



"WE OFFER PEACE OF MIND THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE"

NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER

JUNE, 2008



AS WE SEE IT

THE STRATA UNIT

May 25, 2008

Over the years, we have been asked time and time again from our experience as a cost consultant and a project manager from both a restoration and renovation point of view "What is my responsibility as a unit owner for the interior portion of my unit?"

Also, we have been constantly requested to split the responsibility of the cost of restoration after an insured loss between the strata corporation and the unit owner's policies.

The way the Condominium Act is written coupled with the Strata Bylaws for each complex; it sometimes can become a murky and grey area with lots of ambiguous statements in both documents. So as a cost consultant, we have always taken the stand that the not only do we apply the two documents, we apply the principals of restoration and costing as well, thus we come out with a reasonable solution that is more common sense than anything else.

So let's go inside a unit and start there.

CEILINGS

If there is another unit above or the unit owner does not have access to the attic, then it is a common separation and forms part of the strata complex. If the unit owner has access to the attic, then it becomes the unit owner's responsibility to maintain the insulation in that attic, and the roof section belongs to the strata complex.

The finish on the ceiling is the unit owners responsibility, but the framing portion, and the drywall belongs to the strata complex because under the Condominium Act, the strata council is responsible for the safety of the residences, and being part of the structure from both a safety point of view, a fire point as well.

WALLS

All exterior walls, bearing walls, and demising walls belong to the strata complex. Partition walls, provided that they are true partition walls meaning that the drywall on the ceiling flows continuous through above the top plate from one room into the next room, are the responsibility of the owner otherwise they become part of the complex.

All finishes on all walls are the responsibility of the owner. Again the drywall is a fire issue as well as the framing being a safety issue. The entire true partition wall is the owner's responsibility.

FLOORS

The floor covering or finish is the owners, whereas the balance of the structure is the complexes. Even if the unit is on the ground floor and there is access to a crawl space basement because the foundation, footings, services, cleans outs, etc for the whole complex can be accessible from this point. It is the unit owner's responsibility to inform the council if they observe unusual activity going on in that space because council has limited access to the space.

MILLWORK

All built in, vanity, and kitchen cabinets are the owners, as well as the trim, and interior doors.

EXTERIOR DOORS & WINDOWS

They are the responsibility of the complex, while the maintenance of these components is the owners. By maintenance, we mean broken glass, weather-stripping, etc.

PLUMBING

This area seems to be the most confusing of all, so let's take a bathtub for example; the drain is the responsibility of the complex, while the water supply can be the owners, along with the fixture itself. The reasoning here is quite simple, as the water supply usually has shut off valves, the unit owner can control the flow from that point into the unit, whereas the drain has no shut off and runs into areas that the owner has no control over, therefore it becomes part of the complex.

Maintenance of this item would be the owners. For example again, a toilet, the fixture and water supply is the owners, while the sewage pipe is the complex. Again the sewer pipe runs into areas that the owner can not access. However, should the toilet back up from abusive use or a plugged drain, it is the unit owners duty to address the issue unit a trades person can tell them that the cause is further into line and out of the owners jurisdiction, then the complex should take over.

HEATING

If the unit is self sufficient, then the owner has this responsibility, unless ducts and runs are in common areas that the owner cannot access, then again it becomes the strata's. If it is a common heating plant for the complex, then all of it becomes part of the complex. The only exception to this rule would be registers which can become the owners.

ELECTRICAL

All fixtures, receptacles, switches, plates, are the unit owners. If each unit has its own service, this too becomes the owners. If the wiring runs into common areas, the wiring becomes the complex. Again the principle of continuous run without junction applies.

FIRE PROTECTION

All fire protection equipment such as smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, central alarms, etc. should be the responsibility of the complex because they do not only concern the unit owner but all of the other owners throughout the complex.

Now as we mentioned in the beginning this is using basic common sense as we see it and applying principles from the condominium act, construction, and restoration. We have been very successful in the past in resolving situations regarding who is responsible, and if you find yourself in this situation, we would advise that you retain a cost consultant. For more information about us, please visit our website at www.integralconsultants.ca



FROM THE GROUND UP

FOUNDATIONS

June 1, 2008

A building needs a foundation to support its considerable weight, provide a flat and level base for frame construction that separates wood based materials from contact with the ground and or concrete that would otherwise cause rot and allow termite infestation.

Depending upon when and where the building is built, the foundation may be of stone, brick, preservative treated lumber, concrete block or poured concrete. The most common material of these is concrete.

Most buildings have a raised, perimeter foundation that supports floors and load bearing walls. Some are built on a flat concrete slab that doubles as the foundation for support, and the ground floor that becomes part of the finished occupancy. Other buildings are built on concrete pillars or

wood pilings, or a portion thereof, although this method is being phased out in favor of the foundation wall.

These concrete pillars can also support load bearing walls within the building structure. These pillars rest upon a footing and support mid span beams that form part of the framing of the building.

Alternatively concrete blocks with steel reinforced rods inserted into the center of them are used in place of solid concrete construction. These blocks which are hollow in the middle are placed on a bed of mortar to solidify rigidity and grouted inserted in the cavity to hold the steel rods in place.

Today, interior supporting pillars have either concrete blocks or steel adjustable poles to support the framing structure.

The most common foundation walls are poured reinforced concrete or filled reinforced concrete blocks, although pre poured foundation wall slabs are becoming more popular and may become a method of the future.

These newer aged poured concrete walls have insulated permanent formwork put in place with a network of reinforcing rods in between for better insulation value for not only full basements but crawl spaces as well.

The exterior of these walls have a membrane with a puck designed waterproofing sheets attached for a watertight wall. This includes the pre formed wall slabs as well.



Concrete Block Pillars



Concrete Block Foundation Wall



Poured Concrete - Full Foundation



Poured Concrete - Crawl Space



Slab of Grade



Poured Concrete Foundation Panels



Permanent Insulated Formwork



Foundation Waterproofing

Foundations can and do crack, sink, and fail. This is because of poor soil conditions, faulty workmanship, over construction of the building, under construction of the footings and placement of the building in proximity to hillsides, roadways, and waterways.

Building Code changes all over North America have introduced these last two products in the last few years and the beginning of "Code Green" is just around the corner.

These two products are part of a greener building code. For more information concerning these products call Mainland Concrete Lifters Inc. toll free at 1 800 231 - 3132.



Please visit our sponsors.

www.integralconsultants.ca

www.mainlandlifters.com

Without them, this newsletter would not be possible.



THIS NEWSLETTER IS DESIGNED TO INFORM ADJUSTERS, BROKERS, UNDERWRITERS, AND CONSUMERS OF RISKS REGARDING REAL PROPERTY WHETHER IT IS SIMPLY EXISTING CONDITIONS OF A PROPERTY OR ACTUAL LOSS OF PROPERTY. THIS PUBLICATION IS DISTRIBUTED BY SUBSCRIPTION OR APPOINTMENT ONLY TO OVER 3,000 SUBSCRIBERS