

# Tuckpointing Definitions & Brief Information

Tuckpointing can be defined as the removal and replacement of old crumbled mortar between bricks and stones. Tuckpointing is also known as repointing or just pointing. All three terms are often used interchangeably to describe the complete process of restoring older masonry joints.

The following definitions of these terms have been recommended by The Brick Institute of America:

**Point** - to place plastic mortar into joints to correct defects or to completely fill joints in newly laid masonry.

**Repoint** - to place plastic mortar into cut or raked joints to correct defective mortar joints in masonry.

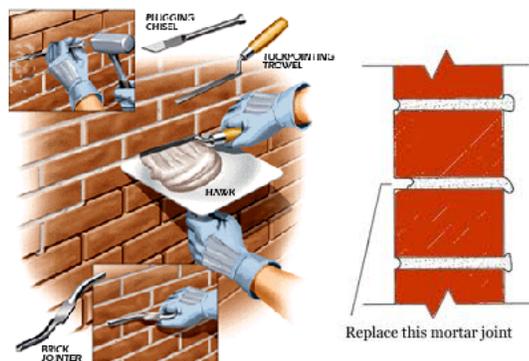
**Tuckpoint** - to point masonry with a flush mortar joint that approximates the color of the masonry units and a mortar of contrasting color that is shaped into a thin strip. (2) see repoint.

## Why Tuckpointing?

The most common reason is to remove loose or cracked mortar from brickwork or stone installations. The longevity of mortar joints will vary with the exposure conditions and the mortar materials used, but a lifespan of more than 25 years is typical. Persistent damage from water, sun, acids in the rain, changing temperatures, building settlement, impact damage, and dirt take their toll. Damaged mortar joints become a waterproofing problem, and eventually a structural issue, if not repaired. When visual inspection reveals that the mortar joints are cracking or otherwise deteriorated, restoration is necessary to help maintain the integrity of wall systems and products.

Tuckpointing and repointing are two effective ways of ensuring structural integrity and decreasing water entry into masonry.

As well as old structures tuckpointing can also be used for newer jobs where mortar may have been damaged or needs to be replaced because of different problems with color or finish. In these instances mortar for tuckpointing must be carefully selected to ensure that the color and texture of the new mortar closely matches the existing material that was not compromised and did not need to be removed.



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## Plesons Brick and Stonework Signature Tuckpointing Procedure

### **Step 1-Evaluate the old mortar removal process**

Old mortar removal is accomplished by either grinding, chiseling or hand raking the deteriorated mortar from the joints to a minimum depth of 5/8". Then the joints are either hand brushed or blown out to remove dust and debris to insure a strong bond with new mortar.

### **Step 2-Repointing procedure**

Once the joints are cut out and properly cleaned, new mortar can be applied to the joint with a jointer. There are many different joint styles available. Concave, flat, weathered, raked and grapevine just to name a few are often used. Mortar type is also a big factor in Tuckpointing. Historic homes often used softer brick than the units available today. The soft brick cannot tolerate the high compression strength of Portland rich mortars used in present masonry construction. This hard mortar commonly causes the soft brick to give way when settling, expansion and contraction, and other movements occur which result in sprawled or sheared brick faces, severe cracking, and chipped brick edges. To avoid these problems a lower compression strength lime mortar must be used. Color match Tuckpointing is an art that is accomplished by highly experienced masons who can break down the mortar to find out what was originally used. Type of sand and tooling techniques play a dominant role in proper matching of mortar. This process can be a time consuming but rewarding task when the project is completed. Once the joints have been pointed and properly brushed the curing process begins.

### **Step 3-Cleaning process**

Once the joints have cured it is time to determine if a cleaning procedure should be performed. There are endless masonry cleaning products and procedures, we use the prosoco brand. Prosoco carries a wide variety of masonry detergents, acids, restoration cleaners, mold killer, efflorescence removers and white scum removers to bring grungy looking building or homes back to their original beauty.

### **Step 4- Waterproofing**

To get the best performance it is always recommended that a sealer is applied after tuck pointing, replacing brick, replacing stone, new brick, new stone on parapet walls, chimneys, or any other masonry unit that is exposed to the elements. Not all sealers are created equal! Please do not be fooled into a low quality sealer sold at the home improvement stores, they simply do not last. If a contractor tries to apply something of this nature to your building, simply refuse these products.

A breathable, silicon based sealer such as prosoco Siloxane PD is a high quality product that goes on clear so there are no shiny, discolored, or patchy looking areas after application. This product has been tested to last for up to 10 yrs. In even the harshest environments. This is a breathable sealer which means if water were to enter the wall through a hole or crack it can still escape.

## **Brick Replacement and Plugging Procedures on Existing Buildings**

Spawled or cracked brick can severely detract from the visual as well as the structural integrity of your building or home!

Brick replacement is an art by itself when considering replacing damaged brick in a wall, ornamental borders, tight joint home fronts and other decorative masonry. It takes a keen sensed mason to perform these tasks and end up with satisfactory job.

The end result is affected even more before one brick is even laid. Unsatisfactory brick matches are all too common in the St. Louis region, drive around the city and look at old buildings and you will see what is being talked about here.

Matching brick on older homes and buildings can be a chore. If the brick cannot be found at a local brick yard and are no longer made, the only option is to find used brick that are a close match to the original. This can take many trips and phone calls to used brick dealers to find a satisfactory match. Taking the time to find these matches can make the difference between a tolerable brick match or an exceptional brick match which we take great care and pride when doing so.



### ***Lack of Brick Maintenance***

#### **This is an Example of a Brick Building with Multiple Problems**

This brick building has had a lack of brick maintenance (tuckpointing), which will be more costly to repair now. By letting a building get in this condition there is a good chance that there will be damaged wood behind the brick that may have to be replaced because of it constantly being moist do to water seepage through the mortar joints and there could be structural damage to your wood studs, also there will most likely be damaged brick because of the fall to the ground, which will have to be replaced. Don't put off having your building tuckpointed or it may end up looking like this. Also notice the side door entrance that used to be a window. The contractor did a poor color match tuckpointing job. This contractor's workmanship shows a lack of pride in their work. Don't be fooled by "Fly by Night Contractors".