



Maintenance Strategy – Grounds

This category covers a broad range of a buildings grounds systems and sub systems. The information contained in this document are general recommendations and guidelines designed to bring attention to the importance and benefits of preventive maintenance strategies supporting quality educational environments. It is important for facility managers and maintenance staff to be aware of the specific systems asset types and maintenance required to effectively maintain the systems functionality and reliability through preventive maintenance requirements. Qualified in-house maintenance combined with certified vendor staff may be necessary to manage systems safely and effectively. Consult manufacturer recommendations on grounds system maintenance requirements.

Whether it be an elementary, middle or high school, charter or vocational school, each school has its own unique brand identity, which communicates to parents, students, staff and local communities what the school stands for. The outdoor landscape, from the conditions of the parking lot to the front door, is the first impression and sets the stage for your schools values. From environmental factors, safety and social aspects to technological and/or historical elements, first impressions matter. The curb appeal is the first look that guests and visitors use to determine the quality of your public schools and is an important leading factor into the condition of your schools. As they approach on your drive-way, onto the parking lot and walk into the building, factors such as quality parking stalls, grounds management, concrete walkways, signage and wayfinding matter. The conditions of the school grounds and storefront tell an important story as to how well the leaders care for the schools environment both inside and outside.

A school storefront riddled with poor parking lot striping, trash, debris and weeds, overgrown shrubs & trees and unreadable signage and no way-finding is not a good first impressions schools should reflect.

Exterior Building Systems such as roadways and parking lots, grounds areas including trees and shrubs, sidewalk and asphalt surfaces, and drainage systems all undergo constant environmental exposures, growth, use, wear and tear from vehicles and other environmental conditions such as water drainage, wind and sunlight. These constant elements combined, over time, work to wear and break-down the curb appeal. Routine reviews and maintenance upkeep are necessary to maintain a quality curb appeal and safe environments. A quality proactive groundskeeping maintenance program can help schools to continue to provide a quality curb appeal that is safe to all students, staff and guests. Paying attention to these conditions through proactive maintenance and custodial efforts will reduce risks and hazards.

Landscape maintenance is the art and vocation of keeping a landscape healthy, clean, safe and attractive. For a landscape professional, this practice must start before a shovel ever penetrates the ground. At the concept phase of the project, the manager must know the designer's intent for the plants once they are installed. A maintenance manager must know many things about the plants chosen for the project: growing height and width, growing preferences and needs. A knowledgeable person must be involved with the tagging of plant material. Most of all the maintenance team must know the plantings are correctly installed. The actual maintenance of the plants begin at this time.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR. As the elements of the landscaping surfaces grow and expand they require constant maintenance and upkeep to ensure a safe and functional environment. From xeriscaping to sprinkler systems, grass to large trees, all facility grounds require routine cleaning and maintenance. From general cleaning, weed and pest management to minor repairs, they need this attention because high use and stresses producing minor defects are constantly at work. These stresses may be caused by growth, heavy use or environmental conditions, and many other factors. Regardless of the cause, the result is the same -- without routine scheduled maintenance the grounds elements may ultimately deteriorate before it is time. Preventive maintenance means the early detection and repair of minor defects, before major reactive action is necessary; it is a proper way to care for important but sometimes overlooked facilities grounds assets. A facilities groundskeeping program should be routinely reviewed for proper operations to include general cleaning to remove routine trash and debris affecting the curb appeal, conducting routine maintenance of grass mowing, trash removal, shrub and tree trimming, graffiti removal and proper upkeep of specialty landscaping supporting a safe and functional asset. Other factors to consider as to why it is extremely important for your school to maintain its grounds areas:

Recommended Maintenance: Grounds components and systems should have evidence of routine maintenance and upkeep being performed. Review for weed control, landscape materials management, xeriscape installed effectively/properly. There should be visual evidence of tree/shrub/branch management (grooming). Check for sprinkler damage or water leaks, routinely identify vandalism or graffiti and remove timely. Check for trash or debris. Fencing and gates should be operational with no evidence of damage/vandalism. Safety, risk hazards or physical property damage should be mitigated to prevent additional damage or risks.

(Seasonal Considerations) Daily review for problems including vandalism etc. Weekly/monthly cleaning and general maintenance may be reduced in colder months and replaced with snow removal processes. Monthly review for damaged category elements, vandalism and coordination of repair. Annual detailed review for physical conditions to ensure category elements & conditions are intact as working as designed.