The Commercial Inspector

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A Monthly Newsletter From Global Property Inspections

ask the inspector

Q. I need to replace a parking lot on one of my commercial properties. What are my options?

A. Paving has been used for centuries to create solid surfaces. The ancient Romans used brick to pave their roads. Today, a variety of products are used for paving.

A paved surface receives traffic weight and transfers the load to the base, but it also protects the base. Pavements are classified in two categories: flexible and rigid. Flexible pavements are resilient surfaces that distribute loads down to the sub-base in a radiant manner. Rigid pavements distribute imposed loads over a broader area and require a thicker wearing surface and a thinner base. Asphalt is an example of a flexible surface; concrete is an example of a rigid surface.

Some examples of the different materials include the following:

» Asphalt is composed of aggregates bound together with asphalt cement. The mixture is heated and combined with hot asphalt cement and installed over a base, usually compacted aggregate.

» Concrete is composed of cement, which is a mixture of lime, silica and gypsum. It is combined with an aggregate mixture and water. This mixture is poured over compacted soil or aggregate base.

» Brick is composed of clay or shale that is kiln-fired and installed over compacted soil, sand or an aggregate base. Brick has been used for hundreds of years for paving but was phased out with the introduction of asphalt and concrete.

» Stone is a durable paving surface available in either natural or synthetic form. Natural paving stone is graded based on its hardness, porosity and abrasion resistance.

» Gravel, crushed rock, crushed shells, decomposed granite, crusher fines, cinders and crushed brick can be used as aggregate that mixes with soil and water to create a fairly solid surface. This surface can be dusty and is not common for high-traffic areas.

» Porous pavements are concrete grid pavers that can be installed to produce flat, continuous, patterned concrete surfaces that are usually filled with crushed rock or stone to create the parking surface.

Other types of surfaces are being tested and may be used for parking and driveways in the future. However, as with any time-tested product, the cost of installation and maintenance and the durability still determine what will be used.

snapshots from the field

Why It's Important to Repair Potholes

Photo A shows a pothole, a depression in a road surface caused by wear or gradual settlement. These defects commonly appear on roads and in parking lots, and if you notice them in your commercial parking lot, be sure to have them repaired. Photo B shows the result of a pothole left unrepaired.

GLOBAL PROPERTY INSPECTIONS™

Canada's Premier Inspection Service
Independently Owned and Operated

maintenance matters

7 Property Maintenance Tips for Springtime

In many regions, winter's rain, ice and snow, and cold temperatures can wreak havoc on a commercial building, forcing building owners and managers to reassess the state of their property as they prepare for warmer weather. A little spring maintenance can help prevent further damage and expensive repairs.

1. **Inspect the building's exterior and roof.** Check the building for chipping paint, damaged siding and foundation cracks. Check the roof for any damage or pooling water.
2. **Clean up landscaping.** Cold temperatures, and snow plowing and shoveling can take a toll on plants, trees and shrubs. Clear out any dead plants and broken limbs. You also may have to re-establish the boundaries between landscaping and walks.
3. **Check the irrigation system.** Examine the system to confirm it was drained properly in the fall and that it operates properly. If the irrigation system doesn't work as it should, call a professional to repair it.
4. **Troubleshoot any drainage issues.** Note any areas where you find standing water, as these will likely lead you the source of drainage problems. Water pooling on a roof or around the foundation can easily lead to leaks inside your building.
5. **Reinvigorate your landscaping.** Pruning plants, shrubs and trees can add new life to landscaping — literally. It may be a bit too late for dormant pruning, which does have several advantages, but you can still do some rejuvenation pruning. This involves the removal of old, overgrown limbs to encourage new, vigorous growth on the plant or shrub.
6. **Service your building's mechanical systems.** Spring is also the time to make sure your building's major systems are ready to go for the summer. Replacing furnace and air conditioner filters, flushing water heaters, and inspecting the fire safety system and carbon monoxide detectors are all essential for proper maintenance.
7. **Focus on the long term.** Approach spring with more than just appearance or curb appeal in mind. Evaluate the status quo; try to determine the most likely scenarios; and make as many plans as possible for the longevity of your building. A little bit of repair now can save a major (and expensive) failure in the future.

Did You Know?

It's Time to Have Your Building's Roof Inspected

GPI recommends inspecting your building's roof and its components annually to ensure that they are in good condition and working to prevent water intrusion. In addition, you should have the roof inspected after any significant hail or wind storms to ensure that it didn't suffer damage. What's even better is that you can rely on your GPI inspector to provide a thorough commercial roof inspection.

Whether you need an inspection of an entire building or just one or two areas, your local GPI inspector will customize an inspection to meet your needs. We offer the experience and expertise you can trust. Contact us today to schedule your inspection.