



Condo Connection

Wilson, Blanchard Management Inc. – *Condominium Management with Experience and Integrity*
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The WB Condo Connection highlights Ontario condominium related articles and educational items that may be of interest to Boards of Directors and condo owners. It is published online and available on our website (www.wilsonblanchard.com) as well as in hard copy format to each of the members of our Boards of Directors.

We hope you enjoy this edition and we welcome your comments, suggestions or article topic requests by email to newsletter.editor@wilsonblanchard.com or by mail to:

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Management Licensing

By: Dean McCabe, **RCM, ACCI, AIHM**
Vice President of Operations

As I am writing this, the Stage 2 report from the Public Policy Forum on revising the Condominium Act is being prepared for release. Already the Government has publicly supported the industry call to license condominium managers with an announcement earlier this summer.

What is yet to be determined is who will be given the responsibility to issue those licenses.

We are confident that increased education will be an important part of the licensing regime and that there will finally be the ability to remove those that breach the public trust from the profession.

We expect that the requirements will include a two tiered regulatory program where level 1 will require that applicant meet the following criteria:

- At least 18 years age
- Ontario High School or equivalent

Inside This Issue

Management Licensing	1
Worst Job Ever	2
Emergency Plans – Are You Ready?	3
In the Next Issue	4
We're Growing!	4
Welcome	4

- Insurance coverage (E and O, Fidelity, Liability)
- Pass entrance exam on the Condominium Act
- Comply with a mandatory Code of Ethics
- Submit a Criminal Background check accepted by the DAA
- Not be an un-discharged bankrupt,
- Be capable of managing property under the Substitute Decision Act (consistent with the requirements of the condo act for directors)
- Earn the required annual continuing education credits
- Attain Level 2 within 5 years

We expect that level 2 will require that the applicant meet the following criteria:

- Maintain compliance with level 1
- Complete the required curriculum in four core areas of study:
 - Condominium Law
 - Financial Management and Reporting
 - Physical Building Management
 - Condominium Administration and HR
- Exam covering the core areas of study
- Have 2 Years Management Experience

The government has also indicated that those who have earned their RCM will have their educational criteria grandfathered and, provided they meet the criteria set out in Level 1, they will be deemed to have earned their level 2 licenses.

Cont'd from page 1...

As a client of Wilson Blanchard it is important that you know that WB already requires our managers to provide the company with a criminal back-ground check when they are hired and to participate in taking part in the in-house RCM educational program and continuing education. In short WB has started implementing as many of the requirements that may be implemented as part of the licensing regime as possible.

We believe that licensing of Condo Managers increases consumer protection and we wholeheartedly support the recent move by Government. As part of this commitment we have started meeting many of these requirements – voluntarily. Just another way that WB is a leader in the industry.

Worst Job Ever

By: Brad Wells
Property Manager- Hamilton

Hopefully in your working career you hold a high paying job that offers independence and a daily sense of satisfaction. According to some surveys, eight out of ten people are unhappy with their current job.

This leads me to the title of this article. What is the worst job ever? Although some of my colleges may disagree, no, I don't believe it is a Property Manager. But, someone else working for your condominium corporation may have it.

Imagine if this is your job description: You live at work. You wake up in the morning open your door and are immediately surrounded by your employers. You proceed to pick up their garbage, clean their mess and fix things that they have broken. You only listen to complaints and are expected to attend to everything immediately. You are on-call 24/7 and must respond to any and all emergencies without extra pay. Your wages are very modest, if not much lower then the average worker.

Do you know whose job fits this description? I know if my wife reads this, she will immediately say "being a mom", which is incorrect because there is no wage for that!

The answer is the Live-In Condominium Superintendent. If you think about their position and what they are expected to

do, it is a very challenging career. However, the Superintendent is usually the first target of Owners, Directors or Managers attention when they want to "improve the building" or "save money." It is often said by new Directors or Owners that your Superintendent is overpaid and doesn't do anything, especially when they don't know the whole story.

As in any job, this could certainly be the case. There are bad apples in every profession. There are also diligent, caring and hard-working individuals that hold these positions and are the back-bone of a well run condominium—but they are not easy to find.

While I'm referring to a Live-In Superintendent or Superintendent Couple, these principles apply to all of the service staff that work for your condominium such as part-time Superintendents, cleaners, maintenance workers, etc.

To address the "over-paid" notion, let's consider a fictional Live-In Superintendent Couple. The owners say they are overpaid and they could save money hiring someone else. If the couple's salary is \$40,000 per year, plus they get a taxable benefit of a suite and utilities as part of their compensation, this adds about \$1,500 per month. The total cost is \$58,000. If the couple only works 40 hours per week, when you divide this by two employees they are making \$13.94 per hour each. This does not account for the time that they are on-call after hours and must respond to emergencies or if their duties include working two or three weekends per month with no extra pay.

The cost of having Superintendents versus hiring outside contractors to complete these duties must be considered on a per building basis using your unique factors. In some cases, having an off-site or part-time Superintendent is perfect, or hiring an independent cleaning contractor might fit another building. Let's discuss the benefits of having a good Superintendent on-staff, specifically living in the building.

The diligent Superintendents care for the building as their home, not a job only. They take pride in their work and are people-pleasers, feeling good about saving the corporation money where possible and dealing with problems quickly.

Cont'd from page 2...

The Superintendent can save on major damage and insurance claims when responding to a leak quickly because they are on-site to stop the problem, rather than waiting for an off-site technician to attend. The Superintendent completes touch-up painting, carpet spot-cleaning and minor repairs to maintain the curb-appeal on an on-going basis rather than waiting for a special project to have these items addressed by a contractor. The Superintendent is a walking history book and live set of building drawings that contractors or engineers can draw on when dealing with building issues since they have been present for all of the past work projects and problems. And, the Superintendent is the Property Manager's best resource for hearing about a small problem before it becomes a big problem.

All in all, a good Superintendent or Superintendent Couple can be a huge advantage to a smoothly run building. Many of us have had the fortune of working with excellent Superintendent's and have seen the difference they can make. We have also had to deal with difficult or unproductive workers. As with any employee, having good job descriptions, employment contracts and documenting progress or shortcomings can quickly help you resolve a bad situation.

One thing to remember as a Director or a Manager- when you are conducting your performance reviews of a Superintendent, try to imagine yourself in their shoes for a 24 hour period- remembering not to turn off your cell phone!

A recent survey shows that a lumberjack and a newspaper reporter are the "worst" jobs in 2013. So Superintendent's are safe for now. However, the good ones thrive in their positions and should be remunerated accordingly as they help clean, maintain and improve your community and your home.

Emergency Plans – Are you Ready?

By: Dean McCabe, **RCM, ACCI, AIHM**
Vice President of Operations

As the autumn arrives and the summer comes to a close we can look back fondly on a summer that brought us some of the most severe weather in recent memory.

Ferrari's flooded out under the bridge, building lobbies flooded out and parking garages with three feet of water...these will be the memories of the summer of 2013. How long the memories last could depend on whether or not your condo had an emergency plan and you were prepared for the unforeseen.

Fire drills are implemented to prepare for an emergency and an emergency plan that is well thought out and reviewed regularly.

An emergency plan can never predict every possible scenario but it will help give management, the Board, staff and even owners a sense of what to do to remain safe and help prevent further property damage.

- The first step is to list the types of possible scenarios that could require an emergency response...and do not limit your imagination. The more inclusive you are in preparing the list the more prepared you will be for the unforeseen. (Include flood, fire, what to do if a body is discovered, what if there is an explosion on the property, windstorm or tornado, snow or ice storm, medical emergencies and extended blackout. Add any others that you think you may never experience)
- Next make up a list of the human resources, the manager, the superintendent, the Board, security staff if you have them, any contractors you may call to respond and emergency response numbers including direct lines - not only 911.
- The contact list should be specific to each emergency so that anyone using this plan has exact instructions to follow and who to call.
- Make sure that each person has duties assigned to them and review the steps. Also remember if the superintendent has responsibilities but he is away on holidays then someone needs to perform those duties.
- Ensure that it is someone's duty to communicate with residents during or after. When people are informed they have faith that someone is in charge. When there is no information people have a tendency to make up their own.

There are a number of excellent books with tips for preparing an emergency plan but the most important step for managers and Board members to take together is the first one. Decide that you need a plan, then set about to create one that will protect your property and your residents in the event of an emergency.

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Cont'd from page 3...

One that I highly recommend is *"Before Disaster Strikes: Developing an Emergency Procedures Manual"* by R. Diane Millie published and available through the Institute of Real Estate Management.

While it is an American publication, with references to American legislation and enforcement organizations, it is also a practical step by step guide to appropriate reactions in case of emergencies.

Most important is that you discuss possible scenarios and the appropriate responses. Take the time now and you will certainly reap the benefits in the future.

In the next issue....

Keep an eye out for:

RCM Courses for all – By: Tracie Contasti



We're Growing!

Please join us in welcoming the newest members to the Wilson, Blanchard family!

Hamilton Office:

- Kirsten Campeau
- Amira Belko
- Wilson Zhu
- Sarah Farr

Cambridge Office:

- Maria Aitkenhead
- Bonnie McCormick
- Paulette Pothier
- Brennan Hughes

And welcome back to Melissa Kirkaldie.

Welcome!

Wilson, Blanchard would like to welcome our newest managed properties:

- 300-310 Limeridge Road West
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