

**Headline: The Importance of Unit Owners' Personal Insurance**

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What is a unit owner responsible for insuring? When owners are provided with the strata's insurance report, some mistakenly believe the corporation's insurance policy will protect their personal assets in the event of a loss; this is not the case.

Unit owners, whether living in the unit or as an investor, should always make sure their personal assets and liabilities are adequately protected by their own personal insurance policy.

**A typical unit owner's policy provides a variety of coverage:**

- Personal Property: in general terms, this coverage includes all the content items a unit owner brings into the unit or keeps in a storage locker on premises, such as furniture, electronics, clothing, etc.
  - Additional Living Expenses: this coverage helps unit owners and their families deal with the extra expenses which can often result if the home is uninhabitable due to an insured loss or damage. Whether it is a fire or significant water damage due to no fault of their own, unit owners may have to move out while their unit is being repaired. In the case of an investment unit, this coverage helps pay the owner's rental income loss due to the tenant moving out.
  - Improvements & Betterments: many unit owners spend considerable money making the unit their own; old carpet is replaced with hardwood flooring, cabinets and counter tops are updated and fixtures modernized to the 21st century. The unit owner's personal insurance policy provides coverage for these items, which are specifically excluded from coverage under all strata corporations' insurance policies.
  - Strata Deductible Assessment: more and more strata corporations have by-laws in place to facilitate charging back the strata deductible to the unit owner responsible for a loss or damage. Unit owners or their tenants need not be liable in order for the deductible to be passed back, in many cases the mere fact the damage originates in the unit is sufficient to make the assessment valid. Strata deductibles can be as low as \$1,000 and as high as \$500,000. Unit owners need to ensure that the limit on their personal policies is sufficient to cover any strata deductible they may be responsible for (including earthquake).
  - Personal Liability: at home or pretty much anywhere in the world, unit owners' policies also provide comprehensive protection for claims against them for property damage and bodily injury.
- Why get personal insurance? Because not getting it is much too risky and expensive. Protect yourself!

**Things to Discuss with your Broker.**

Each Unit Owner policy is different; it is imperative that owners ensure the limits of insurance on their Unit Owner policies are sufficient and that there are minimal gaps in coverage between the insurance of the unit owner and that of the Strata Corporation. Take some time to review the terms and conditions of your policy with your insurance broker. Here are some key questions to ask:

1. What is the limit of coverage provided to me for the Improvements and Betterments in my unit? Please note, unit owners are responsible for insuring the improvements they have made to their unit along with the improvements previous owners have made to the unit.
2. If my unit is uninhabitable due to an insured loss, what amount of coverage is provided for the Additional Living Expenses that I incur?  
This covers the necessary increase in living expense if you are unable to occupy your unit. Such costs could include hotel accommodation and moving household furniture.

3. If the strata suffers a loss that originates from my unit, what amount of coverage does my policy provide if I am charged back the strata's deductible?

Please take a copy of the strata's insurance coverage with you so you can advise your broker of the strata's policy deductibles.

4. If there is damage in my unit, to original strata property (floors, ceilings, walls and NOT improvements and betterments or personal property), and this damage falls below the Strata Corporation's deductible, what amount of coverage does my policy provide to repair this damage?

This coverage varies greatly from insurer to insurer and as we are seeing larger deductibles for strata corporations, this could be a very expensive repair for a unit owner. While an owner may recover financially after a \$3,000 repair if the strata's policy has a \$5,000 water/sewer deductible, being responsible for an \$18,000 repair if the strata's policy has a \$20,000 water/sewer deductible is another story entirely.

5. What is my limit of coverage provided for assessments made necessary by the Strata's Earthquake Deductible?

In the event of an earthquake, the Strata Corporation has a significant deductible; usually 10% - 15% of the insured value.

Please have a discussion with your broker. It is helpful to bring a copy of the strata's insurance policy with you. A copy of the strata's insurance coverage is often provided with your AGM Notice Package.