

Condominium Home Owners Association

A non-profit association serving strata owners since 1976

Bulletin: 300-111

Condo Smarts

Headline: Check out this list: Regular inspections can prevent damage

Topic: Conducting regular inspections

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What lurks beneath your floors? Whether you are an apartment, townhouse or bare-land-house owner, the risk of silent water is ever present.

On New Year's Eve a West Vancouver apartment owner discovered their ice maker had stopped working. Now that will put a stop to any party! Yet the worst news was yet to come. The ice maker had apparently been leaking for some time. The water had been leaking through the walls of several apartments.

When the fridge was pulled out, the owners discovered rot and mold on the wall and floors. Estimated cost of repairs and restoration, \$30,000-\$50,000

Strata Law: The Act is clear. An owner must maintain and repair his or her strata lot. This includes the internal parts of the strata lot and the owner's personal property. Because the fridge is removable and not built in, it forms part of the owner's possessions and must be insured by the owner. If the strata can prove negligence on the part of the owner, they may be able to recover the cost of the insurance deductible or the losses.

Tips: Every appliance needs routine maintenance and inspection. I often recommend that, along with the notice of annual general meeting, that councils include a list of duties that are the responsibility of owners and their tenants.

This list includes maintaining dishwashers, washer hoses and connections, internal dryer vents, hot water tanks, tap spray units, garburetors, shower, tub and toilet drains and caulking, ice makers and water filters, air conditioner discharges, all sinks and taps, floor and deck drains, exhaust hoods and fans, furnaces and heating systems. Routinely checking these items only takes about a half hour and can save owners and their neighbours considerable personal and financial losses.

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