



# BUILDING MAINTENANCE IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Do you own a house, flat or any part of a building? Did you know that as an owner you are legally responsible for any accidents caused by defects in your building? Poor building condition can also reduce property values, lead to spiralling repair bills and mean cold or damp living conditions.

**FOLLOW OUR 10 STEPS TO BEING A RESPONSIBLE OWNER AND MAINTAINING THE VALUE OF YOUR PROPERTY.**

## **RECOGNISE THAT YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR BUILDING**

If you are a flat owner you will be jointly responsible. Your exact responsibilities are set out in your Title Deeds and under the Occupiers Liability Act (Scotland) 1960. Recent changes in property law give you more ways to get co-operation from your co-owners if there are problems with the Title Deeds.

## **IF YOU LIVE IN A SHARED BUILDING**

Talk to your fellow owners and agree who is responsible for what. Some of them may also have useful skills or contacts that you can use in bringing your building back into shape. More information about managing common repairs can be found in the leaflet "Organising common repairs". If some owners won't cooperate the Council's Environmental Health Department may be able to help get repairs done by issuing a "Statutory Notice".

## **GET YOUR NEIGHBOURS ORGANISED**

Setting up an owners association would be a good idea. The Council produces guidance on how to do this. See the leaflet "Quick Owners guide to Owners Associations". It will help you to set up a Stair Account if you don't already have one and give you a set of rules that will set out your agreed responsibilities towards each other.

## **GET YOUR BUILDING CHECKED REGULARLY**

Ideally you should get a building condition survey carried out every five years by an experienced professional such as an architect or surveyor. You should at least carry out a quick survey yourself. See the leaflet "Checking your building".

## **PUT TOGETHER A LIST OF PAST REPAIRS**

If you are in a shared building ask your neighbours and check out any surveys carried out in the past. You should try to record what work was done, when, by whom and if there is a guarantee. This is useful information so keep it safe and up to date and pass the file on to another owner when you move.

**West Lothian Council** delivers

[westlothian.gov.uk](http://westlothian.gov.uk)



**West Lothian  
Council**

## CHECK OUT THE TYPICAL LENGTH OF LIFE OF COMMON BUILDING PARTS

For example, is your roof past its sell by date?

## PUT TOGETHER A MAINTENANCE PLAN

This will help you prioritise the “stitch in time” repairs and help you work out how you can save for big repairs. It should include a schedule of inspections and routine maintenance on the building, a list of reliable contractors and arrangements for paying for the work.

## SORT OUT HOW YOU WILL PAY FOR REPAIRS

See the leaflet “Paying for building repairs and maintenance”.

## DECIDE WHICH BUILDER TO EMPLOY

Consider how you are going to choose a builder suitable for any work which needs done. Small building firms do small jobs well but bigger jobs need bigger firms with the resources for complex work. It can be difficult choosing the right builder, further guidance is given in the leaflet “Organising Repairs To your Building”.

## PLAN FOR FUTURE REPAIRS OR MAINTENANCE

All parts of buildings decay over time so it's best to plan for future repairs and maintenance and not be caught out by emergency repairs which could be expensive.

### Contacts;

- 1 **John Lochhead, Senior Technical Officer**  
Housing Strategy and Development,  
West Lothian Civic Centre, Howden South Road,  
Livingston, West Lothian, EH54 6FF  
Tel: 01506 281377 Fax: 01506 281370  
mailto:John.Lochhead@westlothian.gov.uk
- 2 **Environmental Health, County Buildings,**  
High Street, Linlithgow, EH49 7EZ  
Tel: 01506 775400 Fax: 01506 775368  
environmentalhealth@westlothian.gov.uk

## BUILDING MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

This table shows what you should be doing to maintain your property and how often.

### BUILDING ELEMENT - HOW OFTEN

Gutter cleaning .....	annually
Slated/tiled roof - inspection & repair.....	annually
Flat roof inspection.....	annually
Flashings on the roof and cupolas.....	annually
Render coatings (e.g. cement).....	annually
Chimneys.....	annually
TV aerials and fixings .....	annually
Painted Masonry.....	3-5yrs
External paint work on doors, windows, gutters and down pipes.....	3-5yrs
Mastic around windows.....	6-10yrs
Stair painting.....	10yrs
Pointing – mortar between stone/brick in walls.....	10-15yrs

### HOW LONG SHOULD BUILDING PARTS LAST?

This is a general guide only based on regularly maintained buildings. You should get a survey carried out at least every 5 years to establish the actual condition.

### BUILDING ELEMENT - LIFE SPAN

Render coatings on walls or chimneys .....	replace after 10-20yrs
Plastic gutters or pipes.....	replace between 15-20yrs
Felt roof coverings .....	repair after 10yrs, replace after 20-30yrs
Tiles.....	repair from 20yrs ..... replace after 40yrs
Lead roof coverings or flashings.....	repair after 30yrs, ..... replace after 50yrs
Slates.....	re-fix every 30yrs ..... replace after 90yrs
Cast iron gutters and down pipes ..	replace after 35-90yrs
Sandstone walls and chimneys .....	expect some repairs after 50yrs
Cast iron or steel railings.....	replace after 55-90yrs
External woodwork.....	replace after 55-90yrs

**Information is available in Braille, on tape, in large print and community languages.  
Please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service on 0131 242 8181.**