

## CRITICAL OBSERVATION REPORT

Rules, Regulations, and Guidelines for Ordinance No. 1296-85, Columbus Building Code Sections:

[4109.073 Exterior Walls and Appurtenant Structures](#)

[4109.075 Special Critical Observation Areas Created](#)

[4109.077 Downtown Special Critical Observation Area](#)

The purpose of these Rules, Regulations and Guidelines is to standardize requirements in the ordinance and present protocols for compliance.

### CRITICAL OBSERVATION REPORT:

For all applicable buildings within the downtown special critical observation area, a written report shall be submitted on the enclosed form with all information completed as outlined below. Critical observation surveys of pertinent buildings, three stories or taller, within the downtown special critical observation area, shall be conducted by or under the direct supervision of a registered architect or registered professional engineer who specializes in structural engineering.

**Within twenty-four (24) hours of discovering hazardous conditions** which present an unreasonable and imminent threat to life or safety of any persons, emergency action must be taken to abate the hazard, and notification must be made to the City of Columbus Chief Building Official. If deterioration of features is determined to present unsafe conditions, the owner must hire an architect or professional engineer to oversee the necessary action.

Building permits are required for corrective repairs and alterations according to the Ohio Building Code and Columbus Building Code. Permits are not generally required for painting, caulking, tuck pointing, or glass replacement. Inquiries of permit requirements may be made to the contact below with the Department of Building and Zoning Services. A sidewalk permit shall be required in order to close off the area while repairs are performed.

**If repairs or preventative maintenance items are noted on the report**, corresponding images of identified issues shall be submitted along with the report. The person conducting the critical observation survey must re-evaluate the building and provide to this department, **a follow-up letter confirming that all repairs and preventative maintenance have been completed.**

**By December 31<sup>st</sup> 2026, all reports and documentation must be submitted by email to [COR@columbus.gov](mailto:COR@columbus.gov), or submitted to:**

**CITY OF COLUMBUS-DEPT OF BUILDING & ZONING SERVICES  
ATTN: COR COMPLIANCE SPECIALIST  
111 N. FRONT STREET  
COLUMBUS OH 43215**

Pursuant to the Combined Development Related Fee Schedule, if the critical observation report, and when applicable, a follow-up confirmation of completion are not sent by December 31st of the scheduled reporting year, a fee of \$500.00 will be assessed against the property for non-compliance. An additional \$500.00 will be assessed each quarter until the required report, completion of repairs, and all assessed fees are paid.

**Columbus Building Code Section 4109.073(2) (b):**

“Critical Observation Report...Said report shall contain critical observation findings prescribed by the director’s rules and regulations. The extent of the critical observation and the results thereof shall be documented in sufficient detail so that a comparison of successive reports will indicate any change of condition of the building’s exterior walls and appurtenant structures. The owner shall keep and maintain said report at the applicable building’s site or produce said report at said site within 48 hours of any request for same by the building official or the chief of the bureau of fire prevention.”

**Critical Observations shall include:**

- 1) A close-up visual review of all building elevations. The person conducting this critical observation is not expected to make exposures or inspection holes. However, this is encouraged if a problem is discovered.
- 2) An examination of the following and other items peculiar to the subject building:
  - Parapet wall and cap
  - Perimeter of the roof, flashing, gutters, and down spouts
  - Wall surfaces
  - Window and door openings (including lintels, sills, and sealant)
  - Areas adjacent to down spouts and gutters
  - Weep holes in walls
  - Appurtenances (fire escapes, signs, flagpoles, cornices, canopies, awnings, marquees, chimneys, etc.)
- 3) Documentation of the following conditions when observed:
  - Movement of parts
  - Failure of construction to properly shed water
  - Presence of openings, cracks, or gaps which allow entry of water
  - Loose attachment of appurtenances
  - Deterioration of materials:
    - Cracking or crazing
    - Chipping
    - Corrosion
    - Erosion
    - Spalling
    - Protective surface coatings (paint, etc.)
  - Evidence of improper past repairs
  - Conditions and functioning of expansion joints
  - Conditions of appurtenance structures
  - Efflorescence
- 4) Basement Vaults - Defined as the underground portion of a building that extends into the public right-of-way, typically beneath the sidewalk and/or street. Public Service Ordinance 21.592 accepted in February of 1904 makes the abutting property owner responsible for maintaining and/or removing basement vaults. Detailed questions, information, and policy about basement vaults within the public right-of-way can be obtained by contacting Jerry Ryser with the Department of Public Service by email at [JLRyser@columbus.gov](mailto:JLRyser@columbus.gov) or by phone at (614) 645-1584.
- 5) All other relevant and necessary information on the condition and safety of the exterior walls and appurtenance structures of the building.

**For questions or clarification, please contact the Critical Observation Compliance Specialist by email at [COR@columbus.gov](mailto:COR@columbus.gov) or by phone at (614) 645-6910.**

Department of Building & Zoning Services  
111 N. Front Street \* Columbus OH 43215

**CRITICAL OBSERVATION REPORT**

**ALL SECTIONS OF THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED  
WITH ANY ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

**Please Print**

Date of Submission \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Survey \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Building Name \_\_\_\_\_

Building Address \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Stories \_\_\_\_\_ Age of Building \_\_\_\_\_

Building Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Owner Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Building Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**EXTERIOR WALL CONSTRUCTION (PLEASE CHECK ALL APPLICABLE BOXES)**

Brick  Concrete Block  Glass  Concrete  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**ROOF CONSTRUCTION (PLEASE CHECK ALL APPLICABLE BOXES)**

Wood Joist  Steel Bar Joist  Reinforced Concrete  Precast Concrete

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**DOES THE BUILDING INCLUDE A BASEMENT VAULT?**

Yes  No

Basement Vaults - Defined as the underground portion of a building that extends into the public right-of-way, typically beneath the sidewalk and/or street.

**EXTERIOR WALLS AND APPURTENANT STRUCTURES FINDINGS  
(PLEASE CHECK ALL APPLICABLE BOXES)**

**Category 1 - Hazardous Condition:**

Requires emergency action to be taken to abate the immediate hazard, and notification made to the Chief Building Official within twenty-four (24) hours of the survey date

**Category 2 - Immediate Attention:**

Requires completion of all repairs and maintenance, and a confirmation letter of completion to be delivered to our office, or submitted to [COR@columbus.gov](mailto:COR@columbus.gov) within thirty (30) days of the survey date

**Category 3 - Preventative Maintenance:**

Requires a confirmation letter of completion of all repairs and preventative maintenance to be submitted by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the scheduled reporting year

**Category 4 - No Defects Observed**

**PERSON CONDUCTING CRITICAL OBSERVATION SURVEY MAY PROVIDE COMMENTS BELOW**

***Please Print***

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**CRITICAL OBSERVATION REPORT**

**PERSON CONDUCTING OR SUPERVISING CRITICAL OBSERVATION SURVEY  
(IF ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER IS NOT REQUIRED)**

***Please Print***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**ARCHITECT OR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER CONDUCTING OR  
SUPERVISING CRITICAL OBSERVATION SURVEY**

***Please Print***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Number or Seal \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_