

**Condo Smarts**

Headline: Giving a lift to strata elevator safety

Topic: Elevators

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**Dear Tony:** We are a 30 unit, four-story wood frame building that recently received our depreciation report. Among the many repair and maintenance items identified, our depreciation report planner said we need to upgrade our elevator by October 2015. This is the first we have heard about any new safety requirements. Can you shed some light on this requirement and where we can gather more information? - *David Mullin, Victoria*

**Dear David:** The BC Safety Authority (BCSA) has issued a safety order on single bottom cylinders in hydraulic elevators. A good place to start is with your elevator maintenance contractor to determine what type of elevator your strata has and if it has a single bottom cylinder. If your strata has a single bottom cylinder you will need to submit a compliance plan to the BCSA. Since your strata should have filed its compliance plan by last February this is something your strata will want to take care of quickly. If your strata has a single bottom cylinder you must comply with the safety order and submit a compliance notification form by October 8, 2015. Talk with your elevator maintenance contractor to determine costs and the best course of action for your strata. If upgrades are needed there are four options to consider; you could replace the single bottom cylinder equipment with double bottom cylinders that have a code compliant cylinder protection system; create a safety redundancy by installing a piston gripper system, install car safeties and governor, which acts like a brake in the case of a system failure, or finally replace the hydraulic system with a machine room-less traction elevator.

For those strata that determine the elevator in their corporations are not a single bottom

cylinder BCSA is still requesting they submit a compliance plan form, with documentation from their maintenance contractor or the original elevator manufacturer that supports the strata has either upgraded the equipment or that the elevator has a double bottom cylinder.

Since your elevator upgrade was identified in your depreciation report this may be a good opportunity for your strata to take advantage of recent legislative amendments. Earlier this month the *Strata Property Act* was amended, making it easier for a strata corporation to carry out their repair and maintenance responsibilities. Specifically, it is now easier for strata corporations to pay for repairs recommended by their depreciation report by reducing the required approval for contingency reserve fund expenditures for such repairs from a three-quarters vote to a majority vote. Failure to comply with this BC Safety Authority order could result in enforcement action, including the possibility of a monetary penalty, therefore all strata corporations are encouraged to take a look at their elevator system and determine if this safety order applies to them. More information is available from the BC Safety Authority website at [www.safetyauthority.ca](http://www.safetyauthority.ca) - type "Single Bottom Cylinder" in the search field in the top right corner for more information.

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