

The Commercial Inspector

A Monthly Newsletter From National Property Inspections

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ask the inspector

Q. What will my inspector check and look for in the building's structural frame and envelope?

A. The inspector will observe the accessible structural frame and building envelope. The structural frame includes the components or building system that support the non-variable forces or weight (dead loads) and the variable forces or weights (the live loads) of the building. The building envelope includes the enclosure of the building that protects the building's interior from outside elements — namely the exterior walls and roof.



The inspector will conduct a visual inspection of the overall condition of the exterior and the visible structural components and report on the following. The observations on the exterior components of a building's exterior are generally limited to vantage points that are on the ground or readily accessible balconies or rooftops. Your inspector will document the following:

- » The type and condition of the structure, and the type of material used to create the structure. The structure may consist of wood framing, steel framing, cast-in-place concrete, precast concrete, concrete block, steel post and beam, or a combination of these types of structural components.
- » The type of and condition of the foundation system, including the presence of a cellar, basement or crawl space.
- » The type and condition of the building's floor framing system and roof framing system.
- » The type and condition of the exterior wall surface or covering, including any facades or curtain wall systems.
- » The type and condition of the glazing system, including windows and doors.
- » The type and condition of any exterior balconies or stairways.
- » The type and condition of the roof materials, including exposed membranes and flashing.
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snapshots from the field



Can you guess what is wrong with this photo?

- A) The crack shouldn't have been filled in; the wall needed to be torn down.
- B) The epoxy does not appear to have been mixed properly.
- C) The building owner should have painted over the patching.
- D) Nothing. This is a proper patch job.

(answer on the back)

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- » The slope of the roof and the condition of the drainage system.
- » Any evidence of active or previous roof leaks.
- » Evidence of repairs needed on the roof surface or penetrations.
- » Evidence of significant ponding on the roof.
- » The estimated age of the roof covering. If possible inquire about the age of the roof and whether a warranty or bond is in effect.



The reporting to share the findings is usually a combination narrative and checklist format that includes representative photos of the plumbing system and photos of the issues documented. The reporting can assist the client in the purchase or lease decision and can be a good first step in completing the due diligence process.

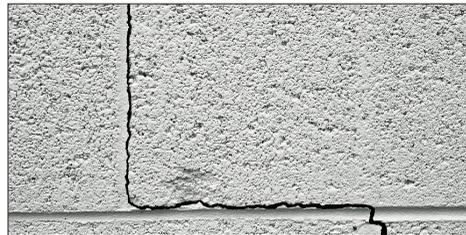
Snapshots from the field

The correct answer is B) The correct answer is B. The epoxy does not appear to have been mixed properly, thus the two colors on the patched crack.

maintenance matters

Monitor Cracks in Foundation

With the wet weather of fall and winter, now is the time to monitor cracks in your building's foundation walls and floor to determine whether water is invading your basement.



Water is the No. 1 enemy when it comes to foundations; a little can soon lead to a lot, and water will look for any way possible to enter a building.

Check for cracks on the building's exterior and fill them with a caulking agent. Also, monitor cracks on the interior for signs of efflorescence and moisture. If you notice either, then it's time to call in a foundation expert to have them properly sealed and waterproofed.

Also check for water seeping in around windows. Basement windows are most commonly made of steel or wood. As these materials age, they begin to rust, corrode and decay, providing the perfect avenue for water intrusion. If this is a problem in your commercial building, call a qualified contractor or basement repair company to fix it.

did you know?

Basement Flooding

The contractors who designed your commercial building never intended for it to be a damp, wet, musty space. Basement flooding could have a number of causes, including cracks in the walls or floor, windows, pipes and hatchway entrances.



Determining the cause of the flooding is the first step to knowing how to remedy it. Call a qualified basement contractor to determine the cause of the flooding and the remediation.