

## AUTHORITY VS. RESPONSIBILITY

*By Sara E. Barry, CMCA PCAM – UNLV Certified Paralegal  
Nevada licensed insurance Producer*

There has been some confusion on responsibility vs. authority in division of labor in community associations. The Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for all actions taken by their agents or committees. Below is a brief definition of a couple of forms of both terms and how they relate to community associations.

*Authority* can be delegated, *responsibility* cannot. A member of the Board of Directors can assign authority to a committee or management company to take an action, but is still ultimately responsible for ensuring that the job gets done properly. Because the ultimate responsibility lies with the Board, delegation of authority always entails the creation of accountability. The Committee or Manager becomes accountable, or answerable, to the Board of Directors for the performance of the tasks assigned to them, particularly if things go wrong.

Black's Law Dictionary, Sixth Edition, Definitions of Authority and Responsibility:

**Authorize.** To empower; to give a right or authority to act. To endow with authority or effective legal power, warrant, or right. To permit a thing to be done in the future. It has a mandatory effect or meaning, implying a direction to act.

**Authority.** Permission. Right to exercise powers; to implement and enforce laws; to exact obedience; to command; to judge. Control over; jurisdiction. Often synonymous with power. The power delegated by a principal to his agent. The lawful delegation of power by one person to another.....

**Responsible.** Liable; legally accountable or answerable. Able to pay a sum for which he is or may become liable, or to discharge an obligation which he may be under.

**Responsibility.** The state of being answerable for an obligation, and includes judgment, skill, ability and capacity. The obligation to answer for an act done, and to repair or to otherwise make restitution for an injury it may have caused.