



# Chicagoland2to4Flats.info

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## Inspection Issues: ‘Contractor’ vs. ‘Handyman’ Repairs

### Issues for Licensed Contractor

There can be issues where a **licensed contractor who specializes in that area** must come in to fix the problem. These are what we call the BIGGIES! Most fall into one of these seven categories:

- 1) Roofing, 2) Masonry,
- 3) Foundation, 4) Electrical,
- 5) Plumbing, 6) Heating/AC—
- and 7) Porches.

### Issues for a ‘Handyman’

**NOT ALL problems listed on the left require a licensed contractor.** Much typically falls into a **HANDYMAN REPAIR** list. **Case Handyman Services**, one of the larger ‘handyman’ services in Chicago, for instance, says on their website that they can handle REPAIR work for ALL of the following:  
Baths, Basements, Carpentry, Concrete, Decks, Doors, Drywall / Plaster Repair, Electrical, Exterior Trim, Fireplaces & Chimneys, Flooring, Interior & Exterior Painting, Kitchens, Masonry, Mildew Removal, Moisture Damage Repairs, Plumbing, Porches, Roofing, Pressure Washing, Siding, Skylights, Wallpaper Hanging, and Window Replacement.

When it comes to the Biggies, TIMING is everything. If a building needs tuck pointing but you can wait even just 12 months, you may be able to refinance to cover that cost. And, certainly, in many cases if the work can wait 2-3 years, the appreciation that is reasonable to expect will be able to cover those costs.

Many of the issues your inspector finds will probably be what we call safety/stabilization costs— and you will want know if the total you should budget is less than 10K, 10 to 20K, or 20K up. But don’t be scared by a LONG list. If a handyman is paid \$25.00/hour, that person can do 100 hours of work for \$2,500.00!

We believe that you MUST learn from your inspector (1) which, if any, of the ‘Biggies’ exist, (2) possible costs for each of those issues, and (3) a sense of time when each major repair must occur. **Our bottom line is this: any mandatory MAJOR repair work needed in the next year should be viewed as CASH required now—beyond that, you will need to determine whether or not you think the building will FLOAT itself through refinancing.**

In summary, we believe that for multi-units a total budget of **50K or less is LITTLE/NO work, 100K is SOME work, and 150K is GUT REHAB. Few multi-units need less than that!!!**

| Time                             | Typical \$ | Description   |
|----------------------------------|------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yrs 1-3 | 10-20K     | <i>Immediate safety and building ‘stabilization’ issues</i> (i.e., the building inspection list of short-term, important repairs). Few 100-yr old buildings need NO work!!! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yrs 1-3 | 10-30K     | <i>Duplexing or enlarging apartments if possible to increase rent</i> (and to eliminate any illegal garden units). Many buildings can command enhanced rent!!!              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yrs 3-5 | 10-20K     | <i>Mid-range necessary building repairs</i> (i.e., the building inspection list of things that didn’t have to be done immediately).   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yrs 4-6 | 10-40K     | <i>Updating/upgrading windows, heat, electric, plumbing, etc.</i> . Putting on a new roof or rebuilding porch and/or garages probably must happen at some point!!!          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yrs 5-7 | 10-40K     | <i>Some modernizing</i> (kitchens/baths, etc.) eventually will probably be needed unless the future of this building is to deconvert or condo’ize.                          |

*As for porches, virtually NO porch built before 2007 meets the new code—and there is no grandfather provision. The city can’t ask EVERYONE to rebuild their porches—but they will be ask some to!*

We also recommend that you download off our website a document called “The Rehab Checklist,” which we think is a very good guide to estimating repair costs and is provided by the Community Reinvestment Corp (CIC) of Chicago. CIC specializes in work with large apartment buildings, but we believe its way of estimating costs applies quite well to homes or 2- to 4-flats.