



CHECKING YOUR BUILDING



Your building should be checked by a professional every five years to make sure it is in a good state of repair. There are also some simple checks that you can do yourself. Before you start you should draw a sketch of the building so you can mark on any problems. You will also need some equipment - a camera, torch, binoculars, long measuring tape, a ladder and someone to help. If you live in a block of flats you will need to ask neighbours if you can have access to their properties.

STAY SAFE - don't take any risks. If you're not sure if it is safe to do something, don't do it! If you are using a ladder or other equipment make sure you know how to do it safely. See www.hse.gov.uk

INSIDE THE BUILDING

Mark any problems on your sketch and try to find the cause by looking at the outside of the building. Photos may be useful too.

TOP FLOOR ROOMS

You should check the ceiling for signs of water coming from a damaged roof, i.e. stains or mould.

ROOMS WITH AN OUTSIDE WALL

Check for signs of water coming in, for example stains or mould on the wall.

ROOMS AT GROUND LEVEL OR BELOW

As above.

ROOF SPACE

You should only go into the roof space if it is properly floored. You should check:

- **Joists, rafters, joins between roofs and walls and other visible surfaces** - check for signs of rot, damp or water damage

- **Insulation** - there should be a minimum of 200 - 300mm. We recommend that you use mineral fibre quilt and ensure that all positions of all services are clearly identified. Electrical cables should be adequately protected.
- **Water tank** - Is it insulated, are pipes well lagged to prevent frost damage? Does it have a cover on the top? Are there any lead pipes which have to be replaced?
- You should also ensure that the roof is adequately ventilated and has sufficient ridge, tile or soffit/facia vents

COMMON STAIRS AND PASSAGES

Check for:

- increasing cracks for example between stair treads
- treads which are uneven or worn away
- loose or missing balusters or rails
- loose plasterwork

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COMMON STAIRS AND PASSAGES continued

- broken or inadequate locks on main doors
- broken or rotten stair windows
- hollow sounding ground floor.

OUTSIDE THE BUILDING

ROOF

You should not go on the roof - this is a job for a professional - however you may be able to do some examination from another high building, for example a neighbour across the road. Pay special attention to any areas above water damage you have identified from your internal survey.

WALLS AND CHIMNEYS

Look for cracks, areas of decayed stone, gaps in the pointing (cement between bricks or stones), bulging or leaning walls.

PAINTWORK

Check for any bare wood on windows or doors. Check the mastic (sealant between the window frame and the wall) for signs of wear.

GUTTERS, DOWNPIPES

Check for rust, cracks, leaks and loose fixings. Check they are clear from blockages, for example vegetation.

PATHS AND BOUNDARIES

Is there anything which could cause a trip, or fall, are railings or walls in good condition?

DRAINS AND GRATINGS

Are they clear of sticks, stones and leaves?
Does water flow away quickly?

AIR VENTS (AT GROUND LEVEL)

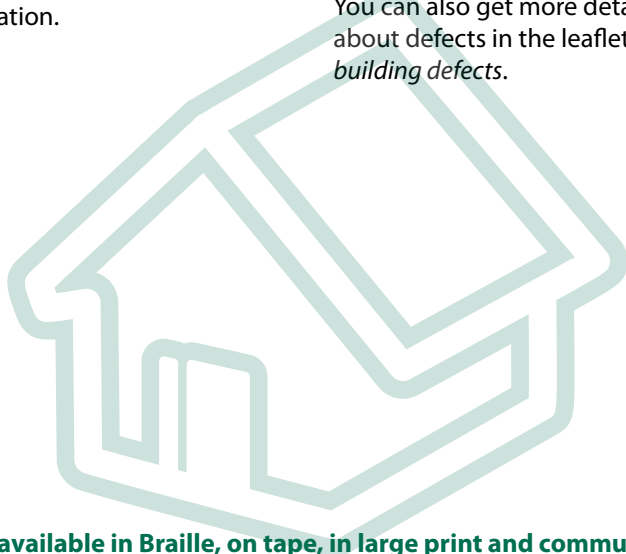
These should be clear of the ground and covered with a grating to stop vermin getting in.

TREES

Are there any trees next to the building which could hit telephone or power lines or damage the building?

AFTER THE INSPECTION

If you find problems you should take action to stop them getting worse. The leaflet *Organising repairs to your building* gives useful information on how to go about it. You can also get more detailed information about defects in the leaflet *Guide to common building defects*.



Inspection Checklist

Problems

Inside

- Top Floor rooms
.....
- Rooms at ground floor or below
.....
- Rooms with an outside wall
.....

Roof Space

- Joints between walls and roof
.....
- other visible surfaces
.....
- Insulation
.....
- Water tank and pipes
.....

Roof

- Gutters and downpipes
.....
- Flashings
.....
- Chimneys
.....
- Roof coverings
.....

External Walls

- Cills
.....
- Lintols above windows and doors
.....
- Stonework
.....
- Pointing
.....
- Render Coatings
.....
- Bulges/leaning walls
.....
- Doors and windows
.....

Common stairs and passages

- Rails and balustrades
.....
- Loose plasterwork
.....
- Cracks between stair treads
.....
- Windows and Doors
.....
- Floors
.....

Outside the building

- Paths
.....
- Railings and boundary walls
.....
- drains and gratings
.....
- Air vents
.....
- Trees
.....

