

Condominium Home Owners Association

A non-profit association serving strata owners since 1976

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Condo Smarts

Headline: Records of construction crucial to stratas

Topic: Record keeping and new strata corporations

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Thousands of new condos are sold every month in B.C., and many of the first purchasers are new to strata living. How can they make strata living a great experience and protect their investment as well?

I received a letter a few weeks ago from a new council that didn't know where the water shut-offs for the building were and inquired where they would find this information.

After some quick questions about their management structure, it was apparent that no one had processed the records of the building construction, operations manuals or warranties. In addition, a number of owners had, without realizing it, run afoul of strata law and endangered building envelope warranties by making some alterations to the exteriors of the units, attaching satellite dishes, planters and shutters to the building.

Strata Law: At the first annual general meeting of the strata corporation, the developer must provide a concise list of records, documents, plans, contractors' names and records that are crucial for the operation of the strata corporation. This list is available under section 20 of the Act. If the developer fails to provide the documents, the strata may recover from the developer any of the standard costs that will be incurred to obtain those records.

Tips: Most strata corporations have in fact been receiving the necessary documents, records, and maintenance plans. However, once received, they are often filed where no one has access to them, or they become long forgotten.

Take time to create a log of your documents and identify their location. Provide a copy of the log to all council members, including the critical information of warranties and contractors and trades who built the project which can be a vital source of valuable information in a pinch.

Your warranties are especially critical. One binder system should hold all of the warranties, and a summary page should be created that shows the expiry date of the warranties and the maintenance and inspection requirements that ensure the warranties are protected. The limitations on warranty should also be published for every homeowner. Building envelope warranties can be seriously compromised if someone is drilling holes or screwing into the surfaces of the exterior.

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