



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS

Fran Burns, *Commissioner*
Michael E. Fink, *Deputy Commissioner*
Bridget Collins-Greenwald, *Deputy Commissioner*

August 26, 2009

Re: Building Facade Maintenance

Dear Building Owner:

Are you properly maintaining your building? Over the past two months there have been at least four documented facade collapses in Center City Philadelphia. It is critical to the safety of pedestrians, building occupants and physical property that you abide by the provisions of the Philadelphia Code.

The Philadelphia Property Maintenance Code requires all building owners in the City to ensure that the exterior walls of their buildings are free from holes, breaks, loose or rotting materials; and maintained weatherproof and properly surface coated or pointed to prevent deterioration (see PM-304.3).

Additionally, building owners in Center City are required to ensure that exposed architectural elements or appurtenances, including facades and business signs, are maintained in good structural and decorative repair (see PM-704.1.1).

If your property is exhibiting conditions of deterioration you are in violation of the Code, creating conditions unsafe to the public. These conditions are considered "Class III violations" and subject you to fines of up to \$2,000 per day.

The Department of Licenses and Inspections is seeking your cooperation in meeting your responsibilities to the citizens of and visitors to the City of Philadelphia by making sure the exterior facade of your building is safe. The exterior of your building should be serviced by a building maintenance professional to maintain public safety as well as your investment. If you notice any points of deterioration, err on the side of safety and have sidewalk protection installed. Be sure to obtain a permit before constructing sidewalk protection installation over or on the public right of way.

Additionally, we seek your help in identifying those buildings in the City that exhibit severe deterioration by calling the City's non-emergency complaint line – 311 – and reporting these defects for violation and prosecution by the Department.

Lastly, please be advised that the Department is considering the development of code language that would require regular maintenance inspections at a building owner's expense. If you have any thoughts on this subject, please e-mail them with your contact information to buildingcodeofficial@phila.gov.

We need your cooperation under the law to better ensure public safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Burns". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "F".

Fran Burns
Commissioner
Licenses and Inspections