

Condominium Home Owners Association

A non-profit association serving strata owners since 1976

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Condo Smarts

Headline: Operations plan can eliminate grief for owners

Topic: Maintenance and an operations plan

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Have you ever wondered where vents and fans exhaust all that moisture, odours and smoky cooking smoke? Are you sure your dryer venting is going outside? What if it's plugged?

A White Rock complex recently discovered that all of the exhausts were going into the attic space of each townhouse. After almost six years of extended use, several owners noticed a "musty" smell in their upper floor living spaces, which originated in the attic. The moisture from the kitchen fans, bathroom fans and the dryer vents was going into the attic spaces. The fan systems had been installed, but the venting connections in the attics had never been connected. The strata is now having the mould and damaged areas of each townhouse replaced at great expense.

Strata Law: Crawlspace and attic spaces are either designated as common property or do not have any specific property designation, so they default to common property. According to the act, the strata as a whole must maintain and repair the common property. Attics and crawlspaces are clearly for exclusive use, as the only access is from within individual strata lots – but if they are common property, they are still the responsibility of the strata, not individual owners, for maintenance and repairs. (By the

same token, any additions or alterations to these areas require written permission of the corporation).

Tips: Venting, ducts, emergency systems and water lines frequently pass through crawlspaces and attics of townhouses and apartments. It is crucial to regularly inspect these areas to prevent damage resulting from component failures. Every strata property should have a building operations plan.

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