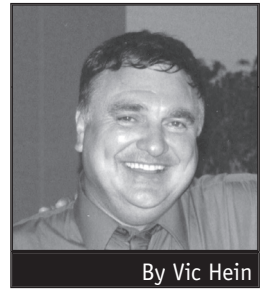




Protecting your investment against the elements of nature is an ongoing challenge, whether you're a homeowner or a property manager. From high-rises to single-family homes, direct contact with the elements is unavoidable. Your investment suffers a constant attack from rainstorms, temperature variations, extreme heat and humidity. Make no mistake and leave nothing

On the inside, look for water stains, mold, or mildew on your walls and ceilings located closest to the outer walls. Check the carpeting located beneath these areas as well. The interior walls are the perfect environments for mold to breed, live, and grow. Mold is not only invasive and damaging to your property, it can also attack your physical health and well being, causing further worries.

"AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE"



By Vic Hein

to chance. Long-term exposure to the elements is very damaging. The best protection is preventative maintenance.

Water is extremely damaging and the deterioration it causes has the potential to destroy the integrity of the entire building from the inside, out. You may be skeptical, but here are a few signs you can look for in your own home. Take a walk around the perimeter of your property and inspect your walls, floors, windows and walkways for chalking, heavy cracking and separation. These seemingly innocent cracks are signs of possible water intrusion. It begins with walls and floors (sub-structure) and gradually causes stucco to disbond, wood to begin the rotting process and rebar to separate from the concrete. Gradually, this will cause the concrete to break away from the rebar that supports it. These are called surface spalls.

Fixtures attached to the home are other prime areas for water intrusion. Check around gutters, downspouts, light fixtures, hose bibs, dryer vents and stanchion posts. Do you observe any mildew, cracks or gaps? Is anything loose? These areas should most likely be addressed.

Windows should be examined to ascertain if they have been properly caulked. The weep system for water should be clear and functional, i.e., the pan underneath the window is draining properly. You should also inspect the rubber gasket between the glass and metal or wood. Long-term exposure to ultraviolet rays from the sun will cause the rubber to turn hard and rot. This will inhibit the rubber's ability to expand and contract as it was originally designed to do, thus allowing water to penetrate into the interior walls.

If you discover water damage, the time to take action is *now*. There are a number of solutions to correct the problems, and they vary with every job. There are also many products on the market for cleaning, sealing, caulking and coating. The basics of waterproofing are generally the same. Stucco re-

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quires pressure washing, mildew treatment and crack and joint repair before sealing and application of a finish coat. Attention should be given to windows so that the perimeter is completely sealed and the sills are caulked and patched to prevent water intrusion. However, as noted earlier, all projects are different. I would suggest you find a certified waterproofing contractor or distributor to get a free evaluation of

the damage. A manufacturer's representative will be able to evaluate the situation, answer your questions and assist you with a plan of action, including exact product specifications and recommended application of the waterproofing products and procedures to be used. It's very much like going to a doctor. Each patient is unique, and requires an individualized remedy to cure the problem.

If done incorrectly, the waterproofing system can cause more damage. Elastomeric coatings on walls can be used successfully, but it should never be applied to a ceiling, because they will actually retain water and sag like a balloon. If elastomeric coatings are applied to the walls, you should ensure that the roof cap and all of the joints are totally sealed so water can't get in between the stucco and the elastomeric coating. Because this coating does not breathe, moisture can't escape and it's retained in the wall. This can lead to deterioration of the stucco and mold and mildew in the walls – damage you cannot see. The only solution then is to remove all of the loose and disbonding stucco and re-stucco the walls.

A waterproofing project should not only fix existing problems, but it should prevent them from recurring again. You should do whatever you can possibly do to keep water away from your building. Sprinkler heads should be redirected to avoid spraying the walls, and shrubs should be trimmed back to allow for sun and ventilation. You might also consider installation of proper-sized gutters and downspouts, scupper holes and floor drains on walkways.

The expense of preventative maintenance on your facility may seem excessive, but it is less costly than a major concrete restoration. Your property is a significant investment, and one that should be protected from water intrusion and other elements.

[Vic Hein is the principal of Vic's Painting in Ft. Myers, FL.](#)