

FALLING ELEMENTS AND STRUCTURAL COLLAPSE

This hazard covers the threat of a property collapsing in the worst case, as well as parts of the fabric of the building either being displaced or falling.

It is natural to consider this hazard as being associated with an unsafe wall or tiles being dislodged from a roof, but inspectors can also look for signs of structural issues inside a property which could result in collapse and potentially cause injury.

This could include:

- Defective ceilings – cracked, damp or bulging
- Loose fittings or fixtures – cupboards, shelves, handrails
- Insecure frames – either windows or doors
- Staircase failure
- Insecure guarding – to staircases or landings

On the main body of the building, inspectors look for these types of defects:

- Structural movement and cracks or bulges to external walls
- Open joints to brick, stone or block work to external walls
- Cladding defects including loose render
- Loose coping to walls and loose guarding on balconies and roof terraces



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Hazard Assessment

Although there are recommendations for preventative measures in the safety regulations, inspectors will use common sense to assess issues in a property based on the urgency for repair before issuing any advice.

For instance, signs of an imminent ceiling or wall collapse will need to be addressed much more urgently than a loose shelf as the likelihood of injury as a result of failure would be much greater.



Inspectors will also assess the chances of injury to the public as a result of falling elements from a building.

Loose roof tiles or slates ultimately create issues of water ingress which could cause problems further down the line, however cases of tiles falling from a roof and injuring someone are relatively rare.

Inspectors are asked to take into account the age and general condition of a building as well as the number of people who may be exposed to a deficiency when assessing the severity of the hazard.

Preventative measures

Regular checks between tenancies and maintenance if required will eliminate many of the main problems associated with this hazard. If you are unsure of how to rate the general condition of the property, it is worth asking a builder with full knowledge of Building Regulations or a structural engineer to take a look.

Building checks

- External walls should support the weight of the building and its contents
- Cladding or rendering should be in good repair
- Lintels should be strong enough and well maintained with frames to doors and windows securely fixed
- Balconies and walkways should support their own weight and any load on it
- Tiles, slates, chimney stacks and pots in good repair
- External pipework securely fixed and well maintained
- Internal ceilings should be intact with fixtures and fittings securely fixed
- Floors and staircases should support their own weight and the occupants

Further resources

DASH Services is a Private Rented Sector service for Local Authorities, Landlords & Tenants and is hosted by Derby City Council on behalf of a number of different Councils across England.

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The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

Covering the threat of whole dwelling collapse or elements falling because of inadequate fixing, disrepair or as a result of adverse weather conditions.

The hazard includes structural failure both internally and externally that may threaten residents or members of the public.

Find out more at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

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