

CONCRETE SIDEWALKS!



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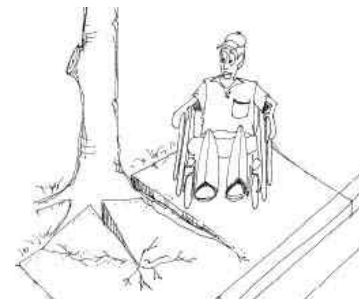
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Walking from “point a” to “point b”... what could be simpler? Unfortunately, it’s not always that simple. In community associations, walking outdoors is primarily done on concrete sidewalks. They are clearly “long term” components, but in our 27 years of experience, they are not “forever” components. So what does that mean at your association?



Concrete can be expected to last an extended period of time. But over time, most concrete walkway installations will require repairs or replacements. Concrete is by nature strong in compression (when a load is placed on it), but it is brittle (its edges are prone to cracking and chipping, and it will crack when exposed to repeated freeze/thaw cycles) and it cracks easily when subjected to bending loads. So when it is flat in the ground it will last a long time. But the protruding edges of stair-steps will always be prone to chipping, and it will crack easily when it is lifted by adjacent tree roots or loses the stability of its sub-base.

In addition to concerns about physical failure (cracking and unsightliness) of your concrete sidewalks, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a trip hazard as any vertical change of ¼” or more at a joint or crack in a walkway surface. It doesn’t take much for sidewalk slabs to develop more than ¼” of vertical unevenness, and the most common culprit is adjacent trees. Be aware of what your association is responsible to maintain – in some jurisdictions the property owner (association) is responsible for sidewalks all the way to the curb. Keep your sidewalks safe – free from trip hazards, and clear of slip hazards (moisture, leaves/snow, etc.).



Our common recommendation is for periodic concrete sidewalk repairs, meaning an “allowance” for repairs to unspecified locations throughout the association. For associations with relatively little in the way of concrete walkway surfaces, ongoing repairs (minor grinding

here and there) can be accomplished through the ongoing operational maintenance budget. For many associations, we find it prudent to set some funds aside in the Reserve budget for local remove/replace projects in addition to significant grinding projects, every other year or every few years, based on association experience.

Enjoy the fresh air and enjoy the walk. Keep your sidewalks safe and attractive!