

Church Property Maintenance Guidelines

Book of Order Chapter 16.3(1) states that the church council (Board of Managers or Property Committee) is responsible for the care and maintenance of all property of the congregation.

Scheduled, regular maintenance is the key to preserving the value of your congregation's property.

- It prevents unexpected damage and deterioration and expensive repairs.
- Damage to a building because of inadequate maintenance is not covered by insurance.
- If your premises look good, more people will want to visit.

The following guidelines and checklist will help you manage your congregation's property maintenance.

Exterior

Roof defects let in moisture, leading to rot and possible damage to electrics. Ensure that:

- Roof tiles are undamaged and firmly held in place.
- Roofing iron is well painted and securely nailed down.
- Bitumastic felt (Butynol) roofs are not cracked.
- Flashings are adequate, clean and rust-free.
- Gutters and down pipes are clear and in good order.

Exterior walls benefit from a regular wash down. When having this done, check that:

- Weather boards are free of rot and cracks and the paintwork is in good repair.
- Brick and block work is free of settlement cracks.
- Mortar in brick and block work is sound.
- All flashings are adequate and free of rust.
- Doors and windows are water tight.

Interior

- Doors and windows should open and close easily.
- Emergency exits must be clearly marked and never blocked.
- Buildings need continuous ventilation, particularly if they are locked up for longer periods.
- Secure bookcases and other equipment that is on shelves or affixed to walls or ceiling, e.g. speaker boxes or heaters that could fall during an earthquake.
- Have the electrical wiring and fuse/meter board regularly checked by a certified electrician (especially for older buildings).
- Smoke alarms must be in working order and checked regularly (replace batteries once a year).

- First Aid kit must be clearly marked, easily found, and kept well stocked.
- Fire fighting equipment must be easily accessible, of sufficient capacity and in good working order.

Building Warrant of Fitness

- If a building e.g. church hall requires an annual Warrant of Fitness, diary this for annual renewal.
- A qualified certifier will see that this is done to local Council requirements.

On the ground

- Ensure that surface water is channelled away from the building.
- Keep underground drains clear. Cracked or damaged pipes caused by tree roots can result in silting away of subsoil with potential subsidence problems.
- Keep plants and shrubs away from the side of the building.
- Check ventilation under the building is adequate.
- Keep access safe by levelling uneven paths and clearing paths, steps and stairs of moss etc.
- Keep trees and hedges trimmed to prevent hiding places or visual barriers behind which break-ins can take place.
- Keep rubbish bins locked away (where rubbish bins are kept next to a building and arson results, insurance companies may refuse to pay out).

Building records and other documentation

- Store offsite a photographic record and copies of all important documents for all property under your care, in case of a natural disaster.
- Plans (including renovations) should be held in a safe location and copied electronically as a back up. Plans can be lost, even when stored on site.
- Plans are very helpful to engineers and others who may initiate repair work or undertake building assessment.
- For each building, keep a file of basic information e.g. age of building. Google street view photos and sky shots are helpful in providing a rough plan.
- Keep a schedule of building contents and update this frequently. This should include date and cost of furniture and equipment purchases. Store a copy of the schedule off site. Photos of the interior and its contents are also valuable.
- If there is a major incident, take photos of the damage as soon as possible and document what has happened.

Funding major maintenance projects

- Any property expenditure over \$20,000 requires the approval of your presbytery and the Church Property Trustees.
- Capital funds (held in a Presbyterian Investment Fund account) may be used for major maintenance projects, subject to approval by your presbytery and the Church Property Trustees.

Annual Checklist

- Roof inspected and any defects fixed
- Gutters and down pipes clear
- Exterior paint work in good order all round
- Doors and windows water tight
- Adequate ventilation through interior
- Electrical wiring inspected
- Smoke alarms and other fire fighting equipment in good working order
- Book cases and all equipment on shelves or hanging from the ceiling secured
- Building Warrant of Fitness current
- Storm water drains clear
- Adequate ventilation under building
- Grounds including paths, steps and stairs tidy
- Building records and other important documentation up to date and stored off site

Signed _____

Dated _____