

The Rainy Season Is Here... Let the LEAKS Begin!

by James L. Brown



Most facility managers postpone proper caulking until they have water intrusion. Water intrusion through windows normally occurs because of deteriorated caulking at metal to metal, metal to stucco, or worn out gaskets at the metal to glass joints. The facility manager should monitor the caulking with the help of a professional caulking and sealant company to ensure a watertight building.

Caulking manufacturers give warranties that are unrealistic in certain conditions. Florida and similar states that receive sun radiation, salt contamination, and severe temperature changes all add to early deterioration of the sealant. In most cases, even though the warranty on the caulk can be 20 years by the manufacturer, anything past ten years can be excessive. In my opinion, caulking should be completely removed and replaced every ten years.

Many manufacturers make top of the line products, which can be used at different junctures of the project. The key to all caulking sealant and wet glazing projects is the complete removal of the old sealant in order to achieve excellent adhesion. It is important to check with the material supplier for the recommendation of the proper cleaning solvent for the product being used. The



manufacturer's representative should be called in several times during the project to perform a pull test and inspect the work to ensure proper application by the hired company. This will enable the manufacturers to furnish that warranty you are looking for at the end of the project.

Some things to keep in mind when it comes to sealants and buildings are:

- Many multi-story buildings, besides coping with the elements, actually move a lot during high winds and storms, which may cause caulking beads to open.
- Some caulk joints were installed improperly or designed improperly by the original engineer of the building. It may take a trial and error approach or more research to find the proper application to solve these problems.
- Make sure you have a roof inspection first to ensure that water is not coming from the roofing materials leaking down through the curtain wall system.
- Beware of cracked and open stucco surrounding the window or curtain wall system. This may be the culprit of the water intrusion.
- Add money to your yearly budgets for the costs of emergency water leaks.

There are many ways to accomplish taking care of emergency water leaks. Having six certified bosun's chair workers to drop over and inspect the work, take pictures, and make the repairs is a plus for our company to keep costs minimal. The main goal is not to lose hotel guests or tenants because of water intrusion problems that can be easily resolved as long as the facility manager is willing to be proactive in his maintenance responsibilities.

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