

Periodic Façade Inspection (PFI) FAQs

Updated as of July 2021

Q1 What is the purpose of inspecting the facade of buildings periodically?

A1 As buildings age, their façades experience wear and tear. To improve public safety, a façade inspection regime will detect deteriorating façade materials and its connections early, and allow the Owner to carry out repairs before it fails.

Q2 What do I need to do when I receive the Periodic Facade Inspection (PFI) Notice?

A2 BCA will serve Owners with a Notice of Inspection when the building is due for Periodic Facade Inspection (PFI). You can play your part by:

- Appointing a Competent Person promptly. The Competent Person can be either a Professional Engineer (PE) or Registered Architect (RA);
- Providing access to perimeter of the building to be inspected by your Competent Person;
- Providing the necessary access system such as suspended working platform/gondola, mobile elevating work platform or scaffold or a combination of these to carry out the close-range facade inspection;
- Providing a set of approved plans and façade drawings;
- Providing information on the maintenance and history of the building, particularly if façade repair work histories had been carried out and its locations, i.e. water ingress, etc.;
- Providing previous periodic inspection reports (if available) for reference;
- Carrying out rectification works and/or monitoring of defects highlighted by your Competent Person promptly;
- Maintaining your building façade in good condition at all times.

Q3 How often do I need to carry out Periodic Façade Inspection (PFI) of my building?

A3 PFI regime will apply to all buildings over 13 metres in height and more than 20 years old on 2H2021 at 7-yearly intervals.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that you should inspect your building only when required to do so. As and when defects or deterioration are detected, you should engage a Competent Person to investigate, propose remedial measures and certify the completion of the rectification work.

Q4 Can my Competent Person purchase a set of my building's building plans on my behalf for the purpose of Periodic Facade Inspection (PFI)?

A4 Yes, your Competent Person can make an *application on your behalf* via <https://www.bca.gov.sg/legalsearch/LegalSearchapp.aspx>

Competent Person would need to attach the Documentary Proof of Ownership of property (latest property tax bill, Title Deed or Notice of Transfer) when making the application.

Q5 What shall I do if my Competent Person cannot find any document on my building?

A5 If there is no information or document available on the building façade, the Competent Person shall carry out the review based on the appropriate Standards and Codes of Practices (applicable to Singapore) at the time of installation for the building façade with reference to the date of issue of the Temporary Occupation Permit, Certificate of Statutory Completion or other available relevant documents.

Q6 Can I engage any facade inspector or specialist to inspect my building facade?

A6 No. You can only engage a Competent Person who has no professional nor financial interest in the building. For example, a PE or RA would be considered as having a professional or financial interest if he has been responsible for the design or construction of the building or any part of the building works.

The Competent Person may appoint a Façade Inspector, who is an employee or sub-contractor of the Competent Person, to assist him/her in the façade inspection. However, the Competent Person shall remain ultimately responsible for the inspection and assessment of the inspection findings and condition of the building facade.

Q7 I am an individual unit owner of a building with multiple owners (but the building is not subdivided and managed by a management corporation (MCST) established under the Land Titles (Strata) Act). Can I appoint my own Competent Person to inspect my unit's facade? What are the required conditions for such an appointment?

A7 No, owners of a building with multiple owners (but the building is not subdivided and managed by a management corporation (MCST) established under the Land Titles (Strata) Act) shall jointly appoint a Competent Person to inspect the building facade within the stipulated timeframe. The Competent Person must inspect the building facade and submit a joint report to BCA.

Q8 What does the Periodic Facade Inspection (PFI) process involve?

A8 PFI may differ slightly from building to building, and would likely involve the following:

- Visual inspection of the condition of the entire (100%) building façade elements from ground level or other available vantage points and openings, which may be done using naked eye or tools like binoculars, camera, infra-red scanning technology or drone technology;
- Detect dilapidation and displacement of façade elements;
- Minimum of 10% close-range inspection to be carried out for each building face (elevation)
- Inspection may include localised removal of façade elements or panels for inspections and material testing to ascertain the deterioration level and/or integrity of the façade elements, if required;
- Determination of whether defects or deterioration in façade elements or panels are of any concern; and
- Recommendation of remedial measures to be carried out.

- For a building with widespread defects observed, the Competent Person may recommend a full facade investigation of localised areas or the whole building for BCA's consideration and approval prior to the investigation.

Q9 What does a full façade investigation of Periodic Facade Inspection (PFI) involve?

A9 Full investigation generally involves:

- Additional locations for the additional close-range inspections;
- Any on-site and/or laboratory tests will be carried out to verify the façade condition, strength of the façade materials and extent of the defects, if deemed necessary;
- Exposing concealed façade elements (e.g. brackets for curtain wall system), or the removing façade panels to assess the condition of the panels, will be based on Competent Person's professional judgement.
- Recommending any repairs to be carried out in order to restore the integrity of the building façades.
- Where the repair involves any structural elements or works, the structural plan approval and permit to commence works are to be obtained prior to commencing the repairs, if applicable. A Professional Engineer (PE), if the Competent Person is not a PE, shall be engaged for this purpose.

Q10 Can I engage a different Competent Person for the full façade investigation?

A10 Yes, you can engage any Competent Person who has no professional nor financial interest in the building. You shall notify BCA on the changes of CP and submit the appointment form. Where a new Competent Person is appointed to continue with the façade inspection or investigation process at any point in time, he/she shall review and take into consideration of the earlier findings by the former Competent Person before continuing.

Q11 If the Competent Person engaged by the management corporation of my building did not inspect my unit's facade, can I request that he inspect my unit?

A11 Yes, you can request, through the management corporation, the appointed Competent Person to inspect your unit's facade.

Q12 I have appointed a Competent Person but he never seems to come in person to inspect my building. Is this allowed?

A12 Your appointed Competent Person is expected to carry out a comprehensive visual inspection based on his engineering judgement and assessment. He is expected to take active and personal interest in the planning and carrying out of the inspection of the building.

Q13 My building is tenanted and I am unable to schedule the facade inspection within the timeframe that BCA has given to complete the inspection. What should I do?

A13 You can write to BCA for an extension of time stating your reasons.

Q14 My Competent Person is unable to continue with his/her duties for my building. What should I do?

A14 You can write to BCA to request extent of time to appoint a new competent person.

Q15 What happens after my Competent Person submits the inspection report?

A15 BCA will vet through the report and may seek clarification from the Competent Person with regards to the contents of the report. The Competent Person is required to respond to clarifications and, where the situation warrants, BCA may also conduct a joint site inspection of the building with the professional engineer and/or require the Competent Person to conduct a presentation to BCA.

Upon the acceptance of the report, BCA will write to the Owner to follow up with the recommendations of the Competent Person on the defects detected. You should carry out the remedial works promptly to prevent further deterioration of the building and thereafter submit the Competent Person's certification on the completion of the remedial works, where applicable.

Q16 My Competent Person has informed me that he requires more time to finish the entire façade inspection and prepare the report to be submitted to BCA, as inspection of some areas have taken more time than expected (e.g. due to weather condition). What should I do?

A16 You can write to BCA for an extension of time stating your reasons.

Q17 My building just completed Periodic Structural Inspection (PSI). Can its Periodic Facade Inspection (PFI) be exempted?

A17 No, the scopes of PSI and PFI regimes are different. PSI involves the inspection of the structural system of the entire building to ensure that the building is structurally sound for continued occupation.

Q18 My building is presently undergoing Repair and Redecoration works (R&R). Can I defer the Periodic Facade Inspection (PFI)?

A18 The scope of R&R works do not focus on the façade inspection and submission of inspection report by Competent Person as required in the Building Control Act. However, Owners could write in to BCA for the deferment, and we will review on a case-by-case basis.

Q19 If only some part of my building façade had been refurbished recently, do I need to carry out Periodic Façade Inspection (PFI)?

A19 Yes, if only some parts of the façade are refurbished, the building is still required to carry out PFI according to the building age.

Q20 I have the intention to carry out recladding works to my building in the near future. Can the Periodic Façade Inspection (PFI) be postponed?

A20 You can write to BCA to inform the works done to the building and the request can be considered on a case-to-case basis.

Q21 I have the intention to demolish my building in the near future. Can it be exempted from Periodic Façade Inspection (PFI)?

A21 You can write to BCA to inform the date of your planned demolition for our consideration. You should also inform us when the building has been demolished so that notices would not be issued in future.

Q22 I am in the process of selling my building. Can it be exempted from Periodic Façade Inspection (PFI)?

A22 The building still needs to be inspected. However, if you have the agreement of the buyer to comply with our Notice of Inspection, you can inform us of this agreement and we can consider letting the new owner take over the compliance.

Q23 My Competent Person who has just carried out Periodic Façade Inspection (PFI) of my building recommended some remedial works. I now intend to sell my building. Can I be exempted from carrying out the repairs?

A23 No, you cannot.

Q24 I received the Periodic Façade Inspection (PFI) Notice to an address where there is combination of buildings that are above 13m and less than 13m, are the buildings less than 13m exempted?

A24 No, all buildings within the compound are required to be inspected even though the buildings are less than 13m as the Notice serves to the address.

Q25 My building just carried out the A&A work, can I apply waiver or deferment to carry out the PFI?

A25 You may write in to BCA to request for the waiver. You will need to submit the details of the A&A accompanying with drawings and description of the works carried out. The A&A works carried out must be related to the façade works.

Q26 Can I conduct PSI and PFI concurrently?

Q26 You can appoint the same PE to carry out both inspection if he met the requirements under PFI and PSI regulations. Please note PFI and PSI are different in scope two different reports have to be submitted.

Q27 Can infrared thermography replace close-range inspection since from infrared we can detect the underlying defects?

A27 Infrared thermography is not able to accurately identify the underlying defects. CP is still required to carry out the 10% "hands-on" inspection

Q28 Can the PFI be carried out before receiving the Notice from BCA?

A28 Building owner need to write in to request for early inspection. BCA will review on a case-by-case basis.