

Strata Living

Headline: What's in your storage locker?

Topic: Storage Lockers

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Written by: Tony Gioventu

Dear Tony: The article on gas storage was an eye opener for our strata council. We have suspected some unusual use of the storage lockers for the past few years, but only this week did we start to take a look at the lockers and were surprised and appalled by what we found. Out of the 77 lockers in our building, 6 were bare, 44 had just boxes, 7 had nothing but tires and bikes, and 20 were a nightmare. 5 were stacked to the ceiling with all kinds of unidentified materials, 2 had appliances that were plugged into altered circuits, one was filled with propane bottles and camping equipment, one had 2 pianos, another was buckets filled with soil (which we suspect is being used for illegal agriculture), 1 was shelved and obviously used for a recycling business, and the remainder contained leaking containers, garbage and piles of clothing. For the most part council is not concerned provided there are no fire safety or unlawful issues, but clearly owners have used these lockers as extensions to their homes and not just storage. How do we control the use of lockers and enforce non compliance?

Bayley J. Surrey

Dear Bayley: Most storage lockers are usually common or limited common property, with the odd units as part of a strata lot or separate strata lot. The use of

lockers and what is stored in the lockers is best addressed through a bylaw. If the strata adopts a bylaw that regulates the use and types of storage of materials in storage lockers it would then apply to all types of property designation. The bylaw should clearly list what is permitted to be stored in lockers, the types of materials, quantities, and the requirement for routine inspection and maintenance of locker areas. The bylaw should also give the strata corporation authority to enter lockers with reasonable notice to the strata lot owner or tenant, and the remedies in the event the user violates the bylaws. It is also helpful for the bylaw to include information regarding security, the user's obligation to insure their personal property and the limitations to use. Unauthorized alterations and use of electrical service or plumbing should also be addressed. The other reports we have received included a person with 200 hamsters in a large cage, stacked oozing garbage infested with cock roaches and rats, 25 bicycles all of which were stolen, firearms and ammunition, a locker filled with stolen street signs and a home brewery.

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