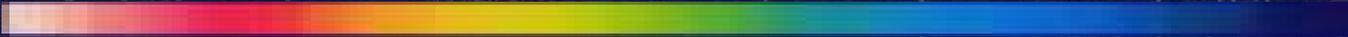


PROSPEC

Building Inspection & Thermal Scanning Services



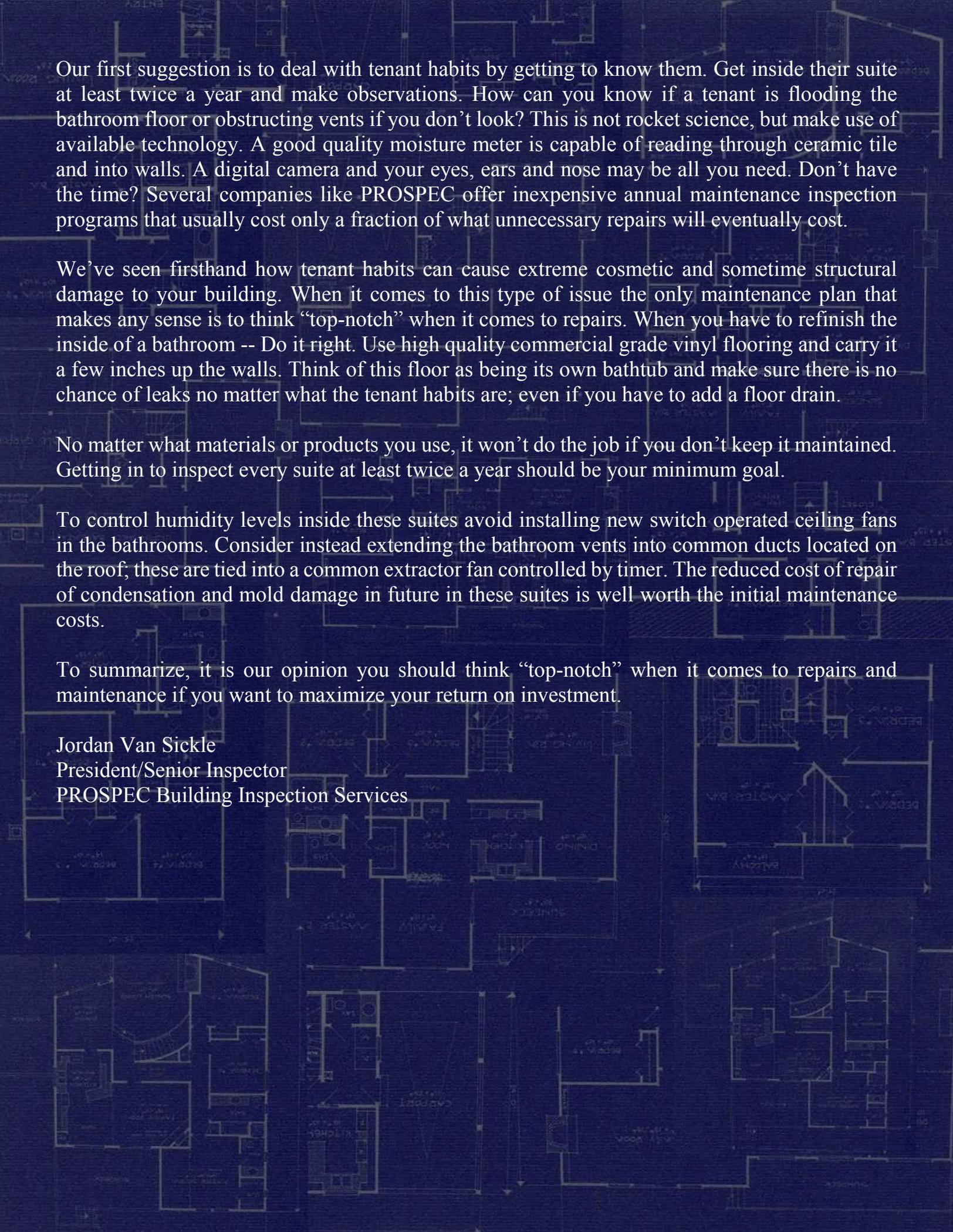
Think “top-notch” when it comes to Repairs and Maintenance and reap the benefit.

You’ve all heard the old saying “you get what you pay for”. In almost every building we inspect there is a pattern to maintenance that can eat away your investment. We are not referring to the normal wear and tear to a building’s systems, such as aging plumbing, wiring or elevators etc.. We’re referring to maintenance issues you cannot easily predict, such as your tenant’s habits. We believe you can accommodate these issues in your regular maintenance program; you’ll likely be rewarded with higher annual income and better property values.

PROSPEC has served the Commercial Real Estate community for over 30 years and viewed over 15,000 suites in 1000 plus apartment buildings. From our years of observation we conclude that inexpensive repairs will always end up costing more money in the long run. Why? Most repairs we view typically resolve the cosmetics of an issue in order to appease the tenant, while the real problem is not being dealt with, the tenants habits that caused the problem in the first place.

The challenge to landlords has changed dramatically over the years. More and more suites these days are occupied by a family recently immigrated to Canada from tropical climates. Quite often every opening in their suite is sealed off with plastic wrap, tape, you name it, all in order to keep out drafts. At the same time thermostats are commonly set above 80°F. On top of this the tenant is doing their laundry in the bathtub and hanging it inside the suite to dry. Condensation is dripping off everything inside the suite. Water pools on the floor of the bathroom, and mould is growing around every window. Does this sound familiar?

What we have observed is cheap repairs using inexpensive finishes like peel and stick vinyl flooring and 5 piece plastic shower surrounds etc.. These are used far too commonly and this will most likely lead to future repairs completely wasting your initial efforts, not to mention more expense and disturbance of the tenant. When it comes time to sell your building the buyer will likely hire a company like PROSPEC to inspect it, and the inspector will see through these repairs (with an infrared camera and moisture meter) and find the damage underneath. The buyer may demand repairs be made or the cost deducted from the sale price. You can’t imagine how many times we’ve seen this cost the seller 100’s of 1000’s of dollars. Ouch!

The background of the entire page is a detailed architectural floor plan of a multi-story building. The plan shows various rooms, corridors, and structural elements in a light blue color against a dark blue background. Labels for rooms like 'BEDROOM', 'BATHROOM', 'KITCHEN', and 'DINING' are visible throughout the drawing.

Our first suggestion is to deal with tenant habits by getting to know them. Get inside their suite at least twice a year and make observations. How can you know if a tenant is flooding the bathroom floor or obstructing vents if you don't look? This is not rocket science, but make use of available technology. A good quality moisture meter is capable of reading through ceramic tile and into walls. A digital camera and your eyes, ears and nose may be all you need. Don't have the time? Several companies like PROSPEC offer inexpensive annual maintenance inspection programs that usually cost only a fraction of what unnecessary repairs will eventually cost.

We've seen firsthand how tenant habits can cause extreme cosmetic and sometime structural damage to your building. When it comes to this type of issue the only maintenance plan that makes any sense is to think "top-notch" when it comes to repairs. When you have to refinish the inside of a bathroom -- Do it right. Use high quality commercial grade vinyl flooring and carry it a few inches up the walls. Think of this floor as being its own bathtub and make sure there is no chance of leaks no matter what the tenant habits are; even if you have to add a floor drain.

No matter what materials or products you use, it won't do the job if you don't keep it maintained. Getting in to inspect every suite at least twice a year should be your minimum goal.

To control humidity levels inside these suites avoid installing new switch operated ceiling fans in the bathrooms. Consider instead extending the bathroom vents into common ducts located on the roof; these are tied into a common extractor fan controlled by timer. The reduced cost of repair of condensation and mold damage in future in these suites is well worth the initial maintenance costs.

To summarize, it is our opinion you should think "top-notch" when it comes to repairs and maintenance if you want to maximize your return on investment.

Jordan Van Sickle
President/Senior Inspector
PROSPEC Building Inspection Services