

Condominium Home Owners Association

A non-profit association serving strata owners since 1976

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Condo Smarts

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One night, a Kelowna couple awoke to the sound of water pouring into their unit. They leapt from the bed and were horrified to discover that their 18th-century dining-room suite was saturated with water coming from the unit above.

It turned out the damage was a result of a broken pipe. No one was home in the unit and by the time the break was discovered, hundreds of gallons of water has saturated several floors of the strata building.

Devastated by the damage to their priceless heirloom, the couple sought restitution from the strata corporation but found their claim wasn't valid. This was because they thought the strata insurance covered their unit and its contents as well. It doesn't.

One big advantage to strata living is that costs are shared, often making expenses lower for all. This includes insurance. Since the couple had been paying for this insurance in the common strata expenses, they never gave a second thought but strata insurance covers only common property and assets, not individuals. The couple could not claim for the table.

Strata Law: The strata corporation's insurance must cover the full replacement value of the strata corporation's assets. These include items

originally installed by the developer. Flooring, walls, cabinets, built-in appliances, light and plumbing fixtures and all other common assets, including windows, doors, building structure and infrastructure are covered in the strata corporation insurance. This is a valuable aspect of strata life as all owners have equal replacement value on their structure. As an owner you are responsible for items in your possession plus any betterments to the strata lot, such as upgraded kitchens, plumbing or hardwood floors.

Tips: Whether in private homes or a strata building, never make assumptions about insurance. Check with your insurer and read the bylaws. Make sure your insurance covers possessions.

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