

Condo Chronicle

NEWSLETTER OF THE CCI NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CHAPTER

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CCI NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CHAPTER

Canadian Condominium Institute
Newfoundland and
Labrador Chapter

P.O. Box 23060
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St. John's, NL A1B 4J9

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Dear Members,

Welcome to our Spring 2020 Newsletter.

This has been an unprecedented winter to say the least. But in true Newfoundland & Labrador spirit, and through our sense of community and our adherence to COVID-19 restrictions, we are seeing our Province emerge from this epidemic and moving forward to a more relaxed environment and our new normal.

This compliance and community spirit is particularly evident throughout our condo community. CCI has witnessed many good news stories from across our country of people helping others and their Corporations to safely get us through this crisis. We ask you to share your stories with us to post on our website as an inspiration to others.

At CCI we have been challenged by the COVID-19 restrictions as have all Condominium Corporations to try and carry on with our normal operations. It is very evident that we are all becoming comfortable using technology such as video and conference calling to hold our Board meetings and AGMS in an effort to stay safe and get on with business.

We invite you to avail of the resources available to you on living with COVID-19, and as well a wide variety of condo related information through our local (<http://cci-newfoundland.ca/>) and national (<https://cci.ca/>) websites.

We thank you for your continued support of our Chapter.

Stay safe.

Board of Directors
CCI-NL

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Security Issues in Multi-Level Condominiums

By David Cumming

Security is an important issue in the condominium I live in – a four story, 16 unit building in the heart of St. John's. According to one source I investigated, St. John's has the 9th highest Crime Severity Index¹ in Canada. There have been cases in St. John's where people have gained unauthorized access to a condominium property and caused several thousand dollars damage. This has made Boards and residents particularly sensitive to preserving a secure environment.

For enhanced security, residents here use a FOB based keyless entry system to gain entry into our building. All FOBs have an ID number that is programmed into a microprocessor. If the FOB is lost, the programmed access code can be deleted and the FOB becomes useless. If the lost FOB is subsequently found, it can be programmed back into the system. To use a FOB to gain entry into the building, the FOB is placed in close proximity to a reader (Fig. 1) incorporated into the intercom housing next to the front door and the door unlocks.

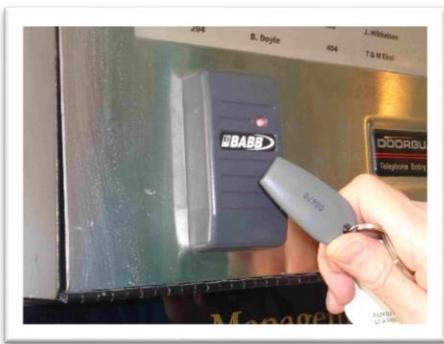


Fig 1

There is a name directory at the front entrance that is incorporated into the intercom entrance system (Fig. 2). For security reasons, only the first initial and last name

are included in the directory so there is no indication that there may be a woman living alone in the Unit. An intercom system is provided whereby visitors type in the Unit number of the resident they wish to visit on a keypad built into the intercom and the landline phone in the resident's Unit rings. There is two way communication between the intercom and the resident. If the resident agrees to admit the visitor, the resident presses '9' on their phone and the front door unlocks. The premise for security is that whoever admits a visitor into our building takes responsibility for their actions and activities. The entrance FOB and intercom system have battery backup power for several hours in the event of a power outage.

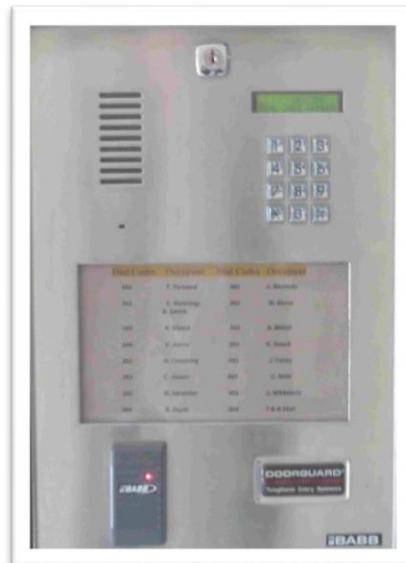


Fig. 2

All keys to Units as well as the Common Elements are stored in a lock box in a secure location in the building. There are two residents living in the building that have access to the lock box. Our governing documents

1 The **Crime Severity Index (CSI)** measures changes in the level of severity of **crime** in Canada from year to year. In the **index**, all **crimes** are assigned a weight based on their seriousness. The level of seriousness is based on actual sentences handed down by the courts in all provinces and territories

stipulate that a Unit can be entered without notice in the event of an emergency to mitigate damage due to a water leak, fire or attend to a medical issue.

Most owners have a standard key to the front door of their Unit however a few owners have opted to pay the expense for a security key that cannot be copied (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3

Note how different a modern security key looks from a normal standard key. Our governing documents explicitly excludes the locks on Unit front doors from the Common Elements so an Owner has the option to change the lock and key. The Board, however, does request that the Owner provide a copy of any new key to the Board so it can be included in the lock box.

The Owners of 10 out of 16 Units (62.5%) in our building are investors who lease their Units. Three of these Owners live outside the province. The only reason they own a Unit is to make money – maximize their income, minimize their expenses. For the remaining six Owners, their priority is to preserve a well maintained, quiet, secure living environment. This has often induced conflict between the investor Owners who want to minimize condo fees and the Owners who live here due to their differing priorities.

Every so often, an Owner who leases their Unit inquires into the possibility of removing their landline phone to reduce their costs and be able to use a cell phone to open the front door as most of their tenants are generally younger and communicate by cell or smart phone. If a cell phone number is programmed into our intercom system, the resident can open the front entrance door by pressing '9' on their cell phone. The issue is, however, how would the tenant take responsibility for the actions and activities of a visitor admitted from a remote location using a cell phone – or even verify how many people were admitted. Most of the people who live in the building are senior citizens including a number of women who live alone. As such, security is a very sensitive issue and any initiative to jeopardize the current security procedures are aggressively challenged. Although it is possible to program our intercom system with a cell phone number, it is strongly discouraged as this could compromise the overall security of the property.

Security is everybody's business. **DO NOT** let visitors in that you do not know. **DO NOT** permit a realtor conducting an Open House to prop open the front door. **DO NOT** permit residents moving in or out of the building to prop open the front door.

David Cumming served on the Board of Directors of the Imperial Condominium Corporation for over 15 years – much of the time as President and now serves on the Board of the CCI-NL Chapter primarily responsible for Education. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent or reflect the views of the CCI Newfoundland and Labrador Chapter. Readers are encouraged to seek the advice of professionals to address specific issues or individual situations. This article may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without acknowledgement to the author.

Condominium Hot Water Heater Narrative

By Gloria Montano

The issue of hot water heater failure is often the subject of discussion at condo board meetings as over the years many condos have experienced expensive failures resulting in water damage to the owner's own Unit as well as Units on floors below. In this era of rapidly soaring insurance costs and in an effort to mitigate the risk of damage, it is recommended that Corporation's carry out annual inspections of all Units, note the manufacturing date of the hot water heaters in each Unit and require that the hot water heater be replaced every five years.

To further reduce the risk of hot water heater failure, some condo owners are exploring hot water heaters fabricated from more robust materials such as stainless steel that come with an extended warranty. From one owner's experience as related below, it may not be worth it.

A stainless steel hot water heater with a 25 year warranty was purchased in 2012 in order to extend the time between replacements. In 2014, the top heating element required replacement. In 2019, the tank was leaking from the bottom heating element.

According to a local plumber, this extended warranty water heater purchased by the owner is no longer stocked by suppliers on the North East Avalon. The manufacturer of the tank declared that there must have been something in our St. John's water that caused the premature failures. Ensuing discussions related to the manufacturer's warranty ended with the manufacturer agreeing to provide the supplier/plumber replacement heating element(s) but unwilling to replace the tank.

The plumber could have ordered a replacement water heater and prorated the warranty; however, that would have taken time and the owner expressed a concern, based on previous experience, regarding how much longer the replacement water heater would last. The plumber also indicated he had one other customer who went that route however the replacement heater proved

to be a disappointment in terms of premature failure. Thus, in the end, the owner decided to replace the stainless steel water heater with a conventional water heater. She noted that owners in their condominium replace their water heaters at a reduced cost as all the water heaters are replaced at the same time. So this owner would lose one year of warranty in order to synchronize with the rest of the Units in the complex.

Apparently, St. John's water is on the acidic side compared with water in some other jurisdictions. This can result in accelerated corrosion and more frequent water heater failures.

If you are considering a plastic water tank, "Ask This Old House" has an informative video covering important considerations using easy to understand language, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oc7EOqMpckc>. Specifically, they note that extended/ lifetime warranties usually cover the tank, not the heating element that is made of metal and will corrode over time. Some suppliers recommend replacing the heating element every few years. This strategy can also be an expensive; however, may be worthwhile as noted in the video.

In the end, replacing a hot water heater with a conventional hot water heater appears to remain the best option for most of us, at least perhaps until someone designs a water heater for Newfoundland and Labrador conditions.

Gloria Montano served on the Board of Directors of the Place Bonaventure Condominium Corporation for five years and is a former CCI-NL Director. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent or reflect the views of the CCI Newfoundland and Labrador Chapter. Readers are encouraged to seek the advice of professionals to address specific issues or individual situations. This article may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without acknowledgement to the author.

CONDO CHRONICLE

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1 Full Page (7.5" x 10")	\$200.00
Full page loose insert, copies supplied by advertiser*	\$100.00

*This would not be a newsletter page but a loose page inserted in the middle of the newsletter booklet

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The *Condo Chronicle* is one of the many benefits enjoyed by Members of the Canadian Condominium Institute Newfoundland and Labrador Chapter. Thank you for your advertising support.

Shutting Down and Draining Your Sprinkler System After a Sprinkler Pipe Break

By David Cumming

A basic description of a fire safety sprinkler system found in multi-level condominium buildings in Newfoundland and Labrador is provided below:

A sprinkler system is a system of piping, connected to a water supply, with sprinklers that automatically discharge water over a fire area. A sprinkler activation will activate the building fire alarm system. Each sprinkler has its own individual heat sensitive element which detects a fixed temperature of approximately 68°C. These heat sensitive elements are not affected by smoke, only by heat. As the temperature reaches a fixed temperature of approximately 68°C the sprinkler element is activated. Sprinklers are extremely reliable and do not activate without heat. Only the sprinkler(s) closest to the fire will operate.

From: "Fire Safety for Residents of Multi-Unit Residential Buildings" - a St. John's Regional Fire Department (SJRFD) publication available on the web at:
<http://www.stjohns.ca/sites/default/files/files/publication/Fire%20Safety%20for%20Residents%20of%20Multi-Unit%20Residential%20Buildings%20Print%20Version.pdf>:

This CCI-NL Newsletter article describes what to do during an extended electrical power outage in winter, a sprinkler pipe freezes and there is a sprinkler pipe break in your condo building. Extensive flooding will result if the sprinkler system is not shut down and drained as quickly as possible. The longer the water flows into your units and/or common elements, the more damage and the higher the repair costs. The first thought after a pipe break is detected is to contact your normal sprinkler support contractor and report the problem. What happens if the contractor, for whatever reason, cannot respond for several hours or even days? Your condo will suffer expensive water damage and inconvenience. This is what happened in January 2014 when there was a severe snow storm followed by a massive power failure

that lasted days in some areas – a serious situation that became known throughout the province as DARK NL.

There are relatively few people available trained to repair sprinkler systems and due to the very cold temperatures for an extended period of time combined with high winds, during DARK NL sprinkler pipes were breaking all over the North East Avalon. That is why it is recommended that simple instructions be available in your condo to shut down and drain your sprinkler system to mitigate the pipe break damage.

Below are typical generic instructions to shut down and drain a sprinkler system:

- 1) Turn Sprinkler Pump Switch Off.
- 2) Close Valve(s) to shut off water to sprinkler system.
- 3) Open Sprinkler Drain Valve(s) to drain water out of both sprinkler piping.
- 4) Call the SJRFD @ 722-1234 (NOT the 911 emergency number), your sprinkler system contractor, Property Manager (if you have one), and condo corporation insurance provider that your sprinkler system has been shut down.

It is also recommended that you adhere to Section A-6.1.1.4(1) of the National Fire Code of Canada that deals with the temporary shutdown of a fire sprinkler system. It states:

"Interruption of normal operations of a fire protection system for any purpose constitutes a "temporary shutdown." Types of interruptions include, but are not limited to, periodic inspection or testing, maintenance, and repairs. During a shutdown, alternative measures are necessary to ensure that the level of safety intended by the Code is maintained."

When a sprinkler system is shut down, we require that a fire watch is implemented. That would entail assigning a person, or persons, to do a walk-through the building once an hour to look for any signs of smoke or fire, and to contact 911 immediately if anything is noticed.

These instructions would be printed in a document that includes a photograph of your sprinkler system piping with arrows drawn on the photo pointing to the appropriate valves. The document would be posted and clearly marked in one of your common rooms. **Note it is important that the instructions must be clear and simple (no long text) since they will be used by a Board member and/or a resident during a very stressful situation reading/interpreting the document using a flashlight during a cold, dark blackout.** The amount of flood damage will be significantly mitigated if the water flowing into the sprinkler system is stopped and the piping drained as soon as possible after the pipe break is detected.



Example of Typical Sprinkler Piping System

The instructions to shut down and drain the sprinkler system would first have to be reviewed and approved by your sprinkler system contractor before it is posted. The contractor may be reluctant to have residents in the building shut down/drain the sprinkler system - don't take no for an answer. Your contractor will not be paying for any water damage from a broken sprinkler pipe - it

will be your condominium corporation and/or your insurance provider.

Once the sprinkler piping has been repaired and checked by your sprinkler system contractor, call the SJRFD at 722-1234 (**NOT the 911 emergency number**), Property Manager, and condo corporation insurance provider to inform them that the sprinkler system has been repaired and is now available for normal operation.

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Data Analysis of the Condominiums Listed in the NL Registry

By David Cumming

Over the spring of 2019, the Board of CCI-NL has spent considerable time reviewing the information in the NL Registry of Condominiums located at 59 Elizabeth Av in St. John's. The objective of this project was to derive a user friendly tool and make this resource available to CCI-NL members. Anyone who has used the Companies and Deeds Online (CADO) database at the Registry will know why the system is often described as 'clunky' - not user friendly to say the least. Also there was no evidence that the information input into the Registry is being verified by Registry staff. As such, all data in the Registry was assumed to be false until it could be proved otherwise. The verification process added considerable time and effort to the review and evaluation process. In addition to reviewing the information in CADO, additional information was derived by reviewing publicly available information on the Internet and carrying out a number of road trips around the north east Avalon where the vast majority of condominiums are located to physically verify condominium addresses and the status of the various local condominium projects.

After reviewing a number of data format options to compile the information, a standard Microsoft EXCEL² spreadsheet was selected as it was assumed that most CCI-NL members are familiar with this format. One line is allocated to each condominium corporation and provides the basic information such as condominium name, registration date, number of units, address, class etc.. The file is entitled NL- Condominium Information Program (NL-CIP) and was released as of May 5, 2019. NL-CIP is now available on the CCI-NL web site 'Members Only' page.

Following the completion of the survey, a basic analysis of the information collected was carried out and the findings are summarized as follows:

- There are nominally a total of **153** condos registered in NL as of the NL-CIP release date.
- The largest condominium corporation is **150** units - Brookfield Estates Condominium Corporation situated in the Lester St. area at the west end of St. John's with Westfield Condominium Corporation at **148** units located on and around Blackmarsh Rd. coming in a close second. Westfield is a recent amalgamation of four condominium corporations - amalgamated as of Jan. 1, 2018.
- The total number of units is **4,153** while the average condominium corporation has **26.88** units.
- One condominium in Gander (The Vanguard Village Condominium Corp.) with 50 units was withdrawn from the Condominium Act under Sect. 63 of the Act as of Aug. 7, 2017.
- There are 5 condominiums with less than 3 units. Since the minimum required is normally 3 units, it is uncertain why these condominium corporations were accepted by the Registrar.
- There are 2 **POTLs** (Parcels of Tied Land) in the province – both located in Mount Pearl. A **POTL** is a freehold parcel of land which is inextricably tied to a share in a Common Elements Condominium.

2 For information on MS EXCEL, see
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_Excel

Condominium Classes:

There are **23** Commercial Condominiums in NL.

There are **5** mixed Residential/Commercial Condominiums in NL.

The remaining (**125**) are various configurations of residential – apartment style, townhouse, bungalow, duplex, triplex, quadplex etc.

Numerical Breakdown (number of units):

- There are **47** condominiums of 10 units or less including POTLs and condominiums less than 3 units.
- There are **46** condominiums with 11 to 25 units.
- There are **40** condominiums with 26 to 50 units.
- There are **17** condominiums with 51 to 100 units.
- There are **3** condominiums with greater than 100 units.

Spatial (Location) Breakdown:

- As expected, the vast majority of condominiums are located on the Avalon Peninsula. A total of **138** condos are located on the Avalon Peninsula including St. John's, Mount Pearl and Conception Bay South (CBS) and a few scattered located in places like Brigus, Torbay.
- There are **4** condominiums in Central Newfoundland.
- There are **10** condominiums located on the west coast centred around Corner Brook and Steady Brook (Marble Mountain).
- According to records in the Registrar's Office, there is one condominium located in Labrador (Labgate

Condominium Corporation a 22 unit condominium located in Wabush).

Images of the condominiums in NL-CIP in Google Street View³ are available for most properties that are located close to a public road (approximately 90%). Instructions on how to view the condominium properties are provided at the beginning of the EXCEL spreadsheet.

There were a number of errors noted in the Condominium Registry records that were corrected and NL-CIP is deemed to be the most accurate NL Condominium data that could be compiled with the available information as of the release date. To reduce the data errors, including names of the current elected Directors, the managers of condominiums are implored to update their Corporation information as soon as it changes and file any changes with the Registry.

Although the economy has recently slowed down in the province and not as many condominiums are being built or expanded in recent years, the Chapter proposes that NL-CIP be reviewed and revised depending on the demands of the CCI-NL membership. Any errors noted by users of NL-CIP should be e-mailed to David Cumming at dwc1463@GMAIL.COM so the resource can be corrected in the next update.

David Cumming served on the Board of Directors of the Imperial Condominium Corporation for over 15 years and now serves on the Board of the CCI-NL Chapter primarily responsible for Education. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent or reflect the views of the CCI Newfoundland and Labrador Chapter. Readers are encouraged to seek the advice of professionals to address specific issues or individual situations. This article may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without acknowledgement to the author.

³ For information on Google Street View, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Street_View



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

CONDOMINIUM CORPORATION

ccinewfoundland@cci.ca • www.cci.ca/Newfoundland

Membership through June 30, 2021

How/from whom did you hear about CCI?: _____

CONDOMINIUM CORPORATION

Condo Name/Number: _____

Number of Units: _____ Registration Date: _____

Development Style: Townhouse Apartment Style Other: _____

Address: _____ Suite #: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

I agree to receive electronic correspondence.

I DO NOT wish to receive electronic correspondence.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

MANAGEMENT COMPANY (if applicable)

Primary Contact: _____

Address: _____ Suite #: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

I agree to receive electronic correspondence.

I DO NOT wish to receive electronic correspondence.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please forward all correspondence to: Management Company address Condo Corporation address

Electronic Correspondence:

This section must be completed in order for the membership application to be processed.

CCI communicates with its membership via e-mail regarding updates on condominium legislation, CCI events and opportunities, newsletters, and member communications; in accordance with the Canada anti-spam law, you must indicate whether you wish to receive electronic correspondence from us.

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Board Member 1 Name: _____

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I agree to receive electronic correspondence. I DO NOT wish to receive electronic correspondence.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Board Member 2 Name: _____

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Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Signature: _____ Date: _____

FEES & PAYMENT

Fees: 1-10 Units - \$100.00
10+ Units - \$125.00

Cheques should be made payable to:
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P.O. Box 23060 Churchill Square, St. John's NL A1B 4J9



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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

INDIVIDUAL / PROFESSIONAL / BUSINESS PARTNER

Membership through June 30, 2021

How/from whom did you hear about CCI?: _____

MEMBERSHIP TYPE	Annual Fee	Fee Owing
Individual Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75.00	\$
Professional Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$125.00	\$
Business Partner Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$125.00	\$

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Company Name (if Professional or Business Partner): _____

Address: _____ Suite #: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Business Website: _____

This section must be completed in order for the membership application to be processed.

CCI communicates with its membership via e-mail regarding updates on condominium legislation, CCI events and opportunities, newsletters, and member communications; in accordance with the Canada anti-spam law, you must indicate whether you wish to receive electronic correspondence from us.

I agree to receive electronic correspondence.

I DO NOT wish to receive electronic correspondence.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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