

# Condominium Home Owners Association

A non-profit association serving strata owners since 1976

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## Condo Smarts

Headline: Maintenance now saves money later

Topic: Maintenance

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The most important tenant of the strata property law is that the strata corporation is responsible for managing its common property and common for the benefit of the owners.

In conducting building reviews of stratas throughout B.C., I have discovered a vast array of neglected building systems. The major systems that fail when not properly serviced, inspected and maintained include heating and hot-water systems, air-conditioning and circulation systems, roofing, decking, exterior cladding such as siding and stucco, windows and doors, interior plumbing and drainage, elevators, and common area carpets and covering.

The result of the neglect is higher costs and risks for the strata. A Burnaby strata has neglected their heating system for years and has experienced six water-leak claims on its insurance over the past five years. On renewing the insurance, the strata discovered its deductible has jumped from \$5,000 to \$100,000 dollars. The strata is now faced with the disastrous result of deferred maintenance and failures in the heating system.

**Strata Law:** In addition to the act, bylaws also require the strata to maintain and repair the common property and common assets of the corporation. However, the Act and bylaws do

not stipulate what standard is required. As a result, many stratas have adopted bylaws that detail the service agreements and schedules of inspections that are required to reasonably maintain the strata's common property and assets.

**Tips:** Stratas are wise to operate with building maintenance manuals that clearly direct the responsibilities of the council and their agents in performing their duties.

Remember the line "pay me now or pay me later?" Later is much more costly.

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