

**PMT GUIDE # 11**

Book of Order Section G-10.0102o: "The session is responsible for the mission and government of the particular church. It therefore has the responsibility and power . . .to provide for the management of the property of the church, including determination of the appropriate use of church buildings and facilities, and to obtain property and liability insurance coverage to protect the facilities, programs, and offices, including members of the session, staff, board of trustees, and deacons."

**PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE**

To stress the IMPORTANCE of preventive and long-range maintenance for all church properties to recognize and repair building deficiencies in their early stages of development in order to avoid: larger extensive repairs/restoration and increased costs relating thereto, and, most importantly, to provide a safe environment for the congregation and the public.

This guide is issued in response to a failure of a bow-string roof truss requiring emergency shoring, loss of facility use by the congregation and the prospect of large repair expenditures. While the example is severe, it demonstrates the problem(s) that can develop when a building component, as in the example, is "out of sight-out of mind", and not readily accessible for review/inspection.

**BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

- 1) PMT GUIDES 1 thru 12 [indexed in PMT Publications Page [www.chicagopresbytery/resources/resources-for/leaders/property-ministries-team](http://www.chicagopresbytery/resources/resources-for/leaders/property-ministries-team)] provide excellent discussion and data regarding the importance of timely maintenance issues and relationships with retained architects, engineers, contractors and PC(USA) work issues. Guide #1 and #5 are comprehensive in their treatment of maintenance items. Guide #12 stresses emergency planning.
- 2) PMT Quarterly and Seasonal Guidelines offer supplementary information and guidance relating to periodic and special items of maintenance.

**THOUGHTS RELATIVE TO LONG-RANGE MAINTENANCE**

Deterioration of building components, excluding severe weather or external source damage (e.g. fire), may take years to develop into major problems and may be initially overlooked as being "OK".

- 1) Have at least one meeting and building tour each year by the buildings and grounds committee to review the building(s) internal and external components as well as site condition to discern areas of potential or continuing distress. Record, date and photographic data establish a history of conditions that can be used as a reference for scheduling and recording repair and a record for future team members to maintain a continuity of property maintenance. Maintain these records for as long as they may be useful.
- 2) Stress review of all hidden building areas, for example: attics, storage areas, basements, crawl space.
- 3) If available, maintain a copy of the original drawings and specifications of the building(s) original construction and any subsequent remodeling programs. Such documents may be of value for correction of extensive repair situation. Maintain an additional copy "off-site".
- 4) Retain the services of professional consultants and specialty contractors as may be required to evaluate items of concern.
- 5) Maintenance is important to reduce chances of major deterioration and increase likelihood when needed of insurance coverage of damage to property or injury to persons.

## EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO LOOK FOR DURING ANNUAL BUILDING INSPECTION TOUR:

### 1) SITE/GROUNDS

- a) Drainage: Look for puddles next to building; ground should slope away
- b) Pavement/walks: Look for uneven and cracked pavement, differential settlement. Danger of tripping
- c) Stairs: Check for deteriorated treads, insecure railings, missing railings.
- d) Plants/trees: Look for dead branches that could fall; look for low branches over walks.
- e) Single steps can be dangerous unless marked such as yellow stripes

### 2) BUILDING EXTERIOR

- a) Exterior masonry walls: Check walls for bowing/bulging (indicator of building floor and/or roof displacement?)
- b) Parapet walls, roofing and flashing; Refer to Guide #10,
- c) Check wood trim for peeling paint ( a sign of water leaking into wall), rotted wood needing to be replaced.
- d) Check for white powder on brick (efflorescence), another sign of water in wall
- e) Check roof drains, gutters and downspouts for blockage, back-up can leak into building
- f) Check roofing for breaks (flat roofs), missing shingle, broken flashing allowing water in.
- g) Check masonry for open joints and broken brick allowing water to penetrate wall
- h) Check concrete foundations and brick for major cracking indicating settlement.
- i) Check exterior doors for secure working hardware and snug fit against drafts and leaks.

### 3) BUILDING INTERIOR

- a) Attics: Examine for roof leaks; inspect structural framing for defective members, excessive deflection, questionable connections and supports, dampness (rot, rust), amateur efforts at repair; Insure that all attics and similar enclosed spaces have access panels.
- b) Unfinished interior surfaces of exterior walls: Check for cracks, dampness conditions.
- c) Interior face of exterior wall: Cracks (settlement?), finish surfaces bulges, paint peeling, plaster deterioration: (trapped moisture?); of interior wall: plumbing leak
- d) Binding doors: Differential settlement? Failing hinges?
- e) Basements/crawl spaces: Excessive dampness, water penetration, lack of ventilation (mold?), floor or wall cracking (settlement?), structural items (see "Attic")

### 4) PLUMBING

- a) Check all drains for smooth flow, blocked P-shaped traps below sinks and basins,
- b) Check and clear grease traps annually
- c) Check all faucets and valves for proper flow, clear aerators, etc.
- d) Check visible supply and drain piping for leaks at all fixtures.
- e) Check basement for signs of leaks (puddles, water on floor)
- f) Flush hot-water heater annually until water runs clear
- g) Check sump pump (if applicable) by manually operating float valve
- h) If roof drains visible from interior, check for leaks and for sign of deck rot indicating leaking at drain flashing

### 5) HEATING, VENTILATION, AIR-CONDITIONING

- a) Check filters and fan belts or have service contractor perform annually
- b) Check hot water circulation pumps for proper operation, for leaks, and lubrication
- c) Check thermostats for proper operation, replace old thermostats with digital set-back type
- d) Check controls for proper cycling of systems or have service contractor perform annually
- e) Bleed air valves on hot water radiators for effective and energy-saving heating
- f) Check boiler and flush until water runs clear, automatic fill valve should refill as needed.
- g) Perform seasonal maintenance on heating (late summer) and air-conditioning (late winter)

6) ELECTRICAL:

- a) Check all light switches for proper operation and no sparking
- b) Check for safety (grounded) outlets next to all water fixtures
- c) Replace burned-out or flickering bulbs, replace with energy-savings bulbs where appropriate
- d) Replace oversized fuses to avoid overheating wiring, check for overloaded circuits (tripping breakers, etc.) Replace old deteriorated breakers that have lost capacity
- e) Have contractor verify that electrical service is grounded to the incoming water service outside (the public side) of the meter.

7) FIRE PROTECTION/EMERGENCY SYSTEMS

- a) Verify that all stairs and exit corridors are free of obstruction, no storage allowed.
- b) Check frequently for and replace burned out lamps in EXIT signs and emergency lights
- c) Replace all batteries in smoke and CO2 detectors at least annually
- d) Check with fire inspector as to recommendations, new regulations
- e) Check status "ON" lights of all smoke and heat detectors and kitchen stove hood emergency system, if applicable.
- f) Have contractor check condition and "ready" status of sprinkler system, if applicable
- g) Verify automatic notification emergency systems to fire/police department if applicable.
- h) Verify "ready" status of all emergency medical equipment.

Updated 4/27/2010