

# Condominium Home Owners Association

A non-profit association serving strata owners since 1976

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## Condo Smarts

Headline: Increased demand may stress furnaces, hot-water tanks

Topic: Maintenance

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Many strata apartments and townhouses have their own hot water tanks and furnaces. With the onset of colder weather, the demands on these appliances have greatly increased and sometimes failures and damages can occur.

In the last week alone, we have received over 25 calls regarding failed and leaking hot water tanks. The tanks have breached, flooding out the homes and in many cases, neighbours as well. One strata has also experienced a fire resulting from an 18-year old furnace that had never been maintained. Not only are the costs mounting for the owners, but they are also increasing the risk of the strata, which directly causes the insurance rates and deductibles to rise.

**Strata Law:** The most simple concept of the Act and the bylaws is that the strata corporation maintains and repairs common property and the strata owners maintain and repair their own strata units. Unless the strata amend the bylaws, owners must maintain and repair the items in their strata unit that are for their exclusive use. If the damage is the result of neglect, the strata may the right to charge the owner for the deductible. There is an exception, though. If the original fixture is damaged as a result of an insurable loss, such as fire or the recent floods, the insurance of the strata would come into effect to replace the damaged fixtures.

**Tips:** Avoid the headaches of losses and claims and notify your strata owners that they have obligations to maintain and repair their strata lots. A simple checklist sent out with the annual general meeting notice can provide a reasonable reminder of what has to be maintained and when. The biggest culprits are: hot water tanks, washing machines and hoses, dishwashers, garburetors, fridge ice makers, furnaces and jacuzzi tubs.

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