

Five Reasons Chicago Buildings Leak

1. Concrete Block: Concrete is porous, and water is more likely to affect the interior if the building is “single wythe” (one layer), as opposed to multiple-wythe like older buildings. The uneven surface of “split faced block” increases the surface area to make it more porous. Weep ropes (white ropes above windows, etc.) are effective only when the flashing system (concealed in the wall) is installed just right.

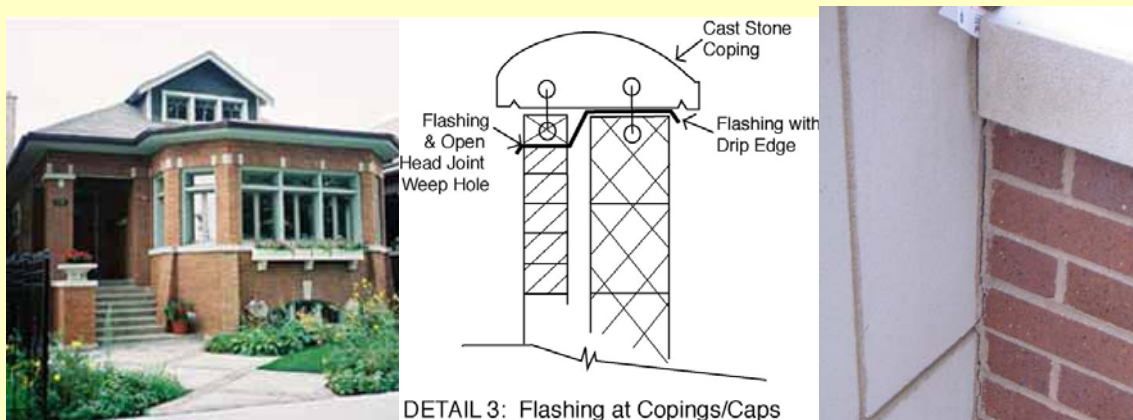


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2. Lintels: Even older, multiple wythe, buildings can leak when one of the weak spots fails: the steel lintel which holds up brickwork above a window opening. The steel rusts, letting water through, and pushes brickwork apart when the rusting causes it to expand.

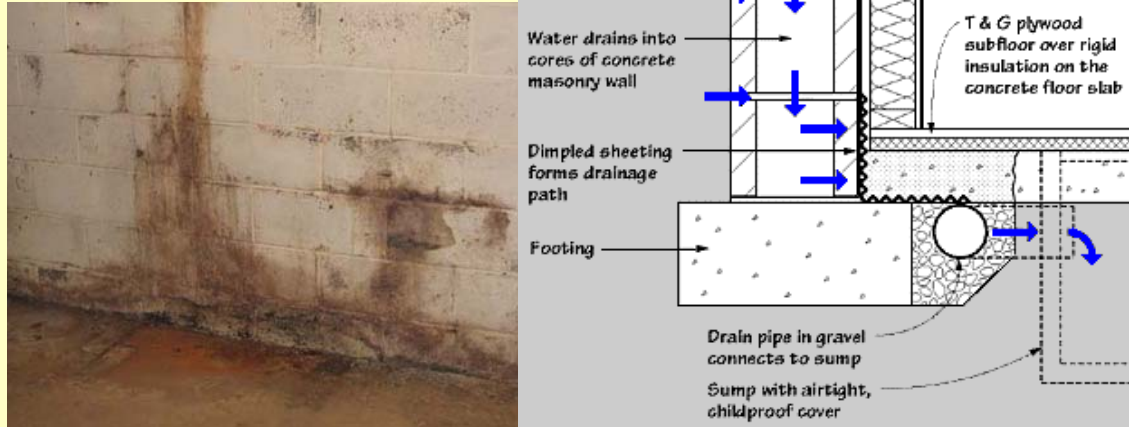
3. Exposure: While the walls of a bungalow or ranch home are protected by 2' wide soffit overhangs (the upper half of a bungalow's wall seldom gets wet), mid-rises and high-rises bear the brunt of weather. Many leaks are due to the stone copings above parapet walls.



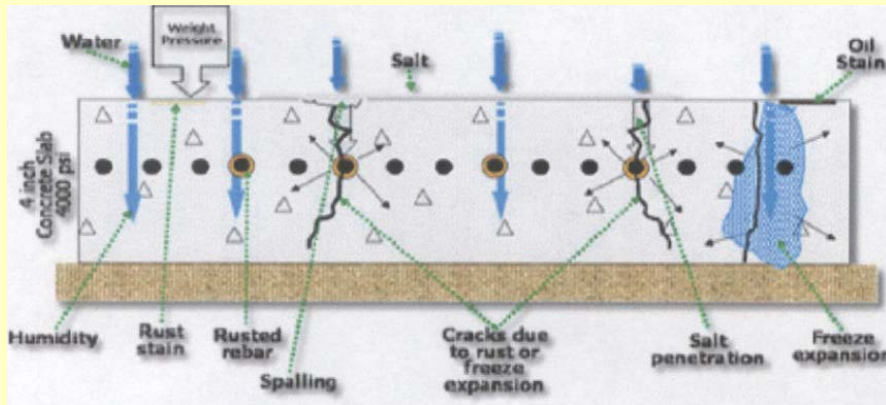
DETAIL 3: Flashing at Copings/Caps

4. Basements: "Dig a hole in the ground, and water will go in it."

Basements need protection from soil water pressure, wall cracks, keyway seepage, poor grading, and sewer backup in order to be dry. If one of these protective systems fails, moisture gets in.



5. Potholes: What you see in the street happens to our buildings: water expands upon freezing, causing expansion and progressively larger cracks. Other climates are colder or wetter, but ours has enough moisture to make the freezing temperatures more damaging.



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