

Condominium Home Owners Association

A non-profit association serving strata owners since 1976

Bulletin: 300-117

Condo Smarts

Headline: Home-based mean harmony

Topic: Home-based businesses

Publication date: March 6, 2005

Publication: The Province

Written by: Tony Gioventu

Working at home is a huge trend and the number of strata owners who use their homes as a place of business shows no sign of abating.

Many home-based workers are in predictable fields. Online day traders, writers, phone service workers, professional agents and accountants find working from home convenient and economical. In most communities, businesses like this function in harmony with residents. But waking up early on a Saturday morning to the sound of a nearby table saw or screechy violin lessons can put even the best of neighbours in the foulest of moods.

After great conflict, one Vancouver Island strata has found a solution to the woes that began when some home-based craft businesses started to disturb other residents. Rather than prohibiting business activities entirely, they created bylaws that permit home-based businesses to operate at specific hours of the week and at regulated noise levels. While the solution is not perfect, it has returned strata life to normal and as a bonus has created a unique artisan community.

Strata Law: The bylaws regulate the unreasonable interference of neighbours in day-to-day life. Does an owner have the right to teach piano lessons at 9:00pm, which disturbs

others? The short answer is no. As a strata owner it is your responsibility (as well as the responsibility of any tenants and visitors) to respect the privacy and enjoyment of other residents.

Tips: Not all business activities are permitted in residential strata lots. Municipalities require business licences and you may be required to get the written authorization of the strata before you are allowed to conduct business. Insurance and liability are also important factors for home-based businesses. Are you, your clients and the strata properly covered for the purpose of your business? Find out before a claim arises.

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