



# FIRSTSERVICE RESIDENTIAL CONNECTIONS

SUMMER | 2017



## **INTO THE STRATA-SPHERE**

*Why you should consider joining your council*

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## **AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION**

*Planning to stay ahead of maintenance issues*

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## **COLOURING YOUR ASSETS**

*Getting professional help with your painting*



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Our team is excited to share with you the summer 2017 edition of FirstService Residential CONNECTIONS, our educational strata newsletter exclusive to FirstService Residential clients. This edition features many prevalent topics, including articles on maintenance planning, roles of a strata council and the new vacancy tax in Vancouver.



While we tolerated this extra-cold, extra-long winter on the West Coast, there were some highlights that warmed our hearts. The biggest was that for the third year in a row, FirstService Residential held its annual holiday donation campaign for the Canuck Place Children's Hospice, this time raising \$76,300 during this holiday season, the most we've raised in a single year. Thanks to our contributing suppliers and congratulations to everyone involved.

And be sure to also follow us on social media to be updated on the latest events, news and information on strata issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott Douglas'.

Scott Douglas  
President, FirstService Residential BC



**FirstService**  
RESIDENTIAL

## **WATCH OUR YOUTUBE VIDEO ON MAINTENANCE PLANNING**

**FIRSTSERVICE RESIDENTIAL** hosted a seminar in Vancouver covering a variety of topics related to maintenance planning (see article pages 8-11). It was led by guest speakers Sean Ingraham, Managing Broker for FirstService Residential, and Gerry McRobert, Senior Regional Director for FirstService Residential.

To view the videos [click here](#), or to learn more about maintenance planning visit [www.fsresidential.com](http://www.fsresidential.com) under 'Articles.'





# FirstService Residential and friends raise \$76,300 for Canucks Place

*Third annual fundraiser hits new heights for kids with serious illnesses*

**WITH THE HELP** of more than 56 vendor associates, FirstService Residential raised \$76,300 in donations this past holiday season for Vancouver's Canuck Place Children's Hospice. It's the highest amount raised in a single year, and will help support more than 670 children with severe illnesses and their families.

FirstService Residential and its associates have raised nearly \$200,000 in the last three years.

"Canuck Place Children's Hospice is grateful for community partners like FirstService Residential who help ensure we can provide pediatric palliative care for hundreds of children with life-threatening illnesses and the families who love them," said Margaret McNeil, chief executive

officer of Canuck Place Children's Hospice. "The 2016 holiday campaign is an incredible fundraising achievement which will benefit Canuck Place families across British Columbia. We thank the FirstService Residential team and their vendors and partners for helping Canuck Place be there for families when they need us the most."

To recognize the contribution, FirstService Residential sent a holiday e-card to its clients – more than 100,000 residents living in over 500 strata properties across Metro Vancouver.

"For the third year in a row we are honoured to support the exceptional work at Canuck Place" said Scott Douglas, president of FirstService Residential in British Columbia.



**Another record donation** from FirstService residential and associates will help make Canucks Place Hospice a happier place for the seriously ill kids it serves. Receiving the cheque from FirstService's Judith Harris (left) and Max Gadjel (centre) is Canuck Place CEO Margaret McNeil.

“FirstService Residential is proud to support an organization that’s close to our hearts. The Children’s Hospice is a true symbol of hope and community, and the impact it has on the lives of children and their families is extraordinary.”

**CANUCK PLACE** Children’s Hospice is British Columbia’s pediatric palliative care provider. Over 670 children living with life-threatening illnesses and their families receive care from CPCH through outreach programs and two provincial hospice locations: Vancouver and Abbotsford. Services include medical respite and family support, pain and symptom management, 24-hour phone consultation support and in-house clinical care, art and education, recreation therapy, grief and loss counselling and end-of-life care. Through the investment of the community, our talented team, and over 325 energetic volunteers we make a lasting difference in the lives of children and the families who love them. [www.canuckplace.org](http://www.canuckplace.org)

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## Your leak? Your loss!

*Protect yourself by knowing how to prevent and stop leaks*



**DID YOU KNOW** that most units have up to ten or more water connections, including the washing machine, dishwasher, refrigerator/ice maker, bathtub, shower, sprinkler heads, hot water tank, faucets and more? Each of these has the potential to leak. If your unit is found to be the source of a leak that causes water damage, you may be held responsible. Fast action is imperative once a leak occurs in order to prevent damage!

### Prevention Strategies

- Know the location of your in-suite water shut-offs. Turn off the water if you discover a leak.
- Use a water monitoring system or contract with a monitoring service.

- Winterize hose bibs as needed.
- Replace rubber appliance supply hoses with steel braided hoses.
- Avoid hanging items from sprinkler heads.
- Seal tile grout.

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# INTO THE STRATA-SPHERE

Serving as a council member can be rewarding and fun – while helping you personally protect what is probably your biggest investment.

**AT FIRST GLANCE,** joining a strata council seems like a good thing to do – kind of like running the Grouse Grind, or donating bone marrow. It's not easy, but it makes you a better person, right?

In fact, serving on a strata council can be fun and very positive – educational, social and satis-

fyng in a way that allows you to stay in touch with your community while making sure things get done properly.

For community-minded, well-intentioned condo owners, council membership is a great way to get to know your neighbours, plan fun events, and

feel a sense of accomplishment. It's also a way to help personally protect what is probably your biggest investment. And it can give you valuable experience in disciplines you may be able to use elsewhere, including public speaking, problem solving, running meetings and managing properties.

Depending on the size and budget of the corporation and the urgency of needs, councils can meet as often as every two weeks or as seldom as once a year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The usual venue is one of the members' homes or (if your building has one) a common meeting room.

The best meetings are congenial, focused and productive. Councils depend heavily on their property managers for advice and assistance with everything from fines to landscaping, parking issues, repairs, legal matters and organizing and running the AGM.

Serving time (forgive the word choice) on a strata council can be very enjoyable if you're fortunate enough to find yourself in the company of like-minded folks: fellow councillors who want to help build a happier, healthier environment. Basically, the kinds of people you want representing your interests.

Who should **not** join a strata council? For starters, owners with a personal agenda. Those pushing for the community to jointly raise pot-bellied pigs or paint all balcony rails pink to match their flower bed should be gently discouraged.

A good councillor is empathetic and a good listener. The councillor's job, after all, is to hear and act upon the wishes of all the owners. That's a mandate that requires a certain amount of patience, a little humility, and a not-infrequent dose of tact. Assembling a good group of council members, ideally representing as wide a variety as possible of professions (lawyers, accountants and trades, for example) can move mountains. On the negative side, having poor representatives in place can wreak havoc and take years to undo. Keep this in mind when voting in council members at your next AGM.

Choosing a good property manager is probably the council's most important task. The better the manager, the easier your job will be – which means

more free time for you to attend your weekly book club gatherings or hot yoga classes.

Anyone interested in knowing all the rules and regulations concerning strata corporations should read the BC Strata Property Act ([http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/98043\\_01](http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/98043_01)). It's actually a good resource for resolving uncertainties or clarifying what the law says – and not that hard to wade through if and when the need arises.

The act does not specify an exact composition of council, but many have at least the traditional core of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, with other members filling assigned roles or simply being members-at-large to vote on issues and take on tasks as they arise.

That said, and at the risk of scaring you away, the following is an abbreviated list of some of the responsibilities of council membership.

## Transparency and disclosure

As a council member, you must act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of the strata corporation. You must exercise the care, diligence and skill of a reasonably prudent person in comparable circumstances.

Occasionally, strata councils must deal with potential conflicts of interest – for example, a contractor or stakeholder who could benefit from the award of a contract. In this case the duty of the council member is to:

- a) *Disclose fully and promptly to the council the nature and extent of the interest.*
- b) *Abstain from voting on the contract or transaction, and;*
- c) *Leave the council meeting both while the contract or transaction is discussed (unless asked by council to be present to provide information) and while the council votes on the contract or transaction.*

If you are a licensed realtor, you must provide a written disclosure to the Strata Corporation prior to sitting on a Strata Council, and your letter must meet the requirements

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## Strata Life | Council Membership

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*Strata council membership (from previous page)*

of Section 9-3 of the Council Rules under BC's real Estate Services Act. [Click here](#) for more info.

### Specific responsibilities

#### President

This person represents the council (and therefore the community as a whole), and is the primary (and often sole) contact with the property management company. He or she should have a solid understanding of the needs of the community, a strong sense of direction, and the desire to play a major role in the day-to-day operations of the strata corporation.

Specific duties of the president include:

- *Leading monthly meetings.*

- *Interaction with property management.*
- *Identifying issues requiring attention and delegating responsibilities to solve them.*
- *Implementing work programs (with council approval).*
- *Ensuring community guidelines are maintained and enforced.*

#### Vice President

The vice president works closely with the council president, and in his or her absence takes on the role of president.

#### Secretary

The secretary has responsibility for recording





and distributing all strata council-approved minutes and official records. Depending on the size and budget of your corporation, distribution is sometimes delegated to management.

Minutes are very important. They are a permanent record of strata council action, and may be needed as legal evidence to support contracts and other legal commitments. Owing to the requirement that prospective purchasers be given copies of minutes (sometimes going back years), it is critical that the minutes be detailed and provide an outside party with an understanding of the discussions. Official records also include copies of correspondence, copies of contracts and an accurate owners list. The secretary should endeavour to record all strata council discussions accurately to protect both the strata corporation and the individual strata council members. Minutes must be made available to every owner.

### Treasurer

The treasurer is responsible for managing community financial matters. Understanding finance and accounting is beneficial but not essential; many council responsibilities – minutes, chairing meetings, financial statements, etc. – are taken on by the management company.

The treasurer's duties include:

- *Overseeing financial operations.*
- *Advising on financial issues including budgets, investments and spending.*
- *Reviewing monthly and annual financial statements and reports.*
- *Reporting to council on financial reviews and decisions.*
- *Planning for special assessments to finance costs of large projects.*
- *Assessing cash flow and making recommendations for changes in strata fees.*

Councils can designate responsibilities as they see fit. Two popular ones we will use as examples are Buildings/Maintenance and Landscaping.

### Buildings/Maintenance

This person oversees matters pertaining to the overall management of the community's buildings – mainly their exteriors. A good knowledge of carpentry, architecture and/or construction is a definite asset. Some duties include:

- *Acting as a resource to council on building-related issues.*
- *Being available to residents with building-related concerns.*
- *Ensuring the strata's building guidelines are adhered to, (exterior colour schemes, legal/illegal additions, etc.).*
- *Helping council identify problems and oversee maintenance and repairs.*
- *Recommending and dealing with contractors on repairs and maintenance – ensuring work/repairs recommended by contractors are appropriate, fairly priced and necessary.*
- *Evaluating the quality of jobs performed.*

The key to managing a strata corporation is good three-way communication between the management company rep, council and owners.

### Landscaping

This person oversees the management of common grounds, including roads, and should have a keen interest in landscape design and care. The nature of the duties and responsibilities of this portfolio is similar to those in the Buildings/Maintenance portfolio, but with emphasis on green spaces. Duties include:

- *Acting as a resource to council on grounds-related issues.*
- *Ensuring strata guidelines concerning grounds-keeping are adhered to.*
- *Identifying landscape problems and recommending appropriate measures.*

*continued next page*

- *Liaising with landscaping contractors and evaluating completed projects.*
- *Liaising with owners.*

## **Guidelines for meetings**

The last thing you need to know as a council member is how to behave in and around meetings. Some guidelines include:

1. *Arriving on time so that the meeting can start at the scheduled time. If this is not possible, i.e. you expect to be late, advise your strata manager or another council member so that the meeting is not held up.*
2. *Reviewing materials received from the property manager's office prior to the meeting rather than at the meeting.*
3. *Adopting the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. Any new business items should be added at this time.*
4. *Allowing a speaker to complete what he or she is saying before you counter with your viewpoint.*
5. *Avoiding dominating every discussion.*

6. *Allowing for discussion, viewpoints; i.e., compromise.*
7. *Avoiding side conversations while the meeting is in progress.*
8. *Avoiding the consumption of alcohol during the meeting.*
9. *Making sure the meeting is a business meeting.*
10. *Setting timelines for each business item.*
11. *Remember, you are representing the entire strata corporation. Personal biases or interests should be set aside.*

In conclusion, the key to managing a strata corporation is good three-way communication among the three main parties: your management company representative, the council and the owners. For simplicity, one person (the president or other council member) should be designated as the primary contact with the strata manager for any matters needing attention between meetings.  
Most important? Have fun!

**Coming up:** *our next newsletter will examine the roles and responsibilities of your council and strata corporation.*







# FSRCONNECT

**Register today** to instantly connect with your strata community anywhere, anytime and from any device. Available exclusively to strata corporations managed by FirstService Residential, FSRConnect uses the most advanced technology to give you secure access to your community's custom website portal. Whether you're an owner or a Strata Council member, you'll easily be able to locate important notices and documents, attend to community business and communicate with residents, Council members, strata managers and onsite staff.

**Don't delay – sign up for FSRConnect now at**  
[www.register-me.ca](http://www.register-me.ca)

Communicate with your strata manager

View strata fee balance

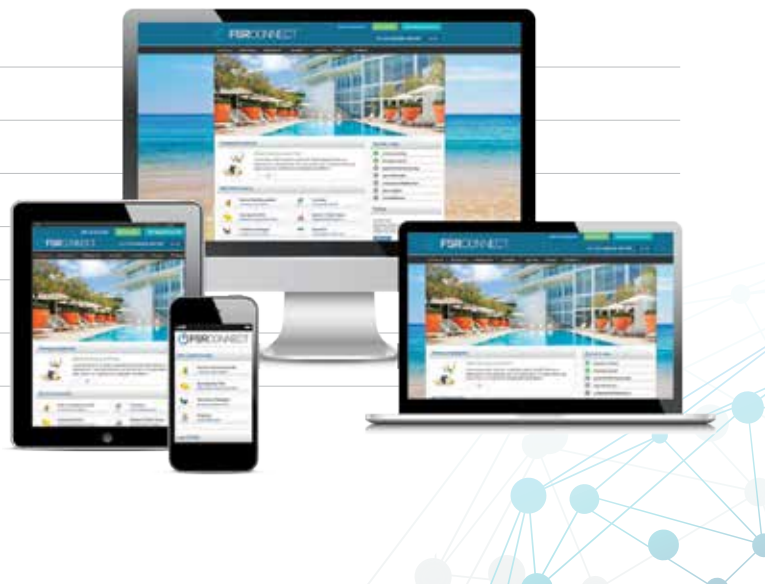
Browse the community calendar

Submit online service requests

Make amenity bookings

Track packages

Receive instant voice message alerts



# AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION



Like changing the oil in your car, **regular maintenance** on a building helps keep everything working properly and safely. For stratas, some tasks are not optional, they are **mandatory**.

**A** maintenance plan is a great tool for organizing and discussing a strata corporation's property repairs and maintenance. What the plan looks like depends on the building type and age, as well as the corporation's finances.

Maintenance plans come in a variety of formats, from brief outlines to comprehensive multi-page reports, but regardless, an ongoing plan for preventive maintenance can extend the effective life of the property and increase its value by:

- *Increasing the life of building components;*
- *Improving a community's visual appeal;*
- *Increasing residents' pride of ownership.*

## **What Goes Into a Maintenance Plan?**

**1) Required Maintenance:** This includes anything your strata corporation must do to be compliant with the BC Safety Authority and government authorities, such as your city or fire department.

**2) Regular Maintenance:** This is maintenance that is not legally mandated. Most people think of it as preventive maintenance (cleaning, painting, etc.). It also enhances curb appeal.

## **Role of the Strata Manager**

Since each strata corporation is unique, it is important that the strata council and owners discuss what to include in a maintenance plan. From there, your strata manager can work with your strata council to create a plan that reflects your directives and particular maintenance focus.

*Infographic next three pages*



# 1. REQUIRED MAINTENANCE



## BACKFLOW DEVICES

Strata corporations are required to annually test their backflow prevention devices. This helps ensure that they are functioning properly to prevent water from the building flowing back into the city line. Cities in BC have become increasingly stringent about enforcing testing requirements.

## FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY, ELEVATORS

A strata corporation must perform a variety of testing under different frequencies. Contractors provide a copy of test results that the Strata may have to provide – along with proof that they have fixed any defects – to fire inspectors upon request. Recently, inspectors have focused on parkade fire doors and storage areas because of their susceptibility to fires.

## EMERGENCY GENERATORS

Some buildings have emergency generators that typically can provide enough emergency power for lighting and one elevator. A non-functioning generator could be inconvenient or worse. Strata corporations are expected to test and check their generators, and record the results in a log kept on site.

## ROOF ANCHORS

These safety devices, which are attached to the building exterior, are used by trades such as window washers that require fall protection equipment. Roof anchors need to be certified by a specialized company each year. Certifications should be posted at roof access points.

## MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL, HVAC

This equipment requires a wide range of inspections. One is the testing of CO<sub>2</sub> sensors, which are located in the parkade and turn on the parkade fans if the CO<sub>2</sub> level from car exhaust becomes too high. Strata corporations must also maintain and test the communication links between the fire panel and exhaust fans.

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## 2. REGULAR MAINTENANCE

### PAINTING AND MILL WORK

Prioritize painting the building's front entrance and lobby – areas with the greatest impact on property values. Rotate areas so that, for example, north hallways are done one year and south hallways the next. Mill work is often forgotten, it's important to budget for repair of the wood trim in the lobby and common areas.



### POWER WASHING AND PARKADE CLEANING

It's a good idea to pressure wash the front of the building at least once a year. Hot water pressure washing can remove items like gum. Parkades can be cleaned by pressure washing or power scrubbing. A great option for dusty parkades is a mid-year power sweeping.



### LANDSCAPING

An annual walk-through with the strata corporation's landscaper can help identify issues that may affect the strata corporation's maintenance plan. Has your strata council considered artificial turf? The main benefits are that it needs less maintenance and is dog-friendly.

### JANITORIAL

Remember to consider budgeting for both regular cleaning and deep cleaning. Deep cleaning includes such tasks as scrubbing garbage rooms and cleaning stairwells and grout. Encouraging residents to sort waste correctly and break down discarded boxes can save janitorial time and expense.





### CARPETING AND FLOORING

Regular vacuuming not only helps maintain carpets, but may extend their life. On average, a strata corporation may want to have its carpets professionally cleaned once a year and spot-checked quarterly. For tiled areas, cleaning grout regularly and having it sealed at least once a year can reduce cleaning costs.

### DRYER VENT

Dryer vents can be cleaned from the interior and exterior. It's important that the strata corporation create a policy on who is to conduct the interior cleaning of the dryer vents – particularly in light of stricter fire codes on cleaning frequency. Your Strata may find it worthwhile to take responsibility for interior cleaning.

### WINDOW WASHING

Most strata corporations have their windows cleaned a minimum of once a year. Two methods to wash windows are with a tucker pole that extends to about 50 feet and allows cleaning from the ground, or by hand washing using a bosun chair or ladder. Give residents a set time to report deficiencies once work is complete.



**WATCH OUR RECENT SEMINAR ON BUILDING MAINTENANCE.** [Click here](#) to see short videos from FirstService Residential's recent educational seminar on Annual Maintenance Planning.



# COLOURING YOUR ASSETS

*A primer on contracting out  
paint jobs for common areas.*

*By the Colourful Crew at CertaPro Painters*

**WHETHER YOU'RE A COUNCIL MEMBER** or homeowner, the first two questions that come to mind before every painting project should be:

- 1. WHY?** Painting protects exteriors from the elements while providing curb appeal. A fresh coat of paint also enhances the living experience for homeowners and maintains or increases the value of the property.
- 2. WHEN?** Spring is the ideal time of year for painting. It's also the ideal time to inspect the property for signs of damage that occurred over the winter. Painting should be performed before exterior surfaces show signs of deterioration (wood rot, chalking, peeling or chipping paint) because paint film loses its elasticity over time. Failure to maintain a schedule will cost much more in the long run.

Once the why and when questions are answered, your strata can begin proper planning and execution.



## Getting started

### Prepare a Specification and Bid Package

You may be familiar with Requests for Proposals (RFPs) as a method for obtaining bids. An RFP is a very general request, sometimes providing only the address of the property and rarely more than a few details. In these cases, RFPs tend to draw vague and unequal bids from contractors, making it difficult for strata councils to make a final hiring decision.

A paint specification is a much better and more accurate alternative. This specification provides painting guidelines and product recommendations for your strata's property, serving as a reference tool for both the council and the contractors. It provides detailed information about preparation for specific substrates, application, colour, clean up, etc., and specifies exactly what products will be used on the repaint. A paint specification also compares apples to apples – ensuring all contractors are bidding on the same service and quality while giving the council a standard for evaluating bids (avoiding, for example, one contractor quoting on standard paint and another quoting premium).

The paint specification should include:

- *Paint product lines to determine the performance and longevity of the repaint.*
- *Specific primers for all surfaces of the building to be painted, such as wood, ferrous and non-ferrous metal, concrete and stucco.*
- *Problem areas and/or concerns (e.g. dry rot, chalking, cracking, efflorescence, etc.)*
- *Any replacements or repairs required? Wood, wrought iron, or...?*
- *Exclusions: what substrates should not be painted?*

**Want to save 15% on all in-suite paint services? Contact CertaPro at 1-800-689-7271 or visit [www.certapro.ca](http://www.certapro.ca) and identify yourself as a FirstService Residential client.**



- *Specific bidding instructions – line items or other special considerations?*

### Finding the right contractor

Your painting project is much more than an investment in your property. Before you decide on a painting company, CertaPro Painters® recommends ensuring the contractor can:

#### Work on schedule

Is the crew's scheduling flexible enough?

#### Meet deadlines

A project that gets off track can cause a domino effect for your schedule, with big consequences down the line. Be assured that your contractor can deliver a quality paint job quickly and efficiently.

#### Minimize impact and loss of productivity

Minimize the impact to everyone affected by painting, whether tenants, owners, employees or customers. Since the buildings being painted are places people need to use, the mission should be to understand everyone's needs and concerns, so that they can work around them.

#### Fit into your community

Coming onto your property, your contractors need to be able to conduct themselves professionally and appropriately.

#### Help you get through it

Your contractor should have the processes in place to navigate the project from start to finish.

*continued on page 21*



# TIME TO WALK AWAY?



*From a legal standpoint, the BC Government has made it easier to wind up your strata corporation and sell your property. But that doesn't make it any less work – or much less challenging. Here are some guidelines from the experts.*

Prepared by the legal experts at Lawson Lundell LLP

By lowering the voting threshold from unanimous approval of all strata lot owners to 80%, an amendment to the Strata Property Act enacted last July 28 has made it easier for owners to dissolve or 'wind up' their strata corporation.

Carrying out a strata wind up can be beneficial

for many reasons. As many older strata buildings across the province reach the end of their life cycles, these buildings and related common property may require costly capital repairs, which many owners would rather not pay.

Additionally, as developers search for new development opportunities, particularly in the



Lower Mainland, aging strata buildings (and more specifically the land beneath them) are becoming appealing assets, because many of these older strata developments were built at lower density levels than are currently achievable.

That said, winding up a strata corporation is a technical, complicated process, and legal advice should be sought early on in the process to help ensure a successful wind up. Here are eight major points to consider if your strata corporation is exploring a wind up.

## What you need to know

### 1. Each Strata Corporation is Unique

Each strata corporation is unique in its physical condition, existing zoning, potential for rezoning, state of repairs and can be made up of a diverse group of owners. Your stakeholders need to recognize this, as well as understand where you are in the “wind up” process, and understand how they can help you achieve your goals.

### 2. Information Meetings

It is key that all owners and especially strata council members understand the wind up process. It is important to hold informational meetings with strata council, owners, lawyers, and other parties involved to help explain the process and the role of the various advisors. Ensuring correct information is provided to owners, tenants and mortgagees is a central part of the wind up process.

### 3. Distribution of Sale Proceeds

The process and formula for distribution of any sale proceeds is determined by the Strata Property Act and its predecessor legislation. Determining the applicable formula is a surprisingly complicated process that should be carried out early in the process.

### 4. Conditions in Listing Agreements and Purchase and Sale Agreements

Any listing agreement with a brokerage must address the inability of a strata corporation to force owners to sell their units before the wind up process is complete. A standard listing agreement may not be appropriate. Similarly any purchase and sale agreement must reflect the wind up ap-

proval process including both the approval by the strata lot owners and the courts, as well as the due diligence process required by the developer.

### 5. Sale of the Property

The timing and nature of the marketing of the property will vary from strata corporation to strata corporation depending on the circumstances. The location of the property may be such that there is only one logical buyer who is willing to pay a premium for the property (for example, the developer who controls adjoining sites) or it may attract a wide number of potential purchasers. Strata corporations should carefully choose their real estate brokers who have the ability and experience to market such a property. Appraisals from independent appraisal firms may be required at this stage or later in the court approval process.

### 6. Authorizing the Wind Up

The technical process of winding up a strata corporation requires strict compliance with the Strata Property Act, under the current 80% approval threshold. This can be a long and stressful process. The strategic decision to seek such wind up authorization before marketing of the property or after a contract is accepted is critical.

### 7. Rezoning

Any marketing of the property must take into account what a developer can build on the site, either under the existing zoning or any potential rezoning. Working with your real estate brokers and appraisers, further information can be provided to owners on the current and potential rezoning, and the timing and realistic potential of any rezoning and ensure the strata corporation captures its fair share of that potential. This information can be collected through the appraisers and real estate brokers.

### 8. Land Title and Conveyancing Process

Working closely with Land Title Office staff, precedents have been developed for the wind up process as well as the required conveyancing processes. Be sure to look for lawyers that provide the software and precedent knowledge to help expedite the process and achieve cost savings.



# Copping IN

Project Access will allow Vancouver Police into your public areas faster



The outcome of a crime can depend on how fast the police can get to the scene. But what happens if the building is locked?

Along with legal issues, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) often confront today's high-level security systems. Hence Project Access.

## When police can enter...

During an emergency, VPD officers have the authority to make a forced legal entry into private premises without a warrant if:

- 1) The officer has reasonable grounds to believe an emergent situation exists involving preservation of life or prevention of serious injury; and
- 2) A proper announcement is made prior to entry, including notice of presence, notice of purpose and notice of authority.

Examples of when this procedure would be used include: hang-up 9-1-1, domestic disturbances, home invasions, weapons calls and suicidal person calls.

## ...and when they can't.

Examples of when forced entry would *not* be authorized include: break and enter report without a suspect, surveillance, warrant arrests, curfew checks and noise complaints.

This principle applies to circumstances involving the prevention of an offence likely to cause death or injury. It also applies when police need to enter a premise to prevent death or further injury after an offence has already occurred. The police must be able to articulate the reasonable grounds upon which they acted.

The Supreme Court of Canada has also ruled that police duty to protect life warrants and justifies a forced entry into a dwelling to ascertain the health and safety of a 911 caller.

The terms of use would be strict, and documented and approved by a supervisor. Under Project Access, the police are granted access only to common areas. They still have to comply with laws for entry into any private dwellings.

## Want Project Access for your building?

The VPD is proposing that property managers and/or strata corporations voluntarily provide access to the police during emergencies. The VPD would give the administrator of the building's intercom panel a telephone number to be programmed into the directory under a secure code.

Upon arriving for an emergent call the police enter the code and the intercom panel dials E-Comm – the police call dispatch centre for fire and ambulance. The E-Comm operator authenticates that the person entering the code is a police officer on an emergency call and grants access to the public spaces of the building such as the lobby, elevator and floors.

The solution is cost-effective, and can be implemented with a simple Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Vancouver Police Board and strata corporation.

For more info, contact Cst. Liz Samuel: [Elizabeth.samuel@vpd.ca](mailto:Elizabeth.samuel@vpd.ca) or 604-717-2777.



Repainting common areas (from page 17)

### Communication

The procedures of communication with customers foster positive working relationships based on trust, respect and integrity.

### Make your strata look its best

Often the first consideration of any strata painting project, colour selection is mostly based on achieving aesthetic value. Colour should be pleasing to the eye and work well with the environment surrounding the buildings and property (i.e. landscaping, brick, stone work and roof colour).

### Finishes

Sheen should always be considered when selecting an exterior finish. While a flat finish is generally the sheen selected for stucco and siding, low sheen is beginning to emerge as a popular new trend. Low sheened paints offer a more vibrant appearance and provide excellent dirt release from the substrate.

### Colours

Light colours, such as tan or shades of white, reduce inside temperatures as well as make a building stand out in its neighbourhood. Dark colours, such as burnt reds or blues, absorb heat and can make a large building seem better proportioned to a small lot.

### Professional consultation and assistance

The best way to start with colour and finish selection is to look at other properties in your area and see what you find most appealing. For colour selection, you may want to consider enlisting the help of your locally owned and operated CertaPro Painters® or even a professional colour consultant. Each of these parties offers very useful services to stratas, including advice and assistance in choosing the best paint for the job.

*For more interior or exterior colour tips, contact your local CertaPro Painters®. \*As seen in CertaPro Painters® Envision magazine ©2017 All Rights Reserved CertaPro Painters, Ltd. Each CertaPro Painters® business is independently owned and operated.*

## BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU FLUSH DOWN THE TOILET!



### Getting a handle on clogs: advice from FS Insurance Brokers

Did you know that flushing foreign objects down toilets can cause major backups and losses by preventing the passage of material through the piping system? Here's what not to flush down:

- disposable cleaning cloths
- wash cloths
- diapers
- kitty litter
- food
- hair
- trash

If a foreign object has been flushed down your toilet, you can try snaking it from the drain, but be careful not to push it further along.

If snaking doesn't work, contact a plumber. It's better to spend money to unclog the toilet than to pay the costs of repairing an entire backed-up plumbing system!

Remember, the larger your building, the more extensive the plumbing system, and the more extensive damage can be. So be sure to act fast!



**DISCLAIMER:** All information provided by FS Insurance Brokers is advisory in nature. Any such information may not identify or contemplate all unsafe conditions; others may exist. FS Insurance Brokers does not imply, guarantee or warrant the safety of any of the client's properties or operations or that the client or any such properties or operations are in compliance with all federal, provincial, or local laws, codes, statutes, ordinances, standards or recommendations. All decisions in connection with the implementation, if any, of any of FS Insurance Brokers' advice or recommendations shall be the sole responsibility of, and made by, the client or other recipient of the information.



## GETTING A RETURN on EMPTYIES

Starting July 1, the City of Vancouver will be penalizing you for leaving your home or condominium vacant. So why not rent it out?

Adapted from an article by *The Canadian Press*

Effective this tax year, the City of Vancouver's new empty homes tax requires all Vancouver homeowners to self-declare whether a property is their principal residence.

Homes that aren't principal residences and aren't rented out or exempted will be taxed on 1% of the assessed value. So a \$1-million home would be taxed \$10,000.

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson says the main goal of the tax is to encourage owners to rent out their properties in a city with the lowest rental vacancy rate and highest rents in Canada.

As reported in the Vancouver Sun, a 2016 Stats Can census noted 25,502 unoccupied or empty housing units in Vancouver.

Vancouver City staff have consulted with the public, met with local experts and sought input from cities around the world with vacancy taxes, including Paris and Jerusalem. Most properties will not be subject to the Empty Homes Tax, including those:

- Used as a principal residence by the owner, his/her family member, or a friend for at least six months of the current year;
- Rented for at least six months of the current year, in periods of 30 or more consecutive days;
- Meeting certain exemption criteria, including properties under renovation or construction with valid permits, homes that are empty because the occupant is getting medical care or has recently died, condominiums subject to existing strata rental restrictions, and properties the owner uses for work purposes for at least 180 days a year but claims principal residence elsewhere.

For enforcement, the city plans to audit homeowners on a targeted and random basis. Owners will be required to prove the home is their principal residence. They will be able to appeal, and the city will establish a review office to handle complaints.

**Penalty for failure to pay tax**

Homeowners who fail to pay the tax will face a five per cent late payment penalty. If they still haven't paid by the end of the year, the outstanding balance will be added to their property tax account and accrue daily interest.

Those who fail to declare their change to the status of their property by the second business day in February, 2018 will see their units deemed vacant.

Anyone who makes a false declaration could be prosecuted by the city with a maximum fine of \$10,000 per day for the continuing offence.

The city says it will cost \$4.7 million through the end of 2018 to set up the tax, with an annual cost of \$1.5 million after that. But the city says it expects tax revenue to cover the costs, with some money left over for affordable housing initiatives.

***Got an empty home or rental unit? Let FirstService Residential manage it for you!***

Did you know that besides being the largest strata management company in Greater Vancouver, FirstService Residential has a very dedicated and experienced Rental and Commercial Property Management department?

Yes, from purpose-built rental apartment buildings to shopping centres, office buildings and individually owned condos and houses, we do it all! That includes managing the rental units in your building on behalf of your owners who live abroad or who are local investors.

The synergies created by having one company manage strata affairs and rental tenancies are huge. The rules alone (such as registering tenants with the Strata Corporation via a Form K to indicate they understand and will follow bylaws and rules) can be daunting. Experts who understand the rules and realities of managing can be a boon.

If you or any of your neighbours would like help managing and renting your strata units, please call or email:

*Judith Harris, General Manager Investment Properties, FirstService Residential, T: 604.689.6975. E: [judith.harris@fsresidential.com](mailto:judith.harris@fsresidential.com)*



***Fill 'er up with some regulars.*** Our Rental and Commercial Property Management Department can find and manage suitable renters to generate income for you and keep the taxman away.





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FirstService Residential B.C. provides full-service strata management solutions to a wide range of strata corporations including some of Metro Vancouver's most beautiful and recognizable communities. For more than 37 years the organization has worked hard to serve homeowners in British Columbia, and today it is recognized as the leading strata management company throughout the province. For more information, visit [www.fsresidential.com/british-columbia/home](http://www.fsresidential.com/british-columbia/home).