

Condominium Home Owners Association

A non-profit association serving strata owners since 1976

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Condo Smarts

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Topic: Maintenance

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The past two weeks of heavy rain has, for one Richmond strata, made a mockery out of the marketing phrase "strata life, carefree living". Owners recently went down to the below grade parking garage to discover their cars swimming in a sea of oily goo. Luckily, few cars were damaged but the elevator room and electrical room were seriously damaged. The culprit: failed sump systems. The 14-year-old building had four hidden sump pumps to remove ground water and overflows during heavy rains. Unfortunately, neither the strata or new manager had realized that the pumps existed. Damage to the building and assets is about \$15,000.00. Alarms for the sump system would have cost \$700 and monitoring could have been added to their current monitoring system at no cost.

Tips: Most buildings with basements and underground parking areas have some sort of sump system. These must be maintained and serviced. A simple alarm installed on the system, which can be monitored, can alert the residents of failure long before any damage is caused to the building systems or personal property.

Strata Law: Section 3 of the Strata Property Act sets out the most fundamental principle of strata living: the strata council is responsible for managing and maintaining the common property and common assets of the strata corporation for the benefit of all owners. The standard bylaws, like most amended bylaws, states that the strata corporation must perform the maintenance and repairs. At this time, the strata council is investigating an insurance claim, however, they had failed to perform regular maintenance and may be faced with the expense and a costly explanation to the owners.

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