



# 12 STRATA MANAGEMENT GUIDE

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Management and Maintenance of External  
Façades and Exterior Features



## Preamble

This series of Strata Management Guides, published by the Building and Construction Authority (“**BCA**”), is intended to help councils of the management corporations (“**MCs**”), subsidiary proprietors (“**SPs**”), council members and Managing Agents (“**MAs**”) better manage their estates.

The guide sets out recommended procedures and good practices to address common issues (e.g. how to conduct a general meeting, how to make requisitions of motions).

The guide is aimed at providing a consistent approach and standard for the strata community to facilitate better self-regulation.

### Disclaimer

This guide has been prepared to provide practical information on the Building Maintenance and Strata Management Act (“**BMSMA**”) and regulations made under the BMSMA (“**BM(SM) Regulations**”).

This guide:

- Does not provide a legal interpretation of provisions in the BMSMA or BM(SM) Regulations; and
- Is not a substitute for independent legal advice.

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# Content

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Preamble  |   |
| 1. Introduction   | 4 |
| 2. Responsible Person(s) for Exterior Feature(s)                    | 5 |
| 3. Window Safety  | 6 |
| 4. Air-Conditioning Unit Safety                                     | 8 |
| 5. Common Types of Defects in External Facades or Exterior Features | 9 |

Icon in this guide



**Good Practice**

## Abbreviations

|                           |       |   |
|---------------------------|-------|---|
| <b>AGM</b>                | ----- | Annual General Meeting                                    |
| <b>BC Act</b>             | ----- | Building Control Act 1989                                 |
| <b>BMSMA</b>              | ----- | Building Maintenance and Strata Management Act 2004       |
| <b>BM(SM) Regulations</b> | ----- | Building Maintenance (Strata Management) Regulations 2005 |
| <b>MA</b>                 | ----- | Managing Agent  |
| <b>MCST</b>               | ----- | Management Corporation Strata Title                       |
| <b>MC</b>                 | ----- | Management Corporation                                    |
| <b>SP</b>                 | ----- | Subsidiary Proprietor                                     |



# 01 Introduction



- 1.1 This guide sets out information which MCSTs and SPs may find useful pertaining to the management and maintenance of exterior façades and features of buildings in a strata-titled development, notwithstanding that the responsibilities of the BC Act apply to all building owners.
- 1.2 This guide will cover some examples of exterior features and external façades, and some good practices that the person(s) responsible for these facades and features can refer to during maintenance.
- 1.3 For some of the examples and definitions mentioned, references are made to the BC Act and Regulations. For example, the definition of “exterior features” is as defined under the BC Act.
- 1.4 **Exterior Features** (*Section 9 of the BMSMA*)

In general, an exterior feature is any item that is permanent and is installed onto, forms a part of, or projects outward from the roof or the external face of the building. Please see the illustration below for examples of exterior features on a building:



# 02 Responsible Person(s) for Exterior Feature(s)

(Section 2 and 9 of the BMSMA)



- 2.1 The person(s) responsible for exterior features must ensure that they are properly maintained and securely fixed to the building to prevent the exterior features from collapsing or falling from height, which may cause injury to passers-by.
- 2.2 The person(s) responsible is generally the owner of the building on which the exterior feature is installed, or the person who has daily charge and control of the management and maintenance of the exterior feature.
- 2.3 Both the MC and the SPs are responsible for their own exterior features. Depending on the Strata Title Plan, some common examples (non-exhaustive) include:

| MC's responsibility   | SP's responsibility   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed, full length window claddings that are not part of a flat</li> <li>• Fixed sun shading devices</li> <li>• Vertical greenery</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sliding and casement windows that are part of a flat</li> <li>• Supporting system of an air-conditioning unit</li> </ul> |

- 2.4 Should there be a collapse of any exterior feature, or its support, and if it was found to have been caused by a lack of proper maintenance, the person(s) responsible may face a fine up to \$10,000, imprisonment for a term up to 12 months, or both.



# 03 Window Safety

(Section 9 of the BMSMA & Section 22B of the BC Act)

3.1 SPs are advised to inspect and maintain their windows at least twice a year to avoid incidents of fallen windows and resulting statutory liabilities.

## 3.2 Casement Windows

- a) **Check that the fasteners<sup>1</sup>** are not rusty or loose, and replace rusty or loose fasteners.



- b) **Clean and lubricate** all movable parts of windows.

*When window tracks are dirty, more force is required to open or close the window. The additional force may cause the window to be dislodged and fall off.*

If the building obtained a temporary occupation permit before 2004, SPs are required to ensure that all **window rivets<sup>2</sup>** are **changed from aluminium to stainless steel**.



<sup>1</sup> Rusty or loose fasteners may affect the strength of the support. When not securely fastened, the window may not be sufficiently supported and fall off.

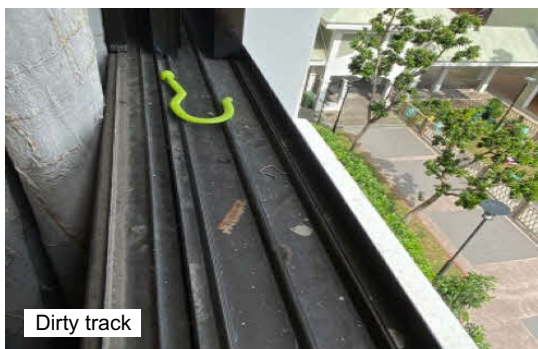
<sup>2</sup> Aluminium rivets were traditionally used for window installation; however, aluminium is highly susceptible to corrosion. In 2004, a law was passed to mandate the replacement of all aluminium rivets with stainless steel rivets in respect of residential properties.

### 3.3 Sliding Windows

- a) Install and periodically check that the **safety stoppers**<sup>3</sup> and **angle strips**<sup>4</sup> are secured in place.



- b) **Clean the window tracks**<sup>5</sup> and ensure the window panels can slide smoothly.
- c) **Change worn-out safety stoppers and angle strips**<sup>6</sup> by engaging an approved window contractor.



- 3.4 Any person who wishes to repair, renovate or install windows must engage an Approved Window Contractor. A list of Approved Window Contractors can be found at [Result — BCA Directory](#).

<sup>3</sup> Safety stoppers reduce the gap between the tracks and the windows, preventing windows from moving vertically.

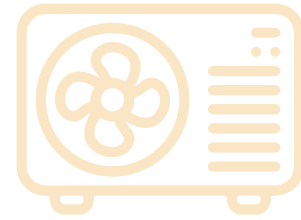
<sup>4</sup> Angle strips create a barrier; in the event that the window becomes vertically dislodged, it will be guided back into position.

<sup>5</sup> When window tracks are dirty, more force is required to close or open the window. The additional force may cause the window to be dislodged and fall off.

<sup>6</sup> Worn-out or displaced safety features may not be able to prevent the dislodgement of windows.



# 04 Air-Conditioning Unit Safety



- 4.1 For air-conditioning units within the SP's lot, it is the SP's responsibility to maintain the air-conditioning units and relevant supporting systems.
- 4.2 If no air-conditioner ledge is available, all air-conditioning units installed on the second storey or above must be supported by a stainless-steel supporting frame. The supporting frame should be inspected regularly, at least once every 6 months, to ensure that the supporting frame and fixings have not corroded or loosened over time.
- 4.3 Any person who wishes to repair or install the air-conditioning unit or the supporting frame must engage a Trained Air-conditioning unit Installer<sup>1</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> To check for Trained Air-conditioning Unit Installers, please submit your enquiry via BCA's [Online Feedback Form](#).



# 05 Common Types of Defects in External Facades or Exterior Features



## 5.1 Common defects due to lack of maintenance

The illustrations below show some of the common defects. It is important that such defects are rectified early to prevent safety issues. You can consult your own competent persons or repair specialists on the steps to be taken for rectifying the defects.

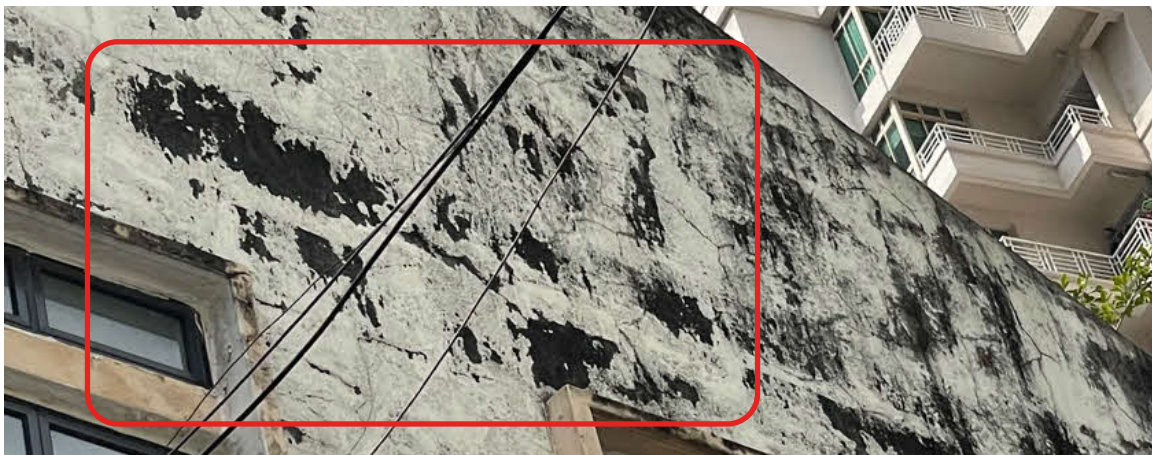
MCs may wish to refer to the list of Competent Persons (CPs) and [PFI Guidelines](#) published on BCA's website and the [infographic](#) on the importance of maintaining their building façades.

### Types of common defects

#### Peeling paintwork



#### Stains on building façade





### Vegetation growth



### Plaster de-bonding and cracks / bulges





### Cracks and spalling concrete



### Corroded railing



### Cracks and dangling stone panel

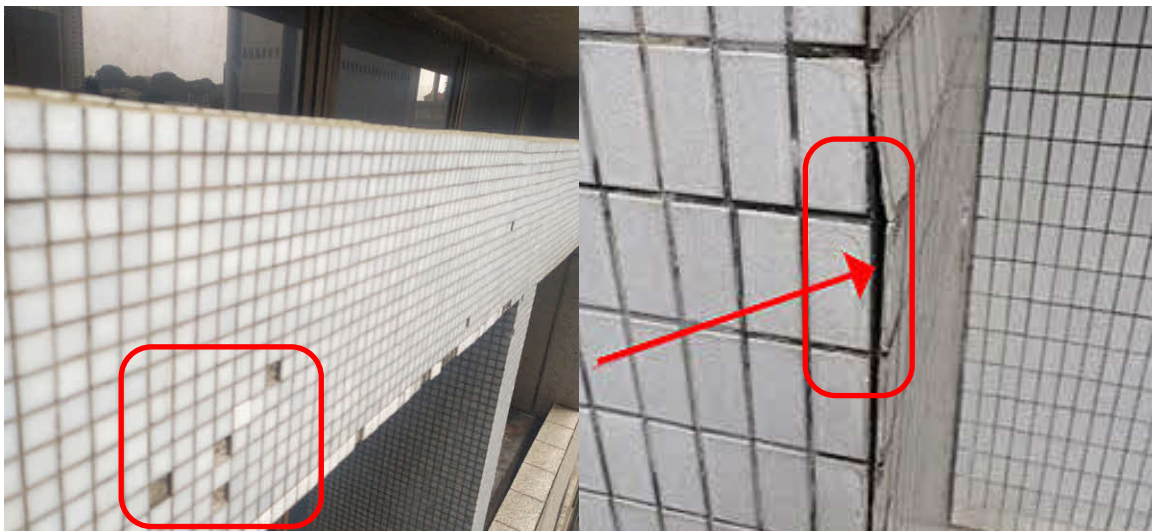




### Dislodged brick façade



### Cracks and dislodging tiles





### Detached ceiling board and corroded ceiling supports





### Good Practice: Installation of grilles at exterior of balconies

It is very common for grilles or louvres to be installed on the exterior of balconies or within a unit (e.g. at a parapet wall, for safety purposes or to shield residents from the sun). However, questions or disputes may arise as to who is responsible for maintaining the grilles or louvres. In such situations, what should the relevant parties do?

#### What should the SP do?



If the grilles or louvres are within the strata title plan (STP), it should be the SP's responsibility to maintain them. If in doubt, SPs should check with the MC.

#### What should the MC do?



The MC should refer to the STP to determine whether the grilles or louvres are installed within the SP's lot and have the records documented somewhere to provide consistent guidance to SPs.

5.2 If any building or common property is not kept in a good and serviceable condition, the owner may be issued a notice in writing by the authorities to conduct repairs or alteration.

5.3 If the owner is issued a notice to maintain his building (including parts of the building) and fails to comply with the notice without reasonable excuse, that person shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000. In the case of a continuing offence, a further fine not exceeding \$25 for every day or part thereof will be imposed during which the offence continues after conviction.

## References:

BMSMA 2004 – *Sections 2, 9*

BC Act 1989 – *Section 22B*

Building Control (Meaning of Exterior Features) Regulations 2021

Building Control Regulations 2003 – *Regulation 41B, 41C, 41D*

# Annex A

## Extract of the Building Control (Meaning of Exterior Features) Regulations 2021

### What are “exterior features”?

2. (1) For the purpose of paragraph (b) of the definition of “exterior feature” in section 2(1) of the Act, the following permanent features of a building are each prescribed to be an exterior feature of the building:
  - a) any window, with or without movable parts, such as a roof skylight, glass panel, glass brick, louvre, glazed sash, glazed door, translucent sheeting and any other building material which transmits natural light directly from outside a building into an interior of the building;
  - b) any grille or shutter, with or without movable parts;
  - c) any tile, cladding, curtain wall, siding, plaster, bracket or cornice;
  - d) any gutter, rainwater down pipe or part of the roof;
  - e) any membrane shade structure, or any awning or device to provide shade;
  - f) any green wall which is partially or completely covered by vegetation, including any brackets that support it, the growing medium for the vegetation (other than soil) and any integrated water delivery system;
  - g) any screen or screen wall;
  - h) any louvres or fins;
  - i) any masonry veneer;
  - j) any window hood;
  - k) any cantilevered roof;
  - l) any part of a concrete wall, concrete slab, concrete beam or concrete column;
  - m) any external balustrade;
  - n) any directional sign, signboard, skysign, animated billboard or other advertising structure installed for more than 36 months, and includes any frame, panel, hoarding or other supporting structure of or for the directional sign, signboard, skysign, animated billboard or other advertising structure;
  - o) any clothes drying rack;

- p) any suspended ceiling system
    - i) fitted under or hung from —
      - A) a porch, porte cochere or portico;
      - B) a covered concourse or walkway; or
      - C) a similar shelter,  
  
that is located at the entrance or side of a building or projects from or near an external edge of a building, and spans across a space below which is accessible to members of the public; and
    - ii) the underside of which is exposed to rain;
  - q) any of the following that is used or may be used, for more than 36 months, to attach to, or that supports or may support for use with, the building any externally mounted equipment:
    - i) a metal or concrete bracket, or similar structural supporting system attached to the building and to the externally mounted equipment (if any);
    - ii) a cable and other associated components of a structural supporting system mentioned in sub paragraph (i), where the cable or components are attached to the building and to the externally mounted equipment (if any).
- (2) In paragraph (1)(q), “externally mounted equipment” includes the following:
- a) an air conditioning unit and its condensing equipment;
  - b) a ventilation system;
  - c) a photovoltaic array or panel;
  - d) a solar water heater;
  - e) an apparatus (including a dish antenna) or a combination of apparatus for the transmission or direct reception of broadcast matter or wireless communication.





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