

Board Members: Condominium Security Tips to share with the residents in your community

We are all concerned about safety. Board members, who have a responsibility to protect the common property, must pay particular attention to security at their properties. A secure condominium building means a happier and safer community, and that is what is most important to owners and residents.

Of course, none of this is news; that's why properties have security measures in place. Even if you think the security at your condominium is adequate, remember that criminals are opportunistic and resourceful, so it's a good idea to continually re-evaluate the security measures in place to keep your community safe. Consider these suggestions to improve the security at your property.

- ✓ **Secure the building.** High security locks should be installed on common area doors to improve security. Your ACMS Consultant can provide you with local, reliable contractors.
- ✓ **Review.** Audit all key fobs and security cards assigned to residents on a regular basis. Remember to cancel those that are no longer valid.
- ✓ **Consider cameras and additional lighting.** To improve security in lobbies, garages and parking lots. Cameras are a major deterrent to crime.
- ✓ **Cover windows.** Criminals are less likely to force entry when they can't see what is inside. Frost or otherwise block lower level common area windows, and encourage your residents to use blinds and curtains.
- ✓ **Disclose.** Communicate with residents about criminal activity on the condominium property and in the neighborhood. Crime is reduced when people are informed and alert.
- ✓ **Communicate and enforce a policy – Not to hold or open the door for strangers.** Most of us don't want to be rude so we often feel we should let a person who is waiting outside into the building. The person waiting at the security door might look harmless, but looks can be deceiving. As difficult as it is, residents should never let anyone they don't know into the building. Every resident is responsible for the security of the condominium and must be firm about keeping strangers out. If residents are asked to let someone in, encourage them to simply say, *"I'm sorry, I cannot let you in because I don't know you. Please contact the person you are here to visit"*. If residents feel threatened, or are harassed, they should be encouraged to contact the authorities.
- ✓ **Become acquainted with the neighbours.** Be aware of the routines and lifestyles of the residents in your community. If you know what is normal activity, you will be more likely to recognize situations that are out-of-place or suspicious.

- ✓ **When should one call for help?** Often people don't want to call the police because they are not sure if something is actually wrong, but it's better to be safe than sorry. If you observe something suspicious, contact the authorities.
- ✓ **Communicate the details.** If you call the police, providing the right information in the right way can speed up the process. Be prepared to give your complete address, and advise how the officer can access the building. If you saw a person or people, be prepared to describe them. What did they look like? What were they wearing? What did they do or say? Where do you think they have gone? Describe any victims and advise the dispatcher if an ambulance and/or an interpreter is needed. Convey any other information that might be helpful, such as suspicious odors, chemicals, or vehicles. The more information the authorities have, the better prepared they will be.

A safe condominium is a happy condominium. Keep these tips in mind to minimize your residents' risk and maximize their safety. For more information on condominium security, contact your ACMS Consultant.