

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

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Spending a small amount of money now will save you a huge amount of money later.

Many Directors think that their primary job is to keep the assessments being charged to the owners as low as possible. While this is partly true, they should be more concerned about spending the funds wisely, but not at the expenses of deterioration of the common areas and resulting property values.

Taking care of all components to provide preventative maintenance will certainly cost a whole lot less now than letting it go and paying a whole lot more later when it is not just preventative maintenance, but rather replacement of the component as it is not maintainable any longer.

Directors need to respond to the calls from owners when their roof is leaking, windows are leaking, plumbing breaks, etc., by there are far more items that need maintenance vs. just responding to calls from the owners. Just as with enforcement of the documents, the Board needs to be proactive as well as reactive to maintenance issues.

Preventive maintenance items come in all shapes and sizes. Many are once or twice a year projects, but some have to be maintained on a recurring scheduled basis. Directors should ensure that their community is better maintained and more attractive than any of the others in their area, which will help the residents to sell or lease their homes/units. Curb appeal is essential in this difficult housing market.

Here is a list of general areas needing attention (but, a checklist needs to be made for each community to help identify *their specific* needs) – See the forms section of the website for a sample checklist for maintenance - *Inspection Checklist*:

- A. Trip hazards on stairs, walk ways, curbs and asphalt areas – Improper installation and/or soil subsidence.
- B. Are tree roots lifting the sidewalk, stairs, curbs, asphalt, etc.
- C. Check signage for leaning or deterioration,
- D. Check Gutters to see if they need cleaning – In some areas this means Spring and Fall for adequate drainage.
- E. Check downspouts – Is anything blocking the proper flow?
- F. Test emergency lighting
- G. Test hall way and stairs lighting (If a formal service is used, have them send monthly reports for filing. They don't get your check until you get these reports).
- H. How long ago were the fire hydrants tested?
- I. Do the fire hydrants need painting? Is it the association's duty or the fire department's duty to maintain and/or paint. Contact necessary entities for proper painting.
- J. Have the Back Flow devices been tested and wrapped?
- K. Has the landscaper removed weeds and debris with their last visit.
- L. Is the wrought iron in need of rust preventative maintenance and paint?

- M. Have any birds built bird nests in the weep holes on balconies?
- N. Are leaves and debris building up on the landings of the units to possibly cause a fire hazard?
- O. Has debris been removed from window wells and is caulking needed this year even though painting may not be completed until next year?
- P. Do you see a buildup of spider and other pests on the buildings?
- Q. Are there tell/tell signs of rust dripping down the buildings showing that the air conditioning units are far past the need for attention?
- R. Is any irrigation hitting any portion of the buildings causing early deterioration of the exterior protective barriers?
- S. Is the pool pump room clean?
- T. When gripping the handrails to the pool and/or spa, was there any movement? These are necessary for some individuals to gain entrance to and exit of the pool and spas.
- U. Are the forms complete that the pool service is required to be kept up for the Health Department?
- V. Have the Fire Extinguishers current with their inspections?
- W. Are there any smoke detectors? Have the batteries been changed or are they on permanent systems that are hard wired?
- X. Inspect and see if repair needs to be made to any pool furniture.
- Y. Does the pool furniture need to be power washed? Oils build up frequently causing slip hazards when a wet body tries to sit on the furniture.
- Z. Is the pool gate working correctly?
- AA. Are there any gate or fence breaches in the pool areas?
- BB. Have you received the playground inspection reports? Do you see any issues with the play ground areas? (There should be a contract for their inspections and just like with the lighting inspections, they don't get their checks until you have the reports in your hands for keeping in a binder specifically for this purpose.)
- CC. Do you see any areas of erosion on the common area?
- DD. Do you see any plants that show "aging"? All plant material has a life and some of their lives are shorter than others. If you have landscape replacement in the reserve study, you can replace plants out of the reserve funds. It would not be appropriate to plant annual color out of the reserve fund, however.

The above is only a real short list of what you should be looking at in your inspections. Drive into the community as if you were a potential buyer. Did the entrance gates squeak as you were coming in the gate? Were they rusting?

Does the plant material catch your eye as you drove into the community? Was it a positive eye catch or a negative eye catch? Many potential buyers will drive into a community and think of what their "friends" will think of their new community. They don't want to be embarrassed with the "route" that their friends will have to take to get to their home.

Owners and members of the Board are expecting their manager to be the eyes and ears of their community reminding them when maintenance should be completed, but remembering that the Board is RESPONSIBLE for everything will help members of the Board understand that they can't just bury their head and leave it all up to the Manager.