

*Maintaining a  
Walkable  
Sacramento:*

# **SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

**Well-maintained sidewalks and curb ramps provide safe and desirable paths for pedestrians and others to enjoy neighborhoods, commercial centers, and other areas of our city. Where sidewalks are good, the neighborhood becomes a more desirable place to live. Maintaining our sidewalks requires the efforts of residents, property owners, and the City.**

### **Removing obstacles enhances accessibility**

Did you know improperly parked cars... garbage cans... tree branches... even basketball hoops can be dangerous obstacles? It's important to remember to keep our sidewalks clear to ensure accessibility for all pedestrians. Sacramento City Code 12.56.050 requires that brush, shrubs, and trees on a property must be maintained to prevent obstructing the right-of-way and visibility of traffic signs. Sidewalks serve so many purposes; and encouragement of people to make more use of the most basic form of transportation – walking.



### **Quality maintenance and repair of sidewalks also improves safety and encourages walking.**

Broken or damaged sidewalks are not only an eyesore and an inconvenience; cracks spacing, and grade displacements in the sidewalk also can impede public access and cause serious accidents for passers-by. To combat these problems, the Public Works Department oversees a sidewalk maintenance program to ensure that all sidewalks in the City of Sacramento are safe and accessible for all pedestrians.

In Sacramento, like most communities across the country, the property owner is responsible for the maintenance of the sidewalk abutting their property. California state law allows this practice on the basis that property owners receive the most benefit from a well-maintained sidewalk because it is available for their use, and it enhances their property value. In most cases, property owners are responsible for making repairs.

## Sidewalk Inspections

The sidewalk inspection program is a request only program. The City inspects sidewalk conditions when there has been a request to do so by a property owner or by a concerned citizen over the condition of the sidewalk, or through the daily on site work activities of the inspector. When responding to a request for inspection, the city inspector will evaluate the entire site (*the general rule is the inspector is to inspect the area identified as defective and 50 to 75 feet in either direction, or to the corner if closer*) noting all concrete and sidewalk deficiencies at the site and the neighboring properties.

The aim of the program is to identify sidewalk defects and assist the property owner with the repair process. Inspectors are looking for defects, such as holes, spalled or chipped areas, wide cracks, deterioration, and areas that are damaged by tree roots.



Inspectors follow general guidelines that apply to the city right-of-ways where there are sidewalks have been established to aid in identifying those defects.

### INSPECTION CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

Generally, a “*Defective Sidewalk*” is a sidewalk where line of grade is altered or displaced or such other condition exists that interferes with the public convenience in the use of the sidewalk. Some examples of these conditions are:

- a significant vertical or horizontal displacement of ½” or greater;
- an area of sidewalk that has spacing with a width of ½” or greater;
- settlement of sidewalk causing water to pond and creating a slipping condition to pedestrians;
- excessive cross slopes caused by tree roots;
- chipped and spalled sidewalk surfaces creating a defective condition;
- an area of sidewalk that is off grade (and adjacent to the curb and gutter) to the point where the curb and gutter has a significant displacement between the curb, gutter and sidewalk; and
- any other conditions judged by the inspector as defective or that may pose an inconvenience to the pedestrian path of travel.

## What is the resident's responsibility?

In the City of Sacramento the property owners are responsible for the cost of the maintenance and repair of the sidewalk adjacent to their property. The California Streets and Highways Code, section 5610, and Sacramento City Code, section 12.32, provide the City of Sacramento the ability to require that the maintenance and repair of public sidewalks be the responsibility of the adjoining property owner.

The complete code is available on the City's website at:

<http://www.qcode.us/codes/sacramento/>



## Sidewalk complaint procedures and property owner notification process

When the City of Sacramento receives a complaint for a defective sidewalk, a city inspector is dispatched to inspect the site. If a defect is identified, the inspector will determine the scope of work and create an estimate for the repairs. If needed, the inspector may employ a temporary sidewalk patch to maintain accessibility while the sidewalk notification process is completed and the work is scheduled. Then the sidewalk notification process will begin.

Using County tax records and other resources, the City identifies the owner of the property that is fronting the defective sidewalk. Once the property owner is identified, the City sends the property owner a Sidewalk Repair Notice with an estimate for the cost of the repairs and their options for making the repairs. If the property owner does not respond within the 30 days a second notice is sent providing them with an additional 30 days. After the second 30 days have elapsed and the property owner has not completed the work the city will repair the sidewalk by default and send the bill to the property owner for the repairs.

## Getting the work done

If you are notified by the City that your sidewalk needs to be repaired, you have three options to complete the work.

1. Hire a licensed contractor (please contact your inspector prior to commencing work, your notification serves as your permit).
2. Do the work yourself (please read the City of Sacramento's specifications and call the inspector prior to commencing work, your notification serves as your permit).

3. Have the City perform the repairs. Sign your notice and return it to the City with the selected option of authorizing the city to do the repairs. Once the city receives your signed notice with this option selected the city will have their contractor schedule and complete the work then the city will bill you once the work is completed.

All three are at your expense. Regardless of who does the work, a \$80.00 Administration Fee will be billed to the property owner. If a root inspection is necessary, an additional \$180.00 Arborist Fee will be charged,.

If you wish do the work yourself or hire your own licensed contractor, the work must be done in accordance with the City of Sacramento Maintenance Services Division Sidewalk Repair Specifications.



### **CITY OF SACRAMENTO, MAINTENANCE SERVICES DIVISION SIDEWALK REPAIR SPECIFICATIONS**

If the property owner is to make the repairs, or hire a licensed contractor to make the repairs, the sidewalk repairs shall be performed as follows:

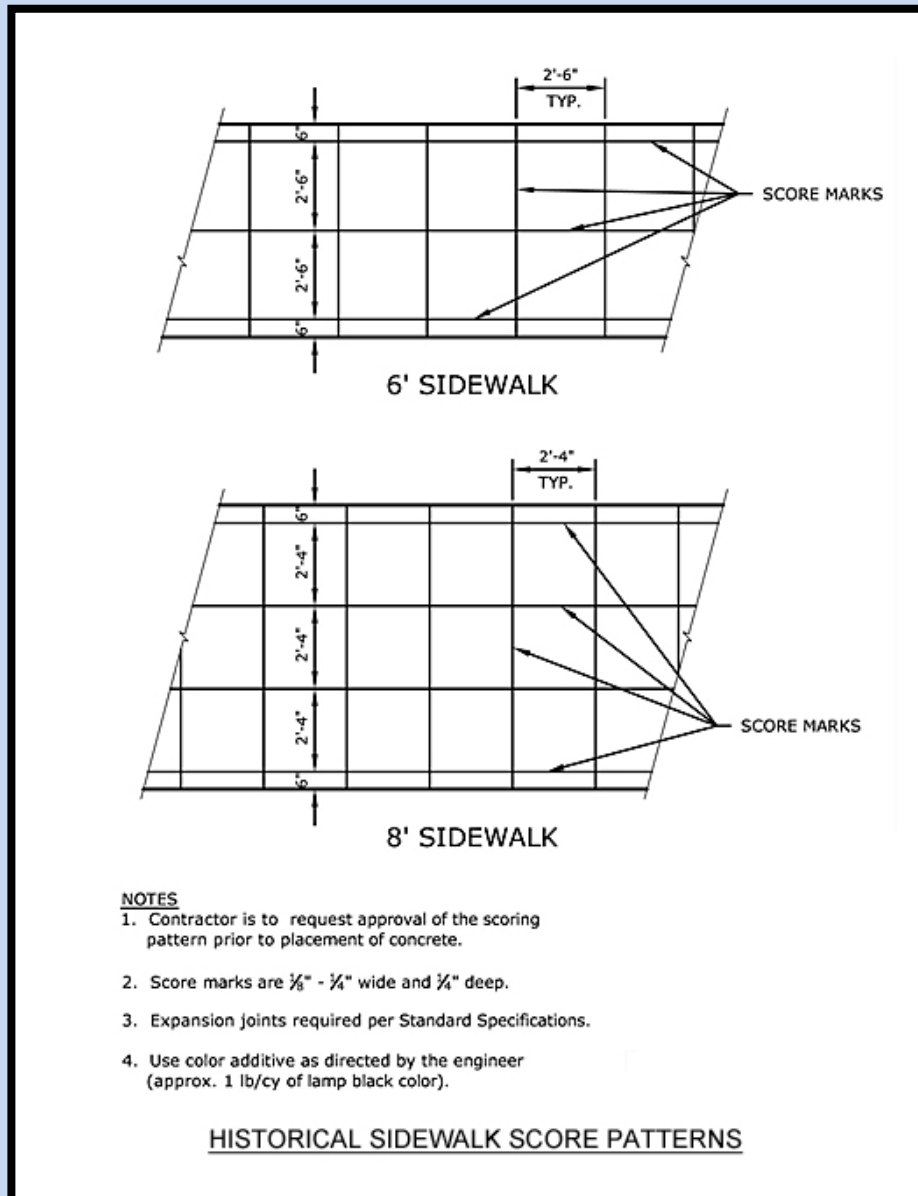
1. Pursuant to Sacramento City Code Section 12.32.100, the repairs shall be commenced within sixty (60) days after the property owner signs the Sidewalk Agreement, or within sixty (60) days after service of a Second Notice to Repair Sidewalk, whichever occurs first, and shall be prosecuted diligently and without interruption to completion.
2. The sections of sidewalk, which are in need of repair, shall be removed and disposed of properly.
3. Replacement concrete shall be Class "B", consisting of six (6) sacks (564 pounds) of Portland cement per cubic yard, and shall have a maximum size of coarse aggregate of three-quarter inch (3/4"). Concrete shall contain 1 pound of lamp black per cubic yard of concrete, unless otherwise directed by the City Inspector.
4. Minimum thickness shall be three and one-half inches (3-1/2") with a cross-slope of one-quarter inch (1/4") per foot towards the curb line, and finished with a light broom finish.
5. Expansion joints shall be placed at approximately twenty-foot (20') intervals, which will be divided equally into five (5) four-foot (4') spaces by score lines.

## **SIDEWALK REPAIR SPECIFICATIONS *(cont.)***

6. The final product is subject to approval by the City of Sacramento, Maintenance Services Division and shall, at a minimum, present a smooth, unbroken surface between the previously existing concrete surface and the replacement portions, where the two adjoin each other.
7. Sidewalk shall be repaired or reconstructed, regardless of recent repairs or construction, matching the width, grid pattern and coloring (typically lamp black) of the historic character within the neighborhood.
8. Property owner/contractor performing repairs must call the inspector listed on the repair notice directly for a form inspection prior to placement of the concrete and for a final finish inspection upon completion of the work. All repairs must meet City of Sacramento Standard Specifications.
9. The person/contractor performing the repairs shall complete all backfill, remove all forms, and thoroughly clean up the job site, not less than twelve (12) hours after the replacement of the concrete is restored to its original condition.
10. Upon failure of the person/contractor performing the repair to comply with any of the above specifications, the City of Sacramento may cause the repairs to be completed in a satisfactory manner solely at the property owner's expense.
11. The City shall not be responsible for any damages resulting directly or indirectly from any repair or other work performed by the property owner or by any person/contractor hired by the property owner. If tree roots are the cause of the damaged sidewalks and the property owners elect to hire their own contractor or do the work themselves, please call the City Arborist at (916) 808-4906, 7 days prior to construction to schedule root inspection. After the sidewalk has been removed and the roots exposed the City Arborist will make recommendations on the cutting of roots from the tree.
12. Please Note: you must have the work order/correspondence number available when calling for a root inspection. This number is located on the top right hand corner of all the "Agreement to Repair Sidewalks."
13. Pedestrian control & traffic control is required in accordance with the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

## SIDEWALK REPAIR SPECIFICATIONS (cont.)

14. Historical Sidewalk Score Patterns are required to preserve and restore the historic character of the Central City, which is the area generally bordered by Interstate 5, Highway 50, and by Alhambra Boulevard and C Street. Construction or reconstruction of sidewalks within the Central City are to be in accordance with City of Sacramento Design and Procedures Manual, Section 15 – Street Design Standards, which details scoring patterns for six and eight foot wide sidewalks.



## **SIDEWALK REPAIR SPECIFICATIONS (cont.)**

Prior to placing concrete, approval to deviate from these scoring patterns is required from the City inspector. Work performed without approval or not in accordance with the drawing may require the saw-cutting of score lines into the concrete or possible removal and replacement of the work.

### **What about tree roots?**

If tree roots are the cause of the damaged sidewalk and you elect to hire your own contractor or do the work yourself, please call 311 or from outside City limits (916) 808-5011. Prior to removing sidewalk, schedule an appointment with a City Arborist. The arborist will come out and make recommendations as to how best to cut the tree roots.

Please note regardless of who the tree belongs to it is still the owners responsibility to pay for the sidewalks when they are damaged by roots according to code (12.32.020). An owner shall maintain and repair any defective sidewalk fronting such owner's lot, lots or portion of a lot. Where a defective sidewalk is caused in whole or in part by a tree root or roots, the owner shall nevertheless have the duty to repair the sidewalk. The director may grant permission to cut the root(s) after consulting with the city arborist. (Ord. 2010-010 § 2)

### **How do I pay for the repair?**

We understand that the sidewalk repairs can be costly and are not usually a budgeted expense. Therefore, in an effort to ease the burden on property owners, the City offers a payment plan for qualified property owners. All payment plans are considered on a case- by-case basis. For more information, please contact the City Revenue Division at 808-5527.

### **Still have questions about the sidewalk maintenance program?**

For more information about City of Sacramento sidewalks, please call 311 or from outside City limits (916) 808-5011.

