



Inspections of facades required for older buildings by council

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Many midsized and large buildings in Cleveland — structures that are at least 30 years old and five stories or 75 feet tall — must undergo an exterior inspection every five years, under a law approved Monday evening.

Cleveland City Council signed off on facade-inspection legislation that was crafted in the wake of an incident on East Sixth Street in downtown Cleveland. Nearly a year ago, a cascade of bricks tumbled from the historic Garfield Building onto the sidewalk and street. Nobody was injured, but the parapet-wall collapse kicked off discussions about ways to ensure that properties, and pedestrians, are safe.

Now owners of buildings that are at least 50 years old have one year to secure an inspection and file a report with the city's building department. If a structure is 30 to 49 years old, the owner has two years to hire a qualified inspector and submit a report. The law doesn't apply to one- to three-family residential buildings, and it's aimed at structures that are close to other buildings, public land or streets.

If an inspection turns up safety flaws or other problems, the property owner has to notify the city and immediately secure or repair the weak spots. Building owners who don't comply with the inspection requirement could be fined. If a building's facade has been inspected during the last few years, the owner can satisfy the city's requirement by filing a report from that evaluation.

Cleveland joins New York, Chicago, Columbus and Pittsburgh on the list of cities that mandate periodic exterior inspections for buildings.

In many cases, the laws were created after someone was hurt or killed by falling debris.

Such inspections can cost anywhere from \$1,000 to \$20,000, depending on the city, the size and age of the building, the choice of inspector and the level of analysis.



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