

Maintenance Strategy – Sidewalks

This category covers a broad range of a sidewalk 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 sidewalk system maintenance requirements.

First impressions and curb appeal are big factors for public school businesses. Sidewalks and wayfinding paths should be both functionally and aesthetically pleasing. The overall goals of implementing these requirements are to enhance, beautify, provide aesthetic curb appeal with the rest of the campus environment, improve the environment and provide efficient walkways and safe pedestrian access. Over time, environmental elements may contribute to the deterioration of this valuable but overlooked asset. As environmental elements and imperfections in concrete or asphalt are one of the biggest causes of accidents, paying attention to these conditions through proactive maintenance efforts will reduce risks, hazards and advanced costs.

If the outside of a business is not well maintained, parents and communities may think the business is failing and choose to go elsewhere. Safety concerns are also important. Uneven paved surfaces, deteriorated surfaces and weeds pose a danger to students, staff, pedestrians and visitors. No school district wants to deal with a twisted ankle, or other scrapes and bruises, and potential lawsuits due to improper sidewalk maintenance. Sidewalk surfaces are also important for directing water flow in the event of heavy rains. Erosion can cause surfaces to slant and result in water runoff and damage to other systems and/or neighboring properties.

For most communities, the first impression of a public school begins in the paths leading up to entering the school. Taking proper care of your asphalt and concrete surfaces will ensure that your school puts its best foot forward. Properly maintaining parking lots, sidewalks surfaces and stairs also contributes greatly to a safe school environment.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR. Sidewalks are a common location for falls due to conditions such as cracks and even minor raised edges. Proactive maintenance including inspection and repair of damaged sidewalks, parking lots and other walkways can reduce the risk of a slip, trip or fall incidents and extend the life of the surface.

Routine inspection of sidewalks and other walkways will help ensure that problems are discovered, documented and repaired as quickly as possible.

- o Perform inspections annually unless it is a high-traffic area
- Review high-traffic areas every other month
- o Inspections can be performed by in-house staff

Safety Checklists: Use the sidewalk safety checklist below to assist in your schools sidewalk inspections. Maintain historical inspection records in the event an injury occurs on the property and to track costs. The following should be documented in your Facility Information Management System (FIMS):

- Vertical displacement greater than ½ inch (¼ inch if on an accessible route)
- Cracks or gaps greater than ¾ inch wide and ½ inch deep
- o Three or more cracks in a single sidewalk section
- \circ $\:$ If 50% or more of a sidewalk section has spalling or chipping $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep
- o Divots or potholes greater than 3 inches in diameter and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep
- o Chunks of loose concrete or slabs that move or wobble
- o Benches, signs or other objects that reduce usable width to less than 36 inches
- Hoses or cords routed across walkways
- o Utility plugs, valves or other objects that protrude ½ inch or more above the walkway surface
- o Unsecured utility covers or grates
- Tree limbs, bushes or other plants posing an obstruction
- Rocks, sand, dirt or other debris accumulating on the sidewalk
- Areas of ponding water 1/4 inch deep or more

Don't Forget - Inspect parking lots, alleys, patios, stairs and other areas of pedestrian travel for the same types of hazards above. Document all inspections with the name of the inspector, date of the inspection, areas inspected, any problems noted and a timeline for additional repairs.

Extend Sidewalk Life and Increase Safety with Good Repair Guidelines. Various sidewalk repair methods can extend the life of your sidewalks and make them safe for pedestrians on school property. Some common sidewalk repair methods include:

- o Grinding: Removes raised edges (up to 1 inch) at control joints
- Saw cutting: Cuts rather than grinds raised edges up to 2 ½ inches
- Mud jacking: Lifts and stabilizes settling concrete slabs
- Vinyl or epoxy patch: Patches divots, cracks and severe pitting or spalling

Maintenance Recommendations: Sidewalks and wayfinding path systems should be in good physical condition with visual evidence and characteristics that components are routinely cleaned and maintained including routine reviews for weeds in transitions, trip hazards, holes, spalling, excessive pitting, sidewalk cracks, lifting or uneven transitions. Asphalt/concrete areas should be clear of excessive debris or trash. If there are identified physical hazards, a plan should be developed to communicate the hazards leading up to repairs. Safety, risk hazards or physical property damage should be mitigated to prevent additional damage or risks.

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