

Condominium Home Owners' Association

Serving BC's Strata Property Owners since 1976

Bulletin: 300-270

Condo Smarts

Headline: Dryer vents in high-rise construction

Topic: Vents

Publication date: March 23, 2008

Publication: The Province

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Dear Condo Smarts: I live on the twelfth floor of an high rise building. Recently I noticed a water stain on my hallway ceiling. I believe the stain is due to condensation created by a plugged dryer vent. At the same time I noticed it was taking an extra long time for my clothes to dry. Could you advise whose responsibility it is to ensure the dryer vents are cleaned on an annual basis. The dryer vents in our building were cleaned in late 2006 but not done in 2007 as the roof anchors had to be replaced. Barbara Reynolds, New Westminster, BC

Dear Barbara: Who's responsible for dryer vents? Who's responsible for windows? These are the two most common questions we field every day and share a common answer. As no two strata plans and bylaws are identical the answer cannot be general. The boundaries of your strata lots are: between units defined by the walls, ceilings, floors, common hallways, or outside walls, as shown on your registered strata plan. The boundaries divide what is part of the strata lot and what is common property. So the first step for anyone is to look at the strata plan. Next look at the Strata Act & the Strata Bylaws. According to the Act, common property is the part of the land and buildings shown on a strata plan that is not part of a

strata lot, and pipes, ducts, located within a floor, wall, or ceiling that forms a common boundary between 2 or more strata lots, the strata lot and common property, or a strata lot and another parcel of land are common property. In most high-rise and apartment style buildings ducting in the floors is common property. The windows border the outside and the exterior and are also generally common property. The Act & Regulations do not permit bylaws that make owners responsible for common property. That means the strata corporation must maintain and repair the dryer vents (ducts) and windows. Many strata corporations routinely clean their ducts once a year, but it is not uncommon during the course of construction that a vent may have collapsed or was plugged with constructions materials, the exterior screens are plugged, or your dryer is simply not powerful enough to exhaust the air over a long distance. Residents must use lint traps and clean them every time, otherwise the ducts will compact much quicker, and the long term damage to their interior finishes may be significant. If your unit is experiencing difficulties, then so are other units. If the ducts are plugged, there is an excessive amount of moisture pumping into your buildings. The results will be mould and long term damages.

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