

White Paper

# Conducting a Facility Appearance Audit

*Or How to turn a “hall of shame” into a Hall of Fame*

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INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR  
ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS



## Introduction

It's easy to do. We frequently move through our buildings and don't really pay attention to our surroundings. That's because we're preoccupied with getting from Point A to Point B.

However, if you look - and we mean **really look carefully** - you'll begin to spot areas where damage has started to harm your building's appearance - dinged up, scuffed and gouged walls, corners and doors; taped-up paper "signs;" shabby window treatments; broken bathroom tiles ... the list can be seemingly endless.

When it comes to your customers, guests or tenants, you only get one chance to make a first impression, and a shoddy interior can harm your brand and the user experience.

This white paper gives you a checklist to conduct your own Facility Appearance Audit, as well as product solutions that help you take back the beauty of your facility, and keep your building looking newer longer.

## View your facility through the eyes of a newcomer

We begin with asking you to follow our line of logic. Much of the following advice is drawn from two experienced senior housing administrators. Now before you dismiss our thesis as "This doesn't apply to me," hold on.

We believe the advice offered by Phyllis Thornton and Christine Wirthwein fits for any facility catering to a consuming public, and it all hinges on this key statement:

**Take a tour of your facility with the eye of a newcomer and you'll notice dozens of consumer turnoffs, from scarred doorjambs and soiled carpet, to hand-lettered signs taped to the walls.**



Substitute "your facility" with "your hotel," "your office building," "your restaurant," "your school," or "your store" and you get the picture.

So, the key is to not think “Oh, that’s just our lobby,” and instead think, “I’m entering the building for the very first time ... what might I see?”

We will state here that the user experience starts in the parking lot and the sidewalk, but we’re going to focus on the interior of your building ... so, the best advice we can give is: Start your Audit at your front door.

## You need to view your facility in a 3D “sphere”

One of the habits facility staff needs to develop is to use “spherical vision” - that’s our term for making sure to look all around *and* up and down. Meaning: We look at walls and doors because those are in our normal visual plane. And these surfaces are a good place to start. But when conducting an Appearance Audit, don’t forget to also look up and down - meaning at the floor and ceiling as well.



We know this suggestion seems almost a forgone conclusion - but missing a water-stained or crumbling ceiling tile or a light bulb that’s out or a chipped floor tile means you’ve missed a potential appearance flaw. Or worse, with water-staining, you may miss a serious rain infiltration problem that needs to be addressed.

## New can get old really fast ... real-life examples

The following request recently came from the office manager at a pediatric clinic in Ohio:

“We recently repainted, but our check-in window seems to get a lot of scuffs/marks already. Looking at adding wall panel to bottom half of wall to protect it.”

We’ll admit that facility appearance upkeep is a never-ending cycle ... just when you put in all new stuff, it isn’t long before the damage starts to show. We’ll add that “value engineering” interior protection products out of a new construction or major renovation budget can be penny-wise and dollar foolish in the long term.

**More real life:** A major retail chain did not dial interior protection into their construction standards for their new stores. Almost like clockwork, about six months after the grand opening, the store manager calls to complain of battered checkout lanes, scratched walls and halls in the fitting rooms, etc. The manager's tale of woe inevitably ends with: "I need some corner guards, wall guards and cart bumpers." Unfortunately, we hear this time and time again.



**Moral of the story:** There's wisdom in using life-cycle costing vs. first-time costs to enhance user satisfaction while reducing costs (from damage and repair) over the long term.

### **Accounting for Opportunity Cost**

As far as we know, there has been no government research project launched to clone skilled tradesmen and women. That means: if a workman or carpenter is assigned to fix that chronic problem corner it means there's some other project that goes undone.



As an example, a school in our area sent around a painter on a rolling stool every month to touch up the paint on all the school's door frames. That maintenance chore was scratched off the list once they installed custom-formed frame guards.

Protecting interiors reduces the amount of fix-ups that frees staff for bigger, more-important projects.

### **Another hidden cost: The chronic "do over"**

Just about every facility has a handful of areas that are constantly getting bashed or slammed. Besides doors and door frames, it's usually a corner or section of wall in high-traffic areas. If the damage is in a public space, you don't want to leave it looking wrecked, so either someone on staff or a hired contractor is engaged to fix the damage again ... and again ... and again.

When conducting your Appearance Audit, pay particular attention to these areas, then plan to upgrade your interior protection to reduce or prevent the chronic - and costly - “do-over.”

## Elevators are interiors, too

Over time, elevator interiors can get damaged ... especially if the cab is used for both passengers and freight. Even with the best padded intentions, freight and furniture movers and delivery drivers ding up, gouge and scuff walls with dollies, carts and crates.

Then there’s the simple aesthetics - styles change and a cab’s interior can start to look dated. Throw in damage and it’s a one-two punch of ugly. Then add in flickering fluorescent bulbs and it’s the trifecta of a not-so-pleasant ride.

During your Audit walk-around, poke your head into every elevator and take a 3D spherical look around.



## A final word about expansion joints



You may not even know that your building has them ... but just about every building does. The often-overlooked expansion joint helps your building handle the rigors of thermal and seismic movement. During your Audit, take a look at the expansion joint covers. You might be surprised by the amount of wear and tear these workhorses endure - after several years of hard traffic, the joint covers could end up pretty battered. Oftentimes, a simple cover plate retrofit can be the icing on an interior renovation.

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On the next page you’ll find the **Facility Appearance Audit Checklist**, which will help you cover some of the main areas that need to be checked and addressed.

## Facility Appearance Audit Checklist

**NOTE:** This is not an exhaustive list, but if you tackle these 23 issues, you will be well on your way to creating a flawless interior that’s attractive to all your building’s users. We’ve left space at the bottom, too, for you to add your own items.

Check	Item #	Issue/Question	Solution
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.	Front Desk/Reception Desk Damage	Woodgrain rigid sheet and/or wall panel systems.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.	Gouges, scrapes, scuffs along corridor walls	Wall guard, rubrail, rigid sheet, stainless steel wall panels, solid surface cladding
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.	Corner damage	Corner guards - high impact recommended; Tape-on guards only in very light traffic areas.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.	Damage on face of wooden doors	Rigid sheet or metal kickplates
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.	Damage and scrapes along door frames	Custom-formed door frame guards
<input type="checkbox"/>	6.	Large blank wall space	Digitally printed wall protection or artwork
<input type="checkbox"/>	7.	Cracked floors around expansion joints	New expansion joint system
<input type="checkbox"/>	8.	Damaged or “clanging” expansion joint covers	New expansion joint cover
<input type="checkbox"/>	9.	Taped-up, handwritten “signs”	Order new architectural signage
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.	Inconsistent signage styles throughout building; lack of building “brand”	Standardize signage around a single style; consider branding elements in signage
<input type="checkbox"/>	11.	Are we compliant with all needed ADA signs (color, contrast, Braille, mounting, etc.)?	Engage signage expert to assist
<input type="checkbox"/>	12.	Elevators - outdated look, or elevator interiors don’t match/compliment corridor decor	Install new cab interior protection system
<input type="checkbox"/>	13.	Elevators - scrapes from carts, luggage, etc.; gouges, dents, etc. in walls	Install new cab interior protection system
<input type="checkbox"/>	14.	Elevators - bad, dim lighting	Install new LED lighting and ceiling
<input type="checkbox"/>	15.	Elevators - damaged or loose handrails	Replace with durable stainless steel rails
<input type="checkbox"/>	16.	Chipped or missing bathroom tiles	Replace with seamless solid surface shower surrounds/wall cladding and receptors

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<input type="checkbox"/>	17.	Mold and mildew in bathroom grout	Replace with seamless solid surface shower surrounds/wall cladding and receptors
	18.	Torn or mildewed shower curtain(s)	Replace with mold-resistant fabric or Super BioStat curtain(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	19.	Damage/scratches in bathroom stalls	Solid surface privacy partitions
<input type="checkbox"/>	20.	Lighting - make sure all fixtures/lights are working	Replace blown bulbs or non-functioning fixtures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	21.	Flooring - audit all flooring surfaces	Make repairs where possible, or start a renovation/replacement worklist
<input type="checkbox"/>	22.	Ceilings - check for damaged or missing tiles; look for water spots/staining	Make repairs where possible, or start a renovation/replacement worklist
<input type="checkbox"/>	23.	Old, faded, damaged window treatments or blinds	Replace with new curtains or roller window shades
<input type="checkbox"/>	24.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	25.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	26.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	27.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	28.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	29.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	30.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	31.		

Since 1979, Inpro® has been making and servicing products with an obsessive commitment to protecting the appearance of buildings and the health and safety of the people who use them. Based in Muskego, Wisconsin, Inpro is a global manufacturer of door and wall protection, washroom systems, expansion joint systems, privacy systems, elevator protection systems and architectural signage.



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