

Strata Living

Headline: Tiling Balconies
Topic: Balconies & Decks; alterations
Publication date: March 13, 2014
Publication: 24 Hours
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Dear Tony: Our strata is an older apartment style of high rise condos with balconies. The balconies are part of our strata lots and each owner is responsible for the maintenance of their balcony areas. A group of owners want to have tiles installed on our balcony surfaces to improve their appearance. The president of the council has said it's ok as we are responsible for them, but one of our owners has raised a good question. What happens if there are problems that occur from the tile installation? Who is going to have to pay those costs?

Emilia C.

Dear Emilia: The answer to most questions that deal with alterations to either strata lots or common property always starts the same way: ***before you alter common property or a strata lot read your bylaws and contact your strata council.*** Many problems in strata corporations can be prevented if owners, tenants, occupants and strata council members simply followed the requirements of their bylaws. Never take anyone's verbal approval. Make an application in writing to the strata corporation and request permission for the proposed alteration in writing. You will discover that even in older buildings where the balconies are part of the strata the bylaws may still require approval in writing before any

alterations are made to the exterior of the building. A condition of approval may require the strata lot owner to take responsibility for any maintenance, costs or liabilities associated with the alteration if it is part of the strata lot, or for any costs related to the alteration if it is part of the common property. Alterations to building exteriors, such as balcony enclosures and deck alterations, may have a significant impact on the performance of the building exterior, drainage, or surface materials. It is important for the strata council and the owner making any such alterations to consult with experienced and qualified technicians and contractors to ensure you are not creating any potential future problems, the alterations don't impact safety or building code requirements, and that they are permitted within the bylaws of the strata corporation.

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