

Condo Connection

Wilson, Blanchard Management Inc. – *Condominium Management with Experience and Integrity*

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: Editor – WB Condo Connection, 101-701 Main St. W., Hamilton, ON, L8S 1A2

Inside This Issue

Fire Safety Plans	1
Kitec Plumbing	2
Financial Seminars a Success	3
RCM Designations	3
Samsung Galaxy Tab Winner	4
New CCI Grand River Chapter	4
Welcome	4

Your Corporation's Fire Safety Plan: A Lifesaving Tool

By: Gail Cote, RCM, Hamilton Office

This fall, one of my Corporations experienced a major fire. Due to the proper training and preparations undertaken by the building's superintendent, a unit owner's life was saved.

Phil Crosskey's actions in the first critical moments of this life-threatening situation received high praise from the Fire Department. His thorough review of the building's Fire Safety Plan allowed him to assist the fire department with their duties and act as an asset to their service.

“Every condominium building is required to have a ‘Fire Safety Plan,’ which must be approved by the Fire Department.”

When considering the fire safety of residents in a condominium corporation, it is imperative to always err on the side of caution and ensure that all bases are covered. Every condominium building is required to have a ‘Fire Safety Plan,’ which must be approved by the Fire Department. The plan should be prepared by a reputable engineer in compliance with the Fire Code. The approved plan must be kept in a ‘fire box’ at the front entrance of the building, and be updated with the fire department annually.

Yearly updates to the fire plan are to ensure that all building contact information is up to date, which assists the fire department in conducting their work in a timely, methodical fashion. Keys to enter the building should be secured in a fireman's lockbox in the front entrance.

Fire Safety Plans should be reviewed by the Board annually to ensure everyone is clear on the protocols in place. New Board members should be provided with a copy of the plan to review so that questions may be addressed long before a potential fire occurs. Any discussions relating to the Fire Safety Plan should be recorded in the Board meeting minutes so that Directors can easily refer to prior conversations to refresh their memory.



A good practice is to include a general review in a Corporation newsletter once a year outlining what residents should do in the event of a fire. Yearly inquiries on whether unit occupant health or physical situations have changed, therefore rendering them in need of assistance in the event

of an evacuation, is also required. Residents should be reminded that if a fire occurs, elevators become inoperable. Completed and updated 'Residents Requiring Assistance' forms are vital tools for emergency response crews in the event of a building crisis. These forms should be kept in the fire box and be made part of the Fire Plan.

Monthly inspections of the fire safety systems should be undertaken by a licensed contractor. Many times corporations bestow this responsibility onto their Superintendents, which is not a preferred practice. Although a cost is incurred for all components to be checked by a professional, the liability is passed to the contractor, who will ensure that all Fire Code requirements have been met.

Annual inspections of the fire safety systems are also mandatory, and once completed to the fire safety contractor's satisfaction, the corporation is issued a 'certificate' of completion that must be kept on site with the fire plan. The requirement of the corporation is to keep the last 2 years' worth of certificates and deficiency reports on site with the Fire Plan. If the Fire Department arrives for a 'surprise inspection' and these documents are not available, an Order of Compliance will be issued naming the Board President as responsible. If compliance is not met, the fine is levied on the Board President.

A yearly fire drill with owners should be held and can coincide with the annual inspection. On site staff should be trained in how to respond to fires, and be provided with a copy of the Fire Plan and emergency contacts. It is imperative that training occurs with all parties that will respond to a fire emergency on the Corporation's behalf. These persons will generally respond to the emergency before the fire department arrive at the building. Their actions potentially reduce the severity of the situation and save lives; it is important they are given the tools to address such critical, time sensitive situations.

Boards can contact local Fire Departments and request a member of the fire department to attend a meeting to provide them with basic information on their responsibilities, as well as tips that can be communicated to unit owners.

Your building's Fire Safety Plan is a lifesaving tool. Once again, a big thank you goes to Phil Crosskey for his quick response that day. Well done Phil!

Kitec Plumbing

By: Michelle Joy, RCM, Hamilton Office

If you live in a Condominium built between 1995 and 2007 you may have heard of Kitec plumbing. Kitec piping is a flexible plastic pipe with copper fittings, which was marketed as a cheaper and easier to install alternative to copper pipes. Kitec plumbing was mainly used on the domestic hot and cold water system within the building, more specifically within the residential units.



Most recently, Kitec plumbing has become a buzz in the Condominium industry as a result of the North American Class Action Lawsuit regarding the premature failure of the pipes. Although the product was marketed as 'corrosion resistant,' it has been found to fail prematurely due to excessive water pressure or water running at temperatures hotter than the manufacturer's rating of 77C (180F). As a result of these issues the product was recalled in 2005 and is no longer manufactured.

Industry professionals believe that Kitec piping will fail prematurely and at an accelerated rate. When leaks occur, the pipes are more likely to burst and cause major flooding as opposed to a pinhole leak.

What actions should the Board of Directors take if they suspect their building may contain Kitec piping? The first step is to correctly identify the product through an inspection by the Corporation's plumber. Kitec piping can be identified by markings on the pipes which a qualified plumber should be familiar with. If the plumber confirms the presence of Kitec piping it is important to take pro-active measures to address the issue.

First and foremost, the Board should ensure that the presence of Kitec Plumbing is disclosed on the Corporation's status certificate. The Board may want to contact their lawyer to obtain appropriate wording.

The next step is for the Board to decide whether or not to replace the Kitec plumbing. Growing industry opinion is that the Board should proceed with the plumbing replacement in order to mitigate the potential for major loss. The Corporation should speak with their lawyer to obtain a professional opinion on the plumbing replacement.

Some Declarations state that piping contained within the unit boundaries set out in Schedule C, or piping that services exclusively one specific unit, is the responsibility of the unit owner to maintain and repair. Due to the potential for major loss as a result of a flood, Corporations have been advised that they may take on the project on behalf of all owners. Since a water leak would transfer between all the units, the Corporation has a responsibility to investigate and prevent these leaks, and mitigate any potential damage.

The Corporation may also want to engage their engineer to determine the extent of the Kitec within the building. For example, is it in all units? The common elements? Or both? This may require the engineers and Corporation to inspect several units to confirm the presence of the piping.

Based on the information received from the Corporation's engineer and lawyer, the Corporation may proceed with the piping replacement. Throughout the project communication with all parties involved is extremely important. The use of professionals, lawyers and engineers throughout the duration of the project is imperative to ensure compliance with the Corporation's Declaration and the *Condominium Act*.

Have your engineer manage the project, including creating specifications and tender to ensure qualified contractors are working in your building. The work required to replace the piping within the units can be very invasive for owners. Although we are maintaining the property we must also remember these are people's homes.

Providing as much information to owners whether via notice or information meetings is key to a successful project. The better owners are prepared, the smoother the replacement will go. Invite your lawyer, engineer and selected contractor to the owner information meetings to answer any questions owners may have.

Lastly, it is recommended that the Corporation notify their insurance provider of the presence of Kitec within the building due to the potential for a major flood and to ensure appropriate coverage. In addition, it is recommended home owners also notify their personal insurer.

Thank You! Financial Seminars a Success

Thank you to the over 150 board members that attended our four recent financial statement seminars. We hope you found them informative and welcome suggestions on topics we can present in the future. Please contact the editor with topic suggestions, at newsletter.editor@wilsonblanchard.com.



Registered Condominium Manager (RCM) Designations

Congratulations to Sokol Meta of Wilson, Blanchard Management Inc. who was awarded his RCM designation recently. We are proud of our RCMs!

Are you looking for an easy way to stay up-to-date on news from Wilson, Blanchard Management and information related to Condominiums in Ontario? It's simple – follow us on social media! There are lots of options to fit your social media preferences.



Samsung Galaxy Tab Winner



Yvonne Bowes, Executive Director of Dunara Homes for Recovery Inc., pictured with Melissa Kirkaldie & Randy Rego of Wilson Blanchard Management Inc. Yvonne won the Samsung Galaxy Tab that was raffled at the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce Business Expo which was held at Bingemans Conference Centre on October 17, 2017. Congratulations Yvonne!

New CCI Grand River Chapter

Wilson, Blanchard is excited for our Waterloo Regional Office to be supporters of the newly formed CCI Grand River Chapter. The new chapter serves the geographical areas of Brant, KW, Cambridge and Guelph which is the same footprint that our regional office services. See www.cci-grc.ca for more details about the chapter.

Wilson, Blanchard Management Inc. has been a longtime supporter of CCI - the Canadian Condominium Institute. Our President Ray Wilson was involved with the Southern Ontario Condominium Association when it originally evolved into the CCI Golden Horseshoe Chapter. Both Ray and our Chief Operating Officer Karen Reynolds have been dedicated volunteers over the years on many CCI committees, Directors of the Board and both served terms as President, as well Directors on the CCI-National Board at different times. Stan Dulberg, Senior Property Manager in our Hamilton office has submitted many articles to CCI Condo News over the years as well as Mike Mullen and Sandy Foulds, Directors of Property Management in Hamilton, are both currently active volunteers with the CCI Golden Horseshoe Chapter.

Welcome!

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

WLCC #46	WaSCC #617	BSCC #104
WLCC #49	WLSCC #235	WLSCC #197
WaSCC #595	WLCC #54	HCC #165
WaCECC #633	TCECC #2277 (Consulting only)	
WLCC #6	WSCC #545	
WLCC #41	HSCC #605	
WLCC #42	WaNCC #174	
WLCC #43	WSCC #548 (Consulting only)	
WLCC #44	River Ridge Services Trust	
WLCC #45	Bristol on Main Shared Facility	

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