

WHAT CONDO DWELLERS ARE READING

FINDING THE RIGHT CEO

**I'M A
CONDOMINIUM
MANAGER
*** NOT A ***
MAGICIAN
(BUT I CAN SEE WHY YOU
MIGHT BE CONFUSED)**

Individuals with a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) have received the best training for condominium management.

While many engineers, accountants, real estate agents and lawyers may disagree, no other designation offers such a broad set of general business skills directly relevant to condominium management. Their education includes operations, accounting, finance, budgeting, organizational systems, technology, communication, human resources, decision making and other basics of business management. These skills, supplemented by experience, are the foundation upon which successful businesses

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FROM THE EDITOR



Happy 2024!!!

One year ago we wrote "... condo fees must increase to cover the increasing cost of materials, services, products and staff. 2022 saw unexpectedly high inflation and cost increases arising from product shortages and delivery problems." We correctly predicted that financial challenges would moderate beginning in late 2023.

Congratulations to communities heeding this warning. You have passed through a difficult 2023 and are in good shape as we enter 2024. Those communities choosing to ignore the warning or take half measures remain in a difficult, challenging and likely worsening financial situation.

If you failed to deal with the financial challenges of 2023, we urge you to take actions necessary to right your corporation's financial situation, both operational and reserve fund, quickly!

A PEEK

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LEAKY PIPES?



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Reduce operating costs & condo fees, save reserve funds
Continue using existing piping, never replace it

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SUPERTALL BUILDINGS

A new class of high-rise structures, those reaching 65- to 95-stories, or more than 250 metres in height, are supertall buildings. The costs of maintaining these structures are



considerably higher although little is known about them. Aura and One Bloor (when completed) are the only residential buildings currently achieving this stature. At least 10 additional supertall buildings are planned for Toronto including the 95-storey Concord Sky at Yonge and Gerrard, and Forma in the King Street theatre district which will include 84- and 73-storey towers.

Most condominium buildings are no higher than 65 stories. Maintaining buildings of this height are known although different from what we expect in the typical 12- to 25-storey building.

Views from higher floors can't be beat, although high winds are a challenge. Higher balconies can be unusable because of strong winds which can also cause more damage to higher levels. Closing windows and balcony doors can be difficult. A constant whistling or shrieking sound is not uncommon.

Window cleaning is one of the biggest challenges. Insurers can be hesitant to insure cleaning beyond 50 storeys. Cleaning takes longer and can encounter more delays because of wind and cold temperatures at upper levels. Employees working at higher levels command a higher salary to compensate for increased difficulty.

The scale of supertall buildings will change much of what is understood about maintaining high-rise buildings and costs.

Major equipment can no longer be located exclusively on a roof or in the basement, both of which are too far away to adequately service

CONTINUED PAGE 4 ...

DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

SUPERTALL BUILDINGS... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

an entire building exceeding about 30 storeys. Locating this equipment mid-level is necessary which can create unwanted noise and vibration affecting nearby suites. Replacing larger equipment becomes more complex.

Higher buildings have more residents and floors. Coming down from the top floors, elevators can be full before they are half-way to ground level. Individuals on the middle or lower floors can wait an exceptionally long time for access to an elevator. Going up, there can be long lines in the lobby.

Height creates challenges to the delivery of water, heat, air conditioning, ventilation, internet services and cellular reception. Ensuring all suites receive adequate service requires equipment to be placed throughout the building.

From daily access to repairs and renovations, everything is likely to take longer because of height and number of floors. If an elevator is reserved for a move or out of service, delays worsen. Projects cost more and take longer to complete. Contractors get paid to stand around waiting to access an elevator, or for supplies to arrive.

Repair budgets are likely to escalate. One 65-storey building includes a crane assembly used to allow window washers to clean windows. There is a budgeted expense of about \$15,000 every 20 years for repairs. The crane extends beyond the walls so window washers can drop down. Replacing a damaged cylinder requires another roof crane to raise a new cylinder from the ground. Cost of this crane is about \$250,000 and the cylinder costs \$60,000 to replace. Replacing large glass wall panels requires another temporary crane to raise new glass panels.

First Canadian Place was one of the first supertall

buildings to be updated, in 2012, at a cost of more than \$100 million. While no supertall residential building has yet undergone an extensive refurbishment, it is safe to expect the cost to be "super". Condo fees in a supertall building may be double that of shorter buildings.

Management is a challenge if one condominium manager is required to manage a much larger building with many more people. New budgeting levels, processes and systems are needed. The balance between keeping costs low and not underfunding repairs will have to be relearned. More people trying to access a single exercise room, swimming pool or showers creates new obstacles.

Volunteer condo boards struggle to manage their current high-rise community and building. Supertall buildings may be unmanageable by volunteer condo boards without greater involvement from professional management.



FINDING THE RIGHT CEO... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and condominium communities are built.

A condominium corporation is a business operation requiring the same basic skills as any other business. In business, poor management leads to business failure. In condominium living, poor management leads to a less-draconian result. Poorly managed and struggling communities continue to survive out of necessity albeit with a lower standard of living, more problems and higher costs.

Having individuals with an MBA serving as a condominium manager or condo director offers the best skillset and experience available for the community.

Training available to condominium managers and condo directors, provided through the Condominium Authority of Ontario (CAO) and Condominium Management Regulatory Authority of Ontario (CMRAO), offer a basic introduction to condominium living and management that is helpful. Much of this knowledge is already known to an MBA with or without business experience. What is not known can be learned by reading and understanding condominium governing documents including the Condo Act. Industry education and training for condominium managers is not at a comparable level to what is necessary to earn an advanced business degree.

Responsibilities and obligations of those in a leadership role within a condominium corporation is comparable to what is required in a business organization and include:

- Manage the organization in a manner representing the interests of owners while reporting to and supporting its directors

- General supervision and management of day-to-day affairs of the organization
- Develop and implement plans for maintaining, supporting and improving the organization
- Establish and meet goals identified as desirable by the organization
- Prepare and adhere to budgets
- Manage finances
- Communicate with stakeholders
- Make decisions based on the best available information

A condominium corporation outlives its current manager and directors. Continuity, or succession planning, ensures that individuals are replaced without loss of skills, knowledge or history. Individuals should be allowed and encouraged to get involved up to and including observing of board meetings.

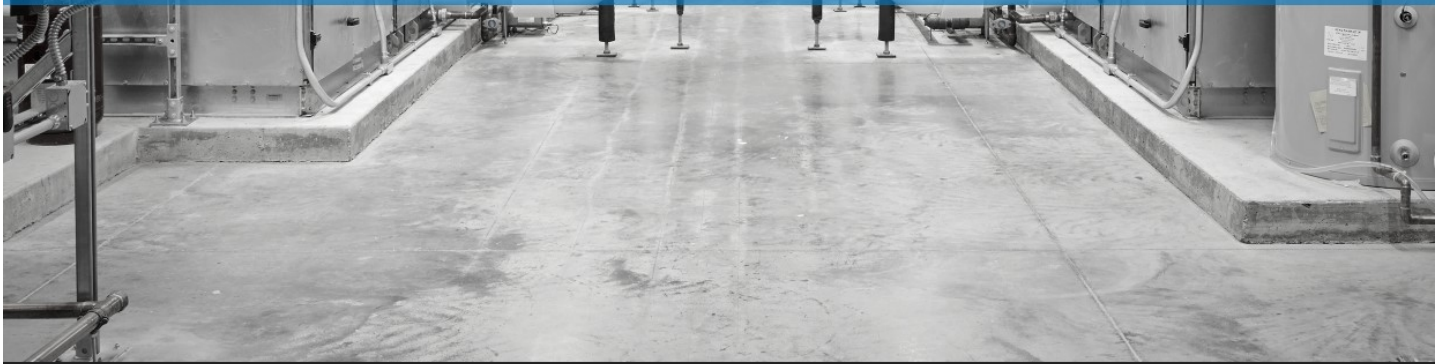
Condominium corporations are not unique when it comes to reserve funds, reserve fund studies, condo fees, conflict of interest and the many other issues addressed among boards and within communities. All business organizations deal with similar matters which they describe using different terminology.

Successful businesses become leaders in their field while addressing the same issues as condominium corporations. Learning from their continued success allows condominium corporations to thrive by obtaining the same necessary skills and utilizing them in an effective manner.



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If your cooling towers look like the pictures below, they will likely be leaking soon. Call HCTS to book your winter restoration so you can ensure a smooth spring start up!



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PROTECTING YOUR CONDO COOLING TOWER



Cooling towers are vital components in many residential, industrial and commercial settings, responsible for dissipating excess heat from mechanical systems.

During winter, when cooling demands are low, cooling towers are typically shut down. This dormant period offers a perfect opportunity for maintenance and crucial repairs. One common issue faced by cooling tower owners is the development of rust in the basins. Rusty basins not only affect the tower's efficiency but can also lead to severe damage to units and mechanical equipment.

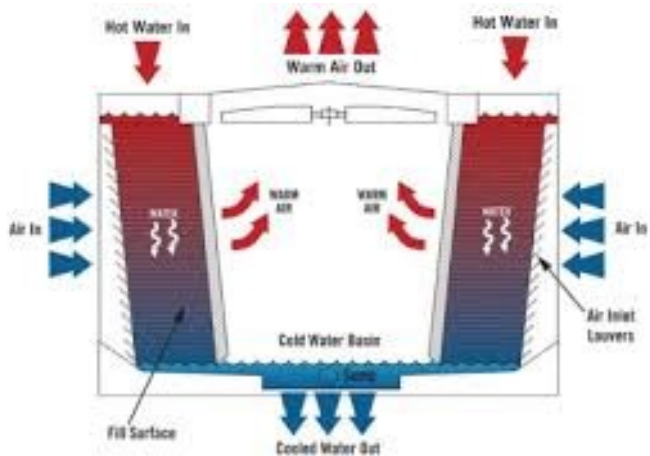
susceptible to leaks and cracks. When the tower is operational, these leaks can result in water wastage and decreased cooling efficiency. However, the problems don't end there. Rust particles and debris can circulate within the cooling system, causing damage to pumps, pipes and other mechanical components. This can lead to costly repairs and operational downtime and negatively impacting residential and commercial units during the hotter months.

Importance of Coating Rusty Basins

Coating the rusty basins of indoor cooling towers during the winter shutdown is a proactive approach to prevent further corrosion and protect your investment.

1. Prevent Structural Damage: Applying a high-quality coating inhibits rust formation, preventing further structural damage to the basin. It acts as a barrier, shielding the metal surface from moisture and corrosive elements.

2. Extend Equipment Lifespan: By addressing rust issues promptly, you prolong the lifespan of your cooling tower and associated mechanical equipment. Regular preventative maintenance and protective coatings can significantly extend the life of the entire system, saving money in the long run and potentially giving you another 10-15 years of service.



Impact of Rusty Basins

Rusty basins in indoor cooling towers are more than just a cosmetic issue. Over time, corrosion weakens the structural integrity of the basin, making it

CONTINUED PAGE 8

PROTECTING YOUR CONDO COOLING TOWER... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

3. Maintain Efficiency: A rust-free basin ensures optimal water flow within the cooling tower, maintaining its efficiency. When the tower operates smoothly, it consumes less energy and performs at its best capacity. This will save you money with operational costs.

4. Prevent Contamination: Rust particles and debris can contaminate the cooling water, leading to fouling and bacterial growth (Legionella). Coating the basin prevents these contaminants from entering the system, ensuring the water remains clean and safe.

5. Avoid Cross-Contamination: In facilities with multiple cooling units, rusty basins can contaminate the cooling water supply, leading to cross-contamination between different units. Coating the basins prevents this issue, maintaining the integrity of each system.

Selecting the appropriate coating is crucial to ensuring long-lasting protection for your cooling tower basin. Epoxy-based coatings are commonly used for their excellent adhesion and resistance to

corrosion. They offer high durability and chemical resistance, making them suitable for harsh industrial environments.

Addressing rusty basins in indoor cooling towers is not just about aesthetics; it's a critical maintenance step that safeguards your investment and prevents damage to units and mechanical equipment. By coating the basins during the winter shutdown, you ensure the longevity, efficiency and reliability of your cooling tower system. Regular preventative maintenance, coupled with protective coatings, is the key to a trouble-free and efficient cooling operation, ultimately saving you time, money and headaches in the long term.

Kevin Cherewaty is President of [HCTS](#) which repairs, restores and maintains cooling towers. They offer a high-quality coating that inhibits rust formation and prevents further structural damage to the cooling tower basin.



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HIGH-RISE FAMILY DYNAMICS

The oldest of baby boomers are turning 75.

Previous generations cared for their older members in the same household and under the same roof. That roof may have been a single-family dwelling, possibly with separate living quarters, or a townhome with multiple units. As parents age, home renovations may have been necessary. Keeping parents at home for as long as possible required that other family members contribute to cleaning, cooking and other chores. Younger and older family members developed stronger bonds.

Since the 1960s and as children got older, it was less likely they would remain at home. Some went to school and lived independently. Others moved away. Many choose to have fewer children or none at all. Others live without getting married or having a partner.

This creates difficulty for older and younger generations who have nowhere to turn when they require support. There are no family members to lean on. Who can I count on? Will someone need to count on me?

High-rise living offers a popular solution.

Today, generations of family live in separate units under a single roof in the same high-

rise building.

Everyone has separate living quarters while sharing common areas, visiting and cooking for each other, and easy access to render or obtain assistance. Dinner is more easily prepared in one home and eaten in another. When the evening ends, everyone returns to their home via elevator to sleep or relax. Those bonds between younger and older family members can be retained without the frustrations of generations sharing the same residence.

High-rise living makes it easier for younger generations to live independently and in close proximity to family they can assist or who can provide assistance.





WINDOW PAINS

Windows are a connection with the outside world allowing light, air, sound and warmth to pass through. They provide protection against moisture, wind and extreme temperatures.

Building-wide window replacement projects are a rare opportunity to add value to the appearance and performance of your home. This refers to not only the glass but also frames which are designed to accommodate standard window glass or higher-quality sealed double-glazed insulating glass.

Poor performing windows are an issue in most 25+ year old buildings. Costing millions of dollars for the standard high-rise building, replacing the window system is likely the largest single expenditure for most condominium communities. Saving for this requires decades of setting aside sufficient funds in the reserve fund if a special assessment or loan is to be avoided.

Glass panes are usually replaced as part of normal maintenance. The window replacement system refers to both glass panes and aluminum frames.

Individual windows can be replaced, and window systems repaired when problems are infrequent. At some point, costs escalate to where window system replacement becomes financially preferable to isolated repairs. Since it can take years for a condo board to decide building-wide window system replacement is preferable to individual window repairs, engage with a contractor and ensure sufficient funds are available, it is best to monitor the frequency and type of individual repairs being

undertaken to know when and how fast window maintenance costs are increasing.

Undertaking a retrofit of window systems may be appropriate if the community is prepared to accept the original window frames for another 15 to 20 years. Window system replacement can last 35 years or more while providing improvements on insulation, noise reduction, air flow and protection from the elements.

Signs that window glass or window systems are failing include:

- Fogged windows due to failed seals
- Water leaks from window frames or seals
- Air leakage and drafts
- High cost of repairs to maintain the windows and window systems
- Poor window performance affecting comfort – units may become cold in the winter or extremely hot in the summer in spite of heating and cooling systems



ANTI-HARASSMENT RULE FROM THE CAO

The Condominium Authority of Ontario (CAO) is proposing an anti-harassment rule and seeking comment. [The rule](#) is intended to help condo corporations build clear, consistent and transparent processes for addressing the prevention, preparedness and response to harassment in their respective communities.

Less clear is why such a rule is necessary, why the CAO is now drafting rules for condominium corporations, and why it requires eight pages.

Most condo rules are restricted to a few sentences at most. A single community can have dozens of rules that owners must abide by. If all rules were drafted with this degree of legalese, they would be unintelligible and ignored. Rather than a few pages of rules, they would expand to hundreds of pages.

Increasingly, CAO seems out of touch with its mandate and seemingly under the influence of lawyers or legislators incapable of writing in a simple and comprehensible manner. If each rule were to be of this length and complexity, nobody in a condominium community would ever read let alone respect or comply with them.

CAO seems intent on making life more unworkable and unmanageable for condominium communities.



The CAO is seeking feedback to refine and improve this rule. [Review the sample here.](#)

DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

While most condominium owners are aware of their board of directors, few understand the difference between directors and officers



Each condominium corporation is managed by a board of directors. Directors are elected by condominium owners for terms ranging from one to three years. Officers are appointed by the board.

The Condo Act requires the board to appoint at least two officers for the roles of president and secretary. Additional officers may be appointed in accordance with corporation governing documents or by resolution of the board.

Officers who are not also directors do not have to attend board meetings nor are they allowed to participate in votes at these meetings.

Only the president of the corporation must also be a director. Anyone can serve as an officer. Owners cannot vote to remove officers. They can vote to remove directors before the end of their term if at least 50 percent of unit owners support a removal at a properly called meeting of owners.

Officers may be appointed by the board to replace a director that has resigned, or to obtain expertise the board feels is lacking.



ACCESS TO RECORDS AND FEES

Records maintained by a condominium corporation include personal information on residents and owners, and financial information on the corporation. Some records are available to owners. Depending on the type of records requested, fees may apply.

"Core" and "Non-core" Records

"Core" records are available free of charge in electronic format

"Non-core" records ... are available at a cost based on actual costs incurred by the corporation

"Core" records including Declaration, By-laws, Condo Rules, Meeting Minutes, Financial Statements and Notices are available free of charge in electronic format. When paper format is requested, there can be a maximum charge of 30 cents per page. No labour costs are permitted. If the Corporation only keeps the record in a paper form but the owner requests an electronic copy, it must provide a paper copy free of charge.

"Non-core" records are other available records of

the corporation. These are available at a cost based on actual costs incurred by the corporation. Copying costs are limited to \$0.20 per page. Labour costs may apply at a maximum rate of \$30.00 per hour to cover activities that include record redaction or archival retrieval.

Owners may request to examine certain records

CONTINUED PAGE 13



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ACCESS TO RECORDS AND FEES... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

rather than obtain a copy. Fees of \$0.20 per page for copying and up to \$30.00 per hour may apply for record redaction.

A refund of owner fees may apply if time spent is less than the Corporation's estimate. Additional payment may be due if actual labour costs are more than the estimate. The owner may be required to pay 10 percent of the difference.

Most financial and operating records must be maintained for a minimum of seven years. Certain records – Declaration, By-laws, Condo Rules, certain agreements – must be maintained indefinitely. Records can be stored electronically or in hard copy.

There must be protection against loss for electronic records. Hard copy records should be kept "reasonably close" for accessibility.

Requesting Condo Records

Anyone requesting access to condo records must submit a request to the board. Within 30 days the board is required to respond indicating which records they will and will not produce, and the estimated cost for producing these records. Access

to certain records may be legitimately denied.

There is no right to access certain information including personal contact information of owners, employee information, some opinions of legal counsel, and any portion of a ballot or proxy that identifies the owner or proxy-giver. The requestor is required to respond to the board's response identifying which records they would like to receive and payment of the estimated cost. Requests are to be submitted using a prescribed form provided by the Condominium Authority of Ontario (CAO). A records request is considered abandoned when the requestor fails to respond to the board's response within 60 days or if no dispute is filed with the Condominium Authority Tribunal within six months of the initial request.

Disputes over Access to Condo Records

When there is a dispute over access to condo records, a dispute can be filed with the Condo Authority Tribunal. Certain fees apply and are payable upon filing. Non-compliance with section 55 of the Condo Act is subject to a penalty of \$5,000 payable to the individual who requested and was improperly denied access to records.

Retention of Core Records

| | |
|---|------------|
| Declaration, By-laws, rules, shared facility agreements | Unlimited |
| Budget, approved financial statements | 7 years |
| Reserve fund plan, performance audits | Unlimited |
| Owner and mortgagee records, information certificates | 7 years |
| Meeting minutes – owners' and board meetings | Unlimited |
| Additional records per by-law | Per by-law |



IMPROVING YOUR INTERNET ACCESS

No one wants to be in the middle of a video meeting or watch Netflix and have to wait for the video to buffer, sound problems or inability to access the printer.

Your home internet service may require assistance to support more devices than it was ever intended for - smartphones, desktop, tablets and laptops for home and business; Zoom meetings; videogame system; multiplayer games; smart TVs and high-tech appliances.

Wi-Fi is more important than ever before because virtually all technology now relies on it. Ensuring you have a quality connection and good speed may require some work.

Too many devices sharing internet access may leave insufficient bandwidth for individual devices or applications. It may be difficult or impossible to get a signal in some homes, in areas of the home or on a balcony. Signal range is limited and more problematic in taller buildings where internet signals may be harder to obtain.

Bandwidth

Bandwidth can usually be resolved by purchasing a faster service. The more you pay, the faster the download and upload speeds, and the more data you're allowed to use per month.

A newer or better modem can be faster and more reliable.

Router

Wireless internet throughout your home requires a router. Locate it in a central spot on the main floor for maximum reach. Keep it higher up and off the floor in an open space rather than behind closed cabinet doors. Locating the router near where the line comes into the home may be a convenient but poor location. Electronic interference may be an issue if your router is installed near an electrical panel.

Wi-Fi routers can broadcast in two different frequencies; 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz. Some routers will automatically determine which is best for your location. The 2.4 GHz frequency can reach farther distances. The 5 GHz frequency operates at faster speeds.

Your router will be faster if it complies with the most current wireless standard which is currently Wi-Fi 6. Older standards offer slower upload and download speeds, and can support fewer devices.

Mesh System

For larger homes, a mesh system can resolve poor internet performance in certain rooms. This is a series of hubs, or routers, placed throughout the home. These hubs wirelessly communicate with the primary router to extend the Wi-Fi signal. Hubs are best placed closer to a strong signal so that it is extended rather than in an area with a weak signal.



HIGH-END EXERCISE FACILITIES



A modern, aesthetically pleasing and well-maintained exercise space remains one of the most sought-after amenities. This time of year, when so many make resolutions to improve their health and level of fitness, exercise rooms become crowded.

The exercise room or fitness center is the most heavily used of all building amenities. An exercise space promotes socialization, a healthy lifestyle and saves the expense of paying to join a club. Poor exercise space is among the most common complaints of building residents.

Many communities fail to provide enough equipment to support resident demand.

Enhanced fitness centres are part of smart residential community design. Developers understand the importance of this space for those who purchase condominium properties. Older buildings are looking at how to expand smaller spaces to accommodate owner interest.

After two years of working from home and closure of exercise facilities, and many continuing to work at home more often than previously, there is greater interest in access to a fully equipped gym and exercise classes that are easily accessible without having to travel.

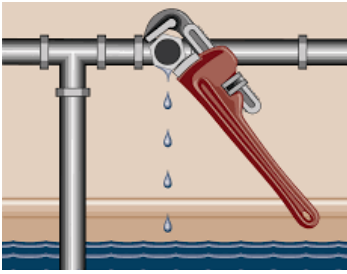
A small room with a low ceiling, no windows, lack of ventilation and a few pieces of equipment is unappealing and underutilized. Many prefer going to a fitness club rather than spending time in such a depressing space.

Newer facilities include high ceilings, windows providing natural light and a view, and more equipment including ellipticals, treadmills, bicycles and free weights. Spaces are designed so residential units are not affected by noise in the room. Open space for core exercises, stretching and group fitness classes is important. Change rooms with locker and shower facilities allow individuals to separate these activities from their personal living space.

High quality equipment, able to withstand frequent use by many people, is essential. Equipment should be regularly maintained and periodically replaced. The space should be kept clean and sanitary to prevent disease and avoid bad odours.

Larger, better equipped and more aesthetically pleasing spaces are better utilized than tiny, poorly equipped spaces.





LEAKY CONDO CRISIS

The Leaky Condo Crisis in British Columbia resulted in an estimated \$3 billion to \$5 billion in damage affecting tens of thousands of condos in the 1980s. Government responded by raising standards after the failures were attributed to designs inappropriate for the climate and cheaper materials that were used. Unaddressed was the lack of owner funding for ongoing maintenance.

Stratas In British Columbia (condominium corporations in Ontario) must undertake a reserve fund study every few years. There is no requirement that owners agree to provide funds in accordance with the study or for regular maintenance. Owners routinely failed to approve increases in condo fees to pay these costs so maintenance and repairs were routinely neglected. This situation is similar to what occurred prior to the Florida condominium building collapse.

A similar problem exists in Massachusetts. The Pinehills, a Plymouth luxury community of more than 5,000 residents is experiencing their own leaky

condo crisis. Two communities of 612 homes include about 100 homes with water problems. Owners blame the problems on poor design and building techniques, including defective building enclosures, that lead to water damage in many homes. Defective building enclosures can lead to rotting, mould and delamination. Owners also claim that developers failed to charge enough in monthly condo fees. Developers claim the problem is poor maintenance, and that they are not responsible for raising condo fees after handing over control to a condo board. Lawsuits claim real estate agents covered up the problem. Homes are more than 20 years old.

Ontario has avoided similar problems. Condominium corporations are required to undertake reserve fund studies and to ensure funds are available in a separate account for these expenditures. Special assessments, raising additional amounts from owners, results when condo fees are too low and funds unavailable when needed.



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Reduce operating costs & condo fees, save reserve funds
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TAKING GOOD MEETING MINUTES

Owners that want to be more engaged, aware of what their condo board is doing, and understand how they go about resolving problems want to know what happens in condo board meetings.

They rely on the accuracy of minutes from board meetings to understand what decisions are being made.

Meeting minutes will be scrutinized and analyzed. The more accurate, precise and clear they are, the fewer problems exist. This should be a simple task for those recognizing that minutes are not a verbatim account of each meeting. They exist as a record of what decisions are being made, when, and the financial implications of these decisions.

Include necessary details

All minutes should include the time and date of the meeting and location. Topics in the minutes should conform to the agenda. Avoid casual conversations, disagreements, hearsay and accusations. Recording of votes is important so attendance, including guests or invitees, should be included.

Be professional and clear

Minutes should be written in third person. Use wording such as "the board" rather than "I" or "we." Meeting minutes will be used by many people on many occasions. Lack of clarity makes it hard to prove decisions were made in a proper and legal manner.



Do not include restricted information

Discussions that include actual or contemplated litigation, specific units, staff, and other private items should be in a restricted records section of the minutes. Some call these "In Camera" minutes. When minutes are requested by owners, this information is not provided unless it pertains to that specific owner.

Most owners are unaware that meeting minutes are not intended to communicate information to owners. In fact, much of what owners want to know does not appear in meeting minutes. For this, they need to rely on newsletters and other communications.



WHO PAYS FOR UNIT REPAIRS

When unit repairs are necessary in a condominium corporation, a single question always arises. Who pays?

Heating, ventilation, water and other building systems have corporation and unit components. Owners are typically responsible for maintaining the unit component. This can extend to cleaning vents and lint traps, replacing filters, dealing with water leaks and caulking windows. All of this falls under general maintenance obligations of the owner. The corporation would be responsible for building systems until the point they enter a unit. For other situations, the answer to this question is not always simple and depends on the situation.

The corporation is responsible for repairs arising from its negligence.

When undertaking common area repairs, unit access may be necessary. The access wall to a leaking pipe may be in a unit. A corporation having to break through a wall to access the pipe would be required to return the unit to its original construction.

When common area mechanical equipment is updated, it may no longer be compatible with in-suite mechanical equipment. Replacing or upgrading in-suite mechanical equipment may not be a corporation responsibility.

When a question arises about who is responsible, the answer can usually be found in the declaration.

LOCAL SUCCESS STORY – CUP OF TE

An enterprising and successful business arose out of adversity. Cup of Té is a Toronto-based loose-leaf tea company started by Taylor Lindsay-Noel.

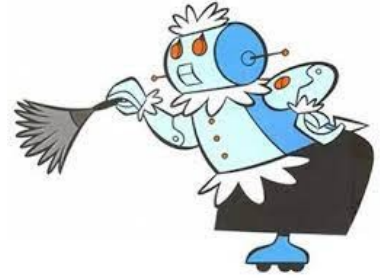
Taylor was a 14-year old elite national gymnast preparing to represent Canada in the 2012 Olympics, before a devastating fall from the high bar rendered her a quadriplegic and wheelchair-bound for life. She was attempting a difficult manoeuvre at the Seneca College practice gym. Rehabilitation was at Bloorview, with family, friends and Toronto Star readers contributing to her support. She returned to Northview Secondary School then studied at Ryerson before focusing on her passion. Taylor started a podcast called “Tea Time with Tay” and created her own blend of tea.

Soon after, Cup of Té was born in 2018. Business grew after being featured in O magazine, Oprah Winfrey's Favorite Things for 2020, and www.MarthaStewart.com. Oprah's stamp of approval created interest and demand took off!

Cup of Té is a high-end organic tea company offering premium teas made from organic ingredients and teaware. Orders are shipped throughout Canada. During the pandemic, Cup of Té benefited from growing interest in quality products delivered direct to the home. A portion of proceeds is donated to mental health-awareness causes and charities.

Cup of Té can only be ordered online. Visit their website at www.cupofte.ca to order.

SMART GADGETS FOR THE HOME



Today's smart gadgets are automated in ways that were unthinkable until recently. They are made smarter with internet accessibility.

Here are a few gadgets that can make your home smarter. Most smart gadgets are individually priced at \$100 to \$400

Cameras



Cameras for outside allow you to see who is at the front door, and speak with them via your smartphone even when not at home. Infrared night mode provides good visibility in the dark. Save and share clips in the cloud with an additional subscription service. Connect the camera to a smart speaker

to receive audible alerts and two-way audio. When motion is detected the camera will start recording. Users can send notification to their smartphone when activation occurs with live footage viewed through a web browser. Voice command controls are available.

Cameras can be activated to detect when a user leaves home and to record any entry during an absence. Indoors, cameras allow you to monitor activities when not at home. They are useful for keeping tabs on or speaking with pets and children.

Indoor cameras for monitoring pets include wide-angle lens, digital zoom and two-way audio. An audio notification feature informs when barking or meowing is recognized.

One of the challenges in high-rise communities is that a few individuals may fail to accept the concept of community living and shared responsibility. They may force security doors open, fail to properly dispose of trash or leave anonymous notices on resident doors. Security cameras can't be placed everywhere thus making it difficult to identify offenders. Smart cameras are low priced and can be temporarily located in problem areas. Cameras can operate wirelessly and are battery powered with local and on-line storage of recordings.

Smart Doors



Smart doors can be locked and unlocked using a phone or smartwatch, or by entering a numeric code on a digital pad. No key is required. Deadbolt

locks can even be locked and unlocked with your voice using a smart app such as Google Home. Just say "Google, lock the front door." Send someone a temporary and custom code for limited access. An app shows when your lock has been accessed, and by whom. When changing the lock on your high-rise

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SMART GADGETS FOR THE HOME... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

front door, inform building management and provide them with an emergency access key or code.

Lights



LED light bulbs consume less power than incandescent and fluorescent bulbs, last longer and generate less heat. Smart bulbs can be managed through an app or smart speaker. Change their colour, dim or brighten

a room, and schedule lights to turn on and off at pre-set times.

Smart Temperature Control



Smart thermostats can reduce your heating and cooling bill. Adjust temperature and comfort settings from an app, smart speaker, or by using the

thermostat's 3.5-inch touchscreen. Add room sensors for more precise control.

Smoke, Carbon Monoxide and Water Sensors



Be informed when your home or its occupants are under threat from smoke, carbon monoxide or water. A voice warns when smoke or other danger is detected

and tells you the location. Warnings can be sent to

your smartphone. System algorithms know the difference between smoke from a fire and steam from a shower which minimize false warnings. Smart sensors will automatically test their batteries and sensors. An app can automatically silence an alarm from your smartphone.

Cleaning



Have your own Rosie the Robot to keep your home clean. Systems are activated by voice control, pressing a button on the unit or an app on your phone.

Wet mopping and dry sweeping pads are interchangeable. Systems can be directed to clean an entire floor, room or "around the kitchen table".

Robotic systems incorporate sensors that navigate a floor including around objects and under couches. Wireless systems will automatically dock and recharge when battery power runs low.



TORONTO

CONDO NEWS

OUR READERS ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS!

OVER 50% OF TORONTONIANS CHOOSE CONDOMINIUMS OVER OTHER HOUSING

What condo dwellers are reading

Tocondonews.com

NOTICE OF VIOLATION

Furniture



You have received a Notice of Violation pertaining to lobby furniture. What do you do?

The condo lobby is the first impression of your home seen by visitors. Damaged, worn or missing furniture conveys the impression that a building is poorly maintained and detracts from what others will pay to reside there. When furnishing the lobby, fire safety requirements should be considered.

The Notice of Violation pertaining to lobby furniture means this furniture is a fire risk. Should there be a fire, the furniture may quickly catch fire or produce large amounts of smoke. You can't store the furniture elsewhere since this is also in contravention of fire regulations.

The safety focus on lobby furniture began after a tragic 2016 fire that claimed four lives. The furniture was made of flammable materials and caught fire. It hindered the ability of first responders to fight the fire and save lives.

Since this time, there has been a greater focus on furniture in common areas of buildings with more attention paid to lobbies and hallways. The goal is to save lives in the event of a fire.

Section 2.4.1.1. (2) of Division B of the Ontario Fire Code, states "Combustible materials shall not be accumulated in any part of an elevator shaft, ventilation shaft, means of egress, service room or service space, unless the location, room or space is designed for those materials." Section 2.3.2.1. (1) of Division B of the Ontario Fire Code states "Drapes,

curtains, netting, and other similar or decorative materials, including textiles and films used in buildings, shall meet the requirements of CAN/ULCS109, "Flame Tests of Flame-Resistant Fabrics and Films", when these materials are used in any... lobby or exit..." Manufacturers of fire rated furniture or fabrics should be able to produce a certificate or document stating this standard is met.

More vigorous enforcement of this standard began in 2018. Each community should have a Fire Safety Plan Book in which they can store certificates documenting the safety of common area furniture and finishings.

Building lobbies are designed to be welcoming and offer a good first impression. Large sofas and chairs with leather and dense cushions that may not be made of fire rated materials are popular. Fire rated materials are those able to withstand a high degree of heat. If they do catch fire, there will not be thick, black smoke that is hard to see through. The risk of death by smoke inhalation is reduced.

Once that Notice of Violation pertaining to lobby furniture is received, act quickly to resolve the problem. The fire department will return in a couple of weeks to ensure the violation has been corrected. If unable to show it has been or will soon be resolved, they can and likely will assess fines for non compliance.





GETTING FULL VALUE FROM COMMUNICATIONS

Investing the time to communicate effectively provides tangible savings and benefits that are difficult to quantify.

Maintain a library of information periodically requested by owners. This includes corporation declaration, by-laws and rules; unit floor plans; meeting minutes; instructions and forms for reserving the elevator, party room or other spaces; and financial records. Managers will spend less time dealing with repetitive issues, requests for information, and questions. Their days will be more productive, and less encumbered by phone calls and e-mail.

Educate owners about energy efficiency, waste management, rules and being neighbourly.

Remind them that images from security cameras monitoring common areas and identifying those failing to abide by rules will be used for enforcement. There will be fewer problems for management to deal with, lower energy costs and a cleaner home.

Board meetings are shorter when owners are better informed, understand the rules of their home, and cause fewer items to be placed on the agenda.

Directors and management have fewer owners complaining about practices, rules, policies and enforcement when they are better informed. Building staff are less likely to be harassed by frustrated or difficult residents.

Better educated communities spend less on electricity, water and cleaning. They become more aware of how individual actions cost the corporation. Of course, security cameras in common areas that identify those who cause damage or create extra work help to keep everyone honest.

An educated community has fewer problems. Their home is better maintained when everyone is working toward the same result. Financial savings can be redirected to improving the home instead of dealing with problems.



DESIGN TRENDS FOR 2024

This isn't about the latest in fashion trends, colours or textures. It isn't about what furniture looks best. For those intrigued by these issues, there are more home décor and renovation programs and magazines than any single person can consume.

When it comes to high-rise living, we focus on what is unique to the high-rise living space.

One area is lobbies which have high traffic.

When replacing old, damaged or outdated flooring, nylon carpet is a reasonably priced and practical solution offering durability and requiring limited maintenance. Nylon carpet will hold the dirt that builds up in a hallway. A weekly vacuuming restores the carpet. Vinyl floors, also easy to maintain, require more effort and a wet mop.

Speaking of lobbies, less seating is more popular. This prevents groups from congregating in the space. Some lobbies have become overcrowded with furniture. Less furniture, more elegantly spread out, makes the lobby look more balanced and upscale.

Opening up the lobby lends itself to more effective use of space for services that support today's lifestyle choices. Excess space can be used to provide better support for growing e-commerce. Space can be repurposed to store more incoming packages with designated areas for short-term storage of more sensitive deliveries of medication, groceries and perishable food.

Common areas can incorporate components to better support the digital world. Amenities can include space for private conversations and backdrops that look good on Zoom, Facetime, and Instagram selfies. Business lounges, areas where a small number of people can work with their laptops in a quiet space with privacy, are important to those who work from home. Of course, good internet service is a necessity if these spaces are to be utilized.

No designs last forever. If you are hoping that today's renovation will survive for 30 years, prepare to be disappointed. The reality is that furniture gets worn and walls damaged. How people adapt to their technology is constantly changing. Area renovations every seven to 10 years is typical, with minor aesthetic changes every couple of years. Spaces should be designed in anticipation of minor and non-structural changes to keep them vibrant and in demand.



BASIC TOOLS FOR THE HIGH-RISE HOME



Every home should be equipped with a few basic tools for handling those small jobs that don't require a professional. A small toolbox with a tape measure, utility knife, claw hammer, multitbit

screwdriver, level, crescent wrenches, hex or Allen keys, and a collection of screws and nails should be sufficient for most small jobs around the home.

Turning off the water is important when leaving home for a number of days and essential when there is a water leak. Turning it off within minutes is the difference between an inconvenience and possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage. Know where the water shut-off is located and how to turn it off. This may require a custom key or wrench that should readily accessible.

A battery-powered drill, plus a selection of bits for drilling and screwing, is handy for projects of all types including putting together furniture. The basic models found in most stores are adequate for most purposes.

A step ladder or step stool is more than just a convenience. Using a chair to reach inaccessible or difficult-to-reach areas is the cause of many injuries. When using a ladder, never go beyond its recommended top step.

Every home should have a fire extinguisher near the kitchen which is where most home fires start. Be sure it is an ABC-rated unit for use on all fire types.

ACT OR OMISSION



One obligation of condominium owners is to ensure their unit is well maintained, and not the source of property damage to common areas of the corporation or other units.

When an owner fails in this regard, the corporation may apply a chargeback to the unit owner for repairs. This is allowed if the corporation is able to establish an "act or omission". This refers to an act or omission by the owner that caused or resulted in the damage to common areas or other units.

Condominium owners have an obligation for general maintenance of their unit which can extend to cleaning vents and lint traps, replacing filters, repairing water leaks and caulking windows. Failure in this regard can result in a small water leak that worsens if unreported or unrepaired, blocked or dirty ducts resulting in a fire, improper renovations, pest infestations, or flooding because of failure to shut off water before going on vacation.

Condominium living is desirable partially because there are fewer home-related maintenance obligations. It is still necessary to ensure that failure to undertake the fewer obligations that remain do not impact on other units or common areas.



FOB VERIFICATION

I received a forwarded email from my landlord by the Management Office regarding condo fobs and remotes. For security reasons they are commencing verification of fobs and remotes from all tenants and owners. All persons are to be physically present with their fobs and remotes for registration purposes. Included in this will be vehicle, pet and parking spot registration checks.

Is this legal?

S. D.



Response from Toronto Condo News

Your community is taking measures making it more difficult for individuals who should not have access to your building. This is a best practice and to be commended.

The condominium corporation is responsible for all activities occurring in the common areas of its building. This includes being aware of who is accessing the property.

Fobs can be duplicated which presents a security risk. An audit or verification as you describe protects against this. See [Fob Counterfeiting](#) in the [Condo Archives](#) for more information.

Verification of fobs and remotes, and requiring residents in possession of them to be present for this verification, ensures only those individuals entitled to access the building have these access devices. Unverified building access devices should be deactivated.

Likewise, all vehicles in parking areas and pets residing in units should be known to the corporation. Over time, pet situations and vehicle possession changes without management being notified. A periodic verification such as you describe ensures that corporation records are updated.

In the absence of fobs and remote access devices, building residents rely on keys to enter a building. Copies may have been made for family, friends or contractors. Security is harder to maintain since changing locks require that all residents obtain new keys.

As a tenant, you are required to comply with the condominium corporation's governing documents which includes this verification if you want continued access to the building and its common areas. If your landlord is also in possession of any building fobs or remotes, they would also be required to comply with this verification process.

It sounds as if your board and building management are taking security seriously. This reduces the risk of theft or damage, and increases your safety.



Information and resources for the Toronto and GTA condo community

Serving Condominium Residents, Directors and Management



Toronto Condo News

Our monthly magazine is what condo dwellers are reading.

Condo Archives

Comprehensive condo-focused library you can search for answers to your questions about condo living and condo management.

Condo Resource Guide

Vendors and service providers for condominium managers, condominium directors and condominium residents.
Condo Resource Guide is Toronto's #1 source for the Condo Professionals you need.

All resources available at

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