to be painted its original colour again before move-out, specify this condition in writing. Give the resident a copy of your paint specifications to ensure the work is completed using acceptable products.

Residents in non-profit buildings cannot be expected to perform building or property maintenance, unless they want to volunteer to help with this work. But you can ask people to report any general maintenance problems to the building manager or to notify your office staff.



Advise volunteers that BC Housing's group insurance program does not provide a disability policy for volunteers. If a volunteer is injured on your property, any legal suit launched would be filed against your liability insurance. Depending on the injury and whether your organization is shown to have any negligence, an injured volunteer may or may not be successful in a claim.

Housing Co-ops

The *Co-operative Association Act* does not contain maintenance regulations. Instead, some maintenance responsibilities are defined in the occupancy agreement each member signs. These terms state:

- Members are required to keep their units in good condition and repair.
- Members are liable for any damage they cause.
- Whether people are allowed to make alterations to their units, the process to obtain consent, and who pays for changes.
- The co-op can exercise a lien against the share purchase, if cleaning and repairs are required when a member moves out.

Other maintenance responsibilities vary among co-ops. For example, co-op maintenance policies generally define responsibility for painting, plumbing, flooring and other minor repairs. At some developments, the co-op pays for these maintenance items, while at other buildings, individual members are responsible for paying.

Participation policies define whether members are expected to help with general cleaning and building maintenance. Some co-ops assign chores that rotate among members or hold biannual building and yard cleanups. Anyone who is physically unable to perform these tasks is asked to help in other ways, such as making calls to organize meetings or bringing food to the cleanup. Expectations for participation are explained when people apply to join a co-op. Other co-ops hire people to perform this type of work.

Some co-ops hire property management companies to handle maintenance and other tasks, such as collecting housing charges. Other co-ops oversee cleaning and maintenance requirements and use property managers for other responsibilities.



Caretakers

Many organizations hire resident or non-resident caretakers to handle day-to-day maintenance. We ask that you demonstrate the need to hire a caretaker. BC Housing's guideline for assessing whether a caretaker is needed is one full-time person for each 100 suites, depending on the job description and layout of the property. If the property is large, requires a lot of grounds work and common area maintenance, but has fewer units, a caretaker may be justified. Or there may be a higher number of units at a concentrated development requiring fewer staff. Generally, seniors' complexes have more common areas and require more maintenance, while family townhouse developments have less common areas, with residents responsible for maintaining their own yards. Smaller developments may not require a caretaker, or a position may be shared between more than one building, or a part-time caretaker may be needed.

A copy of BC Housing's *Cleaning Standards* for building managers and janitors is available on our website at www.bchousing.org. Select the *Housing Provider* section and go to the *Resource Directory - Maintenance Documents*. The standards list how often each task should be done, such as vacuuming common areas once a week and cleaning the lobby daily.

If you want to hire a caretaker, please send a written request to your Property Portfolio Manager.

Refer to the Rent Calculation section of the *Operations Guide* for information on how to calculate rent for a live-in caretaker.

Regular, Cyclical and Emergency Maintenance

Use a detailed maintenance checklist and schedule to ensure the building and site are regularly inspected and consistently well maintained. Routine maintenance can identify problems at an early stage, allowing remedial work to be completed before a problem becomes significant.

Whoever handles maintenance needs to be familiar with the systems and equipment at the development. Select qualified people with experience making repairs and keeping buildings and property clean and orderly. Maintenance staff require tools and equipment kept in good repair, and easy access to drawings, specifications, warranties, operating manuals, and accurate records of equipment repairs.

We recommend you schedule maintenance work by the season. For example, landscaping, grounds clean up and sign repair can be done in spring. Wash windows and buildings and paint the building exterior in the summer. Replace furnace filters and clean other equipment in the spring and fall, and clear drains of leaves or dirt in the fall. In winter, monitor and mend any frozen pipes. You can use the sample maintenance checklist on the next page as a guide, or download a copy from our website at www.bchousing.org. A copy is also included in the appendix on page 53.



Sample Maintenance Checklist

YEAR: _____

GROUNDS (See Note 1 at the end of the checklist)	FREQUENCY (See Note 2)	INSPECTION/MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES	DATE (3)	REFERENCE (4)	SERVICE CONTRACT (5)
Playground Equipment	Annually	Inspect for loose cracked parts, sharp edges, rot and fall protection.		02880	(6)
Planting	Annually	Inspect for plant and tree growth against building.		02900	(7)
Concrete Patios and Retaining Walls	Annually	Inspect for cracks, shifting, water damage and drainage		–	(8)
Sidewalks and Driveways	Annually	Inspect for cracks and trip hazards.		–	(8)
BUILDING EXTERIOR (#9)	FREQUENCY	INSPECTION/MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES	DATE	REFERENCE	SERVICE CONTRACT
Crawlspace, Concrete Foundations	Annually	Inspect for dampness, vermin, inspect beams and posts for rot. Inspect foundations for cracks, shifting, water damage.		–	(10)
Masonry Veneer	Annually	Inspect for efflorescence (white powder), inspect sealants.		04200	(10)
Porches and Balconies	Annually	Clean and inspect for cracks, rot, trip hazards, secure railings and steps.		–	(8)
Wood Siding, Fascias and Trim	Annually	Inspect for cracks, water damage, deteriorated finishes and vermin.		06100	(8)
Attic Roof Sheathing	Annually	Inspect for water damage, mildew, condensation.		–	(10)
Attic Insulation	Annually	Inspect for moisture, vermin, voids, compressed insulation.		–	
Attic Ventilation	Annually	Inspect for obstructions, rot, vermin.		–	
Vinyl Decks	Annually	Check for lifting, water damage, damaged flashing.		07100	(8)
Concealed Waterproofing (parkade)	Annually	Check underside of slabs for evidence of leaks.		07100	(10)
Stucco	Annually	Check for signs of water leakage, mould, mildew and staining.		07240	(10)
Roof Shingles	Annually	Check for curled or missing shingles, excessive moss, damaged flashing, clean gutters.		07300	(11)
Vinyl Siding	Annually	Inspect for damaged siding and water damage.		07460	(8)



BUILDING EXTERIOR	FREQUENCY	INSPECTION/MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES	DATE	REFERENCE	SERVICE CONTRACT
Steel Siding	Annually	Inspect for water damage and damaged sheets.		07465	(8)
Flat Roofs	Annually	Inspect for ponding, loose flashing, plugged drains, air pockets, blisters, debris.		07500	(11)
Roof Hatch	Annually	Inspect for forced entry, hardware operation, leaks and weather stripping.		07700	
Metal Doors and Frames	Annually	Inspect for forced entry, correct hardware operation, weather stripping and sealants.		08100	(8)
Wood Doors and Frames	Annually	Inspect for forced entry, correct hardware operation, weather stripping and sealants.		08210	(8)
Automatic Door Openers	Semi-Annually	Inspect for damage, forced entry, wear, and test all safety features.		08710	(8)
Overhead Parkade Doors	Semi-Annually	Inspect for proper operation and damage to components, test safety features.		08360	(8)
Aluminum Entrances and Storefront	Semi-Annually	Inspect for forced entry, hardware operation, closer adjustment		08410	(8)
Windows and Doors	Annually	Inspect for leaks, hardware operation, sealing.		08500	(10)
Hose Bibs	Semi-Annually	Inspect for damage and winterize in advance of freezing temperatures.		15400	
Outdoor Outlets	Semi-Annually	Test ground fault plugs.		16000	
Dryer Vents	Monthly	Clean bird screens monthly and vents as required.		15500	
Floor and Trench Drains	Annually	Clean out drains and trenches.		15400	
Chimneys	Annually	Clean and check for cracks, loose bricks, leaks or damage. Include fireplaces and wood stoves.		-	(8)
BUILDING INTERIOR AND SERVICES (#12)	FREQUENCY	INSPECTION/MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES	DATE	REFERENCE	SERVICE CONTRACT
Door Handles, Hinges and Closures	Semi-Annually	Check hardware for proper function, check and test fire exit hardware.		08710	(8)
Residential Appliances	Semi-Annually	Check fridge seals and drain tubes. Check stove burners and wires for electrical shorting or grease build up. Check hood fans for filters, venting, grease build up and fire hazards.		11450	(8)
Walls and Ceilings	Annually	Inspect for mould, water damage, holes, cracking, paint and humidity levels.		09250	(8)



BUILDING INTERIOR AND SERVICES (#12)	FREQUENCY	INSPECTION/MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES	DATE	REFERENCE	SERVICE CONTRACT
Elevators	Monthly/Quarterly (Subject to licensing requirements)	Have an elevator contractor service and maintain the elevator equipment		14200	(6)
Boiler - Large Building	Monthly	Service monthly, including circulating pumps. Adjust for seasonal temperatures.		15500	(6)
Boiler / Furnace - Small Building	Annually	Service annually, plus filter changes 3 to 4 times per year. Adjust for seasonal temperatures.		15500	(6)
Air Conditioning	Annually	Inspect for damage, icing, noise, leaks. Clean condenser.		15500	(6)
Ductwork	Annually	Clean and inspect for rust or damage.		15500	(8)
Gas Piping	Annually	Inspect for leaks and clearance between gas fired fixtures and combustibles.		15400	
Hot Water Tank	Annually	Open drain, inspect pressure reducer valve for leaks.		15400	
Electrical Panel and Wiring	Monthly	Inspect for loose, frayed, exposed or overloaded wires/plugs. Test ground fault plugs monthly.		16000	(8)
Electrical Radiant Heater	Annually	Inspect for damage.		16000	
Fire Alarm System, Extinguishers, Hoses, Sprinklers, Heat and Smoke Detectors	Daily / Weekly / Monthly / Annually	Inspect annually using a qualified inspection firm. Have staff conduct daily, weekly and monthly checks from Fire Safety Plan.		16000	(8)
Emergency Generators	Weekly / Semi-Annually	Run emergency generators once per week for 20 minutes, and have inspected by a qualified firm every 6 months. Maintain fuel supply.		16000	(8)

NOTES:

1. Includes site improvements outside the building envelope.
2. The recommended maintenance or inspection interval.
3. The date you complete the inspection and /or maintenance procedures.
4. The reference section found in the Design and Construction Standards and the building operating and maintenance manual submitted by the contractor. Review the manual to determine if product is still covered under warranty.
5. A purchase order or service contract to carry out independent inspection, maintenance, repair or re-construction.
6. Have the equipment manufacturer or subcontractor attend to the repairs.
7. Have the landscape maintenance service perform the work.
8. Employ a specialist trade contractor to perform the repairs.
9. Includes foundation walls, roofs, windows, and doors.
10. Employ an independent building envelope inspection agency to review suspect conditions.
11. Have an independent roof inspection agency inspect roof every 5 years. Have roofing contractor perform repairs annually as required.
12. Includes building services and interior finishes.



Develop a system for responding to resident requests for maintenance and repairs, and let them know how the system works. For example, do you want residents to fill out a request form when they need something fixed? Are the forms kept in a box in one of the common areas? Or do you want people to phone in requests, and leave a message?

If you decide to supply *Maintenance Request Forms* in common areas, people can advise you of maintenance problems, and grant permission for someone to enter their suites to complete repairs while they're out. There's a sample *Maintenance Request Form* on page 52 in the appendix. The forms also provide an easy way to keep a maintenance record for a suite.

Some cyclical maintenance automatically occurs as part of a service contract, such as the monthly elevator servicing. Plan non-cyclical maintenance following the annual suite and site inspections, outlined on pages 32 and 33.

In addition, the *Residential Tenancy Act* requires you to post a contact phone number in the building for after hour emergency maintenance, in case of an emergency such as a fire, flood, elevator break down, power or heat outage, broken window or leaking roof. The caretaker or a service company may be the contact.

To find out how other organizations handle these responsibilities or to arrange maintenance training, contact the BC Non-Profit Housing Association at 604-527-8859 or 1-800-494-8859, or the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC at 604-879-5111 or 1-866-879-5111.

The Mount Allison University Resource Kit for volunteer housing boards includes a session on facilities and maintenance management, and can be ordered at www.mta.ca/rstp/order.html.

Major Asset Planning*

Use the information you gather during annual suite and site inspections to accurately determine when major assets will need to be replaced. Use the inspections to identify what work needs to be done, and develop a five-year maintenance plan for major assets. Update the plan following annual inspections by qualified professionals. Include estimated dates and costs for asset replacements.

For example, during the annual suite inspections in the seventh year after opening, you discover the linoleum will need to be replaced in two years, even though it's supposed to last ten. Use this information to update your plan to replace the flooring in the ninth year. Or at year four, the interior paint looks like it will last six years, even though it's scheduled to last five. Update the plan to reschedule the painting for a year later.

*Major asset planning is referred to as capital planning in the *Financial Management Guide*.



You'll find a list of estimated useful life years for major assets on our website at www.bchousing.org. Click on the *Housing Providers* section and go to the *Resource Directory*.

The annual inspection should be detailed enough to identify specific numbers that must be replaced, such as 50 appliances or 20 carpets in a 90-unit development, in the coming year.

Give first priority for asset maintenance to immediate operational or structural needs, such as damage or a hazard that could affect the health or safety of residents and staff. Also consider technical and aesthetic implications when setting priorities. For example, exterior and interior painting may both be required, but you only have the resources for one job this year. Wood may begin to rot outside if the exterior painting is not done first, while the interior will be less visually attractive for another year. As a result, do the exterior painting first to preserve the wood. Or perhaps flooring and interior paint both need replacing. Paint first and install flooring next, so you don't risk getting paint on the new flooring.

There are three types of funding for major asset replacements in non-profit and co-op developments: replacement reserve, modernization and improvement projects, and extraordinary payments.

a) REPLACEMENT RESERVES

Most housing providers have a replacement reserve fund under the terms of your operating agreement with BC Housing. Replacement reserves are established to replace major assets that wear out. The replacement reserve is funded through an annual or monthly transfer from your operating bank account to the replacement reserve accounts.

Chapter six of the *Financial Management Guide* contains instructions on how to complete a Replacement Reserve Schedule, which estimates the:

- Amount to set aside each year in your budget to cover replacement costs.
- Life years for assets such as appliances, flooring, furnaces, hot water tanks, carpets, linoleum, window covering, painting and paving.

For example, if a major asset will cost \$100,000 to replace and has a life span of 20 years, you need to set aside \$5,000 per year for 20 years, so the money is available to replace it at the end of 20 years.

The list of eligible replacement reserve items specifies the only items that can be paid out of reserve funds.



b) MODERNIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS (M&I)

Modernization and Improvement projects include replacing and repairing major structural components of a building due to:

- Premature failure.
- Deficiencies in construction or design.
- Cosmetic or functional upgrades.
- Obsolescence of existing components.

A Modernization and Improvement replacement is not:

- An item that might normally be scheduled for replacement or upgrading within ten years of the Interest Adjustment Date (IAD) for the property.
- The replacement of an individual, small expense item that could be funded in the operating budget.
- An item already funded in the operating budget or through the replacement reserve provision.

Some examples of items that could be replaced under Modernization and Improvement include:

- Bathtub and bathtub surrounds.
- Toilets.
- Sinks.
- Cupboards.
- Light fixtures.
- Windows or doors.
- Exterior cladding or siding.
- Window screens.
- Elevators.
- Structural or building envelope components.
- Fire sprinkler systems.
- Building re-wiring.
- Building re-plumbing.
- Renovation or conversion projects.



M&I funds can also be used to add new items to improve a site rather than upgrading existing items, such as:

- Installing playground equipment or a sports court at a development that didn't previously have these facilities.
- Removing a standard bathtub and replacing it with a wheel-in shower or tub that is easier for seniors to use. The current equipment may still be in good condition, but no longer meets a client's physical needs.

BC Housing arranges financing for Modernization and Improvement projects, which are added as an annual expense item to your budget. Items costing less than \$5,000 may be funded as a non-recurring maintenance expense in your operating budget or as a one-time extraordinary payment.

Your Property Portfolio Manager (PPM) will send an M&I worksheet with your budget package. Send your plan for Modernization and Improvement replacements to your PPM, who will submit the plan for approval. M&I projects must be completed within the fiscal year they receive approval. Contact your PPM for more information on M&I projects.

c) EXTRAORDINARY PAYMENTS

Developments without sufficient funding for scheduled replacement reserve items may get funding for maintenance expenditures through an extraordinary payment from BC Housing. BC Housing may also provide a one-time payment for emergency repairs.

If a major maintenance project arises unexpectedly, contact your Property Portfolio Manager for assistance.