

Condominium Home Owners Association

A non-profit association serving strata owners since 1976

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Condo Smarts

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We often spend time discussing difficulties caused by strata councils or rogue owners, but too often we forget that the day-to-day maintenance of strata lots can also be neglected. The result is damage to homes, loss of feasible insurance, devaluation of property and a general disruption of everyone's lives – often damage that is completely unnecessary and preventable.

In most circumstances the owners are simply unaware they have responsibilities to maintain and repair the building. Simply to maintain his or her own property, every owner should routinely inspect and maintain under-sink drains and taps, garbage disposals, under dishwashers, the condition of washing machine hoses and drains, ice-maker water lines and drains, toilet tanks and seals. Routine services to deck drains, window sills and drains, fan screens, dryer outflows, gas/wood fireplaces, weather stripping, furnaces, tub and tile caulking is important preventative maintenance.

Strata law: Owners are responsible for the maintenance and repair of their strata lots, including those fixtures or assets which form part of the strata lot, such as flooring, lighting, electrical panels, furnaces, gas fireplaces, built-in appliances, plumbing fixtures and original finishings.

The original assets and fixtures in the strata lot however, are also part of the mandatory items that the strata lot must insure. So while an owner is responsible for the cleaning and maintenance (for example) of the original carpet, the strata insures the carpet due to insurable losses such as fire or water damage.

Tips: An annual notice to the owners clearly identifying what fixtures and assets they must maintain and repair within a strata lot is extremely valuable. An owner who has been notified to repair and maintain bathtub caulking but who has avoided the repairs and maintenance, could be found liable for damages caused due to neglect. If this happened, the owner would pay for damages and losses instead of the strata corporation.

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