

MONEY SAVING DECK MAINTENANCE ADVICE FOR PROPERTY MANAGERS

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Ah, spring time in BC! Here on the west coast we are way ahead of the rest of the country in preparing our outdoor leisure areas for a satisfying season of sun and fun. For property managers, that means spring maintenance time and crossing our fingers, hoping we don't hear that ugly 4-letter word: LEAK.

The first priority is finding out how hard winter actually was on our decks and balconies. The single most influential factor in reducing high maintenance costs is to be sure the building envelope is still protected before unexpected water infiltration and resulting damage can surprise you. Whether your building has small balconies or expansive roof decks, significant and costly repairs due to leaks and water intrusion can often be avoided with simple annual maintenance and inspections.

The cost and time required for deck maintenance can vary widely depending on the type of decking and deck water-proofing that you have chosen. A deck protected with a vinyl membrane might take only minutes for a simple cleaning and visual inspection while a wood or concrete deck can require several hours of labour, spread across several days. Regardless the type of deck, the time required for maintenance is certainly worth the investment as compared to 'letting it slide' for a

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year, only to find out that a simple maintenance chore has now become an expensive retrofit or renovation.

INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST FOR DECKS AND BALCONIES

Perform your annual spring deck maintenance and inspection with this easy-to-follow checklist:

Inspections Details

- Inspect for ice or wind damage: gutters that have pulled away from the building, separation of the gutter seams, etc. Fix or replace as needed.
- Check flashing where the deck and the house meet and along the deck perimeter to ensure that it is still securely in place without any damage or deterioration. Fix as needed. Check doorways and other entryways to ensure all sealing or caulking is still in place.
- Check any caulk at perimeters or posts and re-caulk where it is missing or worn away.
- Look for loose or cracked trim, signs of decay, or insect damage.
- Check the deck slope. Over time, the main building or the deck structure may settle, shrink, or shift, causing cracks or points of vulnerability. Be sure the deck slopes away from the building to avoid pooling water adjacent to the building or entryways.
- Check the stability of the wood in several different areas where applicable, including deck boards, stairs, support posts, and joists under the deck and ledger board (where the deck attaches to the house). Look for small holes in the wood that may indicate insect damage is present.
- When checking wood, pay special attention to areas that tend to remain damp, are regularly exposed to water, or are in contact with fasteners. If you are uncertain of the condition of the wood, use a tool like an ice pick or screwdriver to



Check the flashing where the deck and house meet.

attempt to penetrate the wood surface. If you can break off a sliver of wood without splinters, easily penetrate to ¼- ½ inch, or find that the wood is soft or spongy, decay may be present.

- Check exterior outlets and faucets for cracks or leaks, and repair as needed.
- Inspect any vents for openings to prevent rodent intrusion.
- Check curbs or retaining walls for shifting or damage.
- Inspect all railings for rot, loose bolts, or caulking, and fix as needed. Railing maintenance can be significantly reduced by choosing aluminum over wood.

Regular Maintenance Tasks

- Remove piles of wood, stone, or other debris from around the building to avoid rodent, insect, termite, or spider infestation.
- Prune shrubs, trees, and other vegetation (recommend a minimum of 12 inches from the roof/deck) to avoid insect infestation, hard-to-clean sap, and potential storm damage.
- Clean leaves and debris from gutters and downspouts to avoid drainage problems.
- Clean off any debris from the deck surface as soon as possible. The tannin in leaves can stain a deck horribly regardless of the type of surface, but if allowed to sit for an extended period on unprotected wood or concrete, the stain

may never come out. On vinyl decks, you may have some success with diluted ammonia or outdoor bleach to remove organic stains resulting from leaves, growth of algae, moss, or mold spores, but this will usually involve a lot of elbow work to be effective.

- Clean with a cleaning agent made specifically for the type of surface. Most manufacturers will offer a cleaner specific to their product that will leave less harmful residue than typical household cleaners. If that is not available to you, choose a mild, eco-friendly cleaning agent. Use a stiff bristled brush, scrubbing in circular motions. **It is very important to always flush thoroughly with clean water.** Any remaining residue can damage your deck's appearance when sun exposure will 'bake' the chemicals into the surface.
- Certain household and industrial cleaners can cause damage and discoloration and are not recommended. Avoid the use of:
 - o Powered Abrasives
 - o Steel Wool
 - o Dry Cleaning Fluids
 - o Lacquer Thinner Solvents
- You may choose to pressure wash your decks, ledger boards, and facades. Be sure to use no more than 150 psi and do not point nozzle directly towards building interior or on any seams or attachments on the deck itself.

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Money Saving Deck Maintenance Advice... (cont'd)



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Waterproofing Maintenance Tasks

Aesthetics aside, depending on the type of deck(s) you have, there may be further maintenance to ensure the waterproofing will continue to perform:

- Wood Decks: paint or water-seal all exterior wood including deck surface, overhangs and railings; and apply anti-skid coating to any exterior steps. You may have to perform some sanding to prepare the deck for the new paint or sealant. For best protection, this should be done annually.
- Concrete Decks: fill or patch any cracks or chipping sections of concrete; and apply anti-skid coating to any exterior steps. Apply sealant as needed – approximately every 1 - 2 years.
- Vinyl Membrane Decks: No waterproofing maintenance is required as the vinyl membrane is intrinsically waterproof and is textured for slip resistance. The recommended annual cleaning will keep the anti-slip texture clear of organic growth.

AREAS OF CONCERN? CALL A PROFESSIONAL

Of course, general stability of the deck structure and a protected building envelope are the most important concerns so you must properly waterproof to protect the building from being compromised by water damage.

If you have noticed any structural issues or suspect there may be water damage, you will be best served by contacting a professional to assess the situation. It is to your advantage to gain the peace of mind that your building is protected and your tenants are safe, happy, and will continue to enjoy their residence.

PROFESSIONAL DECK WATERPROOFING

For over 40 years, Duradek PVC membranes and installation techniques have provided reliable waterproof protection to protect the integrity of the deck and building envelope. Duradek is a CAN/CGSB and ICC approved pedestrian traffic roofing membrane and is installed only by trained professionals for warranted waterproof protection.



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