



City of Chicago

Facade Ordinance Inspection Services



How Walter P Moore Helps With Facade Ordinances

Walter P Moore's Diagnostics Group includes more than 175 engineers and architects with the expertise to guide building owners through Chicago's facade inspection requirements. We perform hands-on evaluations, prepare thorough written reports, and electronically submit the required summary inspection report and required form to the City of Chicago DOB on behalf of owners.

Our team provides comprehensive facade assessments for both contemporary and historic buildings, along with prioritized repair recommendations informed by budget considerations. We collaborate with qualified restoration contractors, prepare repair documents, and remain involved through construction to help building owners maintain compliance with L&I standards. We are skilled in a range of access methods, including industrial rope

access, and maintain SPRAT-certified engineers and architects, including Level 3 supervisors, to safely reach challenging locations. Our Chicago team brings decades of experience in exterior wall assessment, enclosure rehabilitation, and structural repairs. We have successfully completed inspections at difficult heights safely, efficiently, and in accordance with industry best practices.

What is the Chicago Facade Ordinance and what buildings are applicable?

The Chicago Facade Ordinance mandates regular inspections and maintenance of high-rise facades to prevent falling debris and ensure public safety, as defined in the Chicago Building Code and Department of Buildings (DOB) rules.

The Chicago Facade Ordinance applies to high-rise buildings with exterior walls or enclosures 80 feet or more in height.

[Chicago Municipal Code Sect 14A-6-603.2 Code Link](#)

[CDOB Rules for the Maintenance of High-Rise Exterior Walls & Enclosures Link](#)

What are the inspection types?

1 Critical Examination: Close up, hands on visual examination of all elevations, with at least one representative 24 foot swing stage "drop" per elevation; for older masonry/stone/terra cotta, it also requires at least one inspection opening in the cladding at each elevation.

2 Ongoing Inspection (Short Form): Visual, non-invasive exam of the entire exterior envelope, often using binoculars, drones, or ground-level views.





What are the deadlines and frequencies?

	Critical Facade Exam	Ongoing / Short Form Facade Report	Initial / First Facade Report	Exposed Metal Exam
Deadline	December 1	November 1	November 1: 2 years after initial occupancy or midpoint of Critical Exam cycle	December 1
Frequency	Every 4, 8, or 12 years	Required every 2 years for buildings in Ongoing Inspection and Repair Program or mid-point of Critical Exam cycle	Initial/first report filing only	First exam 2 years after installation; then every 5 years
Key Notes	Based on facade category (I, II/IV, III)	Depends on Ongoing "Short Form Only" program eligibility and participation	Depends on whether building enters the Ongoing "Short Form Only" program directly	Applies to exterior metal elements (fire escapes, canopies, antennae, signs)

Chicago's Exterior Wall Program uses two main annual deadlines, plus a timing rule for first reports and the separate exposed metal examinations.

Who has to inspect the facade?

Facade inspections under Chicago's ordinance must be performed by an architect or structural engineer licensed in the State of Illinois, and experienced in exterior wall/structural evaluations.

What are the procedures for filing?

The licensed professional must prepare and provide the owner with a report stating whether the facade is **Safe**, **Safe with a Repair and Maintenance Program**, or **Unsafe and Imminently Hazardous** and submit a report and required form to the Chicago Department of Buildings (DOB) Exterior Wall Program. The three classifications are generally defined as:

- **Safe:** No immediate hazards or significant deficiencies identified; the facade requires only routine maintenance.
- **Safe with a Repair and Maintenance Program:** The facade has deficiencies requiring repairs, but they are not imminent hazards; a detailed repair timeline and ongoing maintenance plan must be submitted and followed.
- **Unsafe and Imminently Hazardous:** The facade has critical defects likely to cause immediate failure or falling debris; owners must notify DOB within 24 hours, barricade areas below, and submit emergency repairs within 30 days.

Who We Are

Walter P Moore is an international company of engineers, architects, innovators, and creative people who solve some of the world's most complex structural, technological, and infrastructure challenges. Providing structural, diagnostics, civil, traffic, parking, transportation, enclosure, technology consulting, and construction engineering services, we design solutions that are cost- and resource-efficient, forward-thinking, and help support and shape communities worldwide.



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