

Winter 2011

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) (O. Reg. 429/07) Deadline is fast Approaching

The New Year will be bringing more than season's greeting. It also represents the deadline for compliance with the above-referenced legislation.

This means by that date boards must have taken reasonable steps to remove any barriers that prevent those with disabilities from using any of the corporation's "services".

Although it may appear daunting from the onset, if taken in manageable chunks, compliance should not be problematic.

Firstly, boards must consider what constitutes a "service" in their corporation (i.e., recreation facilities, party rooms, swimming pools, etc.) Do they meet accessibility standards? If not, the Boards

must enact the appropriate rules and regulations.

Secondly, Boards must establish "practices" & "procedures" to comply with those newly enacted rules and regulations. This may mean that monies required to retrofit services may need to be factored into the next Reserve Fund Study.

We suggest that Boards consult their lawyers for help in complying with this legislation deadline and determining exactly what constitutes compliance. We also suggest too that this be taken seriously as there are fines for non-compliance as well as liability under the Human Rights Code.

For more information please visit:

www.mgs.gov.on.ca/en/Home/index.htm

Ice & Snow Removal. Who is Responsible?

The landscaping and snow removal contract is an essential component of a condominium corporation's budget.

However, having such a contract in place does not eliminate a corporation's responsibility to ensure resident safety.

Boards are reminded that their superintendent must have the appropriate snow removal equipment at the ready because snow removal contracts usually have a snow accumulation trigger and the contractor's have many customers. This means that Boards must

take the appropriate action in-house before the contractor arrives.

Boards of small corporations without on-site superintendents must ensure that there is no slip and fall liability caused by snowy/icy sidewalks or wet lobby floors.

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AODA 429/07

1. Enact necessary rules & regulations to ensure compliance.
2. Determine what "practices" & "procedures" are necessary to comply with the rules & regulations.
3. Put those "practices" & "procedures in place" by January 1, 2012.

Winter Hydro & Water Conservation Tips

Toronto Hydro advises that 54% of energy costs come from heating/cooling and 20% from hot water.

Lowering the thermostat 1° can result in a 3% savings. It is suggested that room temperatures be 21°C when home relaxing, 18°C when sleeping and 15°C when away from home.

Installing programmable thermostats away from sunlight will ensure the

appropriate temperature throughout the day.

If units have insuite gas fireplaces, turn down the main thermostat and keep the fireplace thermostat at the lowest possible setting.

Always try to plug space heaters into a ground fault circuit interrupter, which prevents electric shock by shutting the heater off if an electrical leakage develops.

Make sure your appliances are energy efficient. Old fridges and freezers can be picked up by such services as Toronto Hydro.

Make sure that all faucets are operating correctly and not dripping. This is the main cause of higher water costs. Residents going south or elsewhere for the winter should turn off their insuite water to avoid possible flooding.

Responsible Winter Conduct

If it hasn't already been done, Board members should remind owners of winter driving hazards within the community. This means driving at lower speeds and higher vigilance for children who may be playing in the snow or pedestrians walking dogs on roadways. This is especially important when the roadways are flanked by high snow banks.

Drivers are advised to allow

plenty of time to get to their destination. This is even more important in the holiday season when everyone seems to be in a rush. It's better to arrive late than not to arrive at all.

Townhouse residents who are responsible for their own snow removal on verandahs and steps etc. must ensure that there is no slip and fall liability.

Pedestrians must also be

aware of their surroundings and exercise caution when walking. Sometimes newly fallen snow masks black ice.

Remind residents to always have a functioning cell phone with them in case of an emergency.

Report any burnt out exterior lights to management or security.

"Keep winter driving distractions to a minimum. Leave a bigger buffer between you and the vehicle in front of you"

Snowbirds Beware

Once the holiday season is over and the last of the decorations have been put away, many owners eagerly anticipate spending their winters in the warmer climates.

Boards should ensure that residents are aware of the

need to contact their insurer so that they can go away worry free.

Many insurance companies only cover damage if certain prerequisites have been met. Some even state that the HVAC system must be connected to a twenty-four

hour monitoring service.

As with everything else, planning is key to prevention (see page 4 for checklist) and prevention is the key to peace of mind.

Single Family/Townhome Winterization Tips

We don't often devote newsletter space to single family or townhome condominium corporations. The simple truth is that most information and suggestions relate to many different types of Condominium Corporations. However there are some winter precautions that are unique to these entities.

First and most obvious is to remind owners to double check that their irrigation system is drained and shut off.

Owners should not assume that the landscaping contractor has performed this function. It takes only a few minutes and can save unnecessary repair costs not to mention water bills. An extension of this is to disconnect and drain the outdoor drains.

In the event of a burst pipe, owners must know where the main water shut off is located so they can act promptly thereby mitigating water damage.

The outside hose bibs should also be turned off using the shut off within the unit to ensure the pipe doesn't freeze and crack.

Again, the aforementioned is a broad generalization and boards are encouraged to come up with their own suggestions unique to their property.

As with everything else, publicize these suggestions early and often. Everyone will be glad you did.

Holiday Season Safety Tips

Boards are advised to help ensure that their owners have an enjoyable holiday season.

The first step toward this end is for management to put out a newsletter, notice or item in the corporation's website regarding the rules about allowing live Christmas trees. This missive could also include: reminders to not leave lit trees unattended, be careful when

using candles etc.

If your corporation does allow live trees, make sure that residents know the proper method for their disposal. You may want to give other suggestions: for example to never place Christmas trees close to any heat source, and always keep the tree stand filled with water.

Like everything else, too much information is better

than not enough. Do not give residents the opportunity to claim they weren't aware of your corporation's specific holiday rules. This is especially important if they experience a problem that compliance would have prevented.

Be sure that any notice is current, accurate and all-inclusive. Make it a happy holiday season for all.



Start the New Year Clean

The first page of this issue contained advice for boards about the January 1, 2012 deadline for AODA 429/07 compliance.

However, throughout this year we have also advised boards of other legislative issue such as O. Reg. 164/99 (a.k.a. Ontario Electricity Code) (Spring 11) requiring

that all electrical work be inspected and documented; elevators and TSSA changes re single bulkhead systems (Spring 11); countdown to the reserve fund top-up extension resulting from the HST.

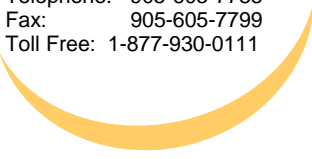
Boards must remember that although we try to make this newsletter as informative as

possible, we can't possibly include everything that comes up in a given year. It is for that reason that we also suggest that boards give their lawyer's and accountant's information documents the appropriate consideration to ensure that their corporation is ready for the new year.

Changes in Comfort Property Management Inc.

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Customized Property Management
at a Comfortable Price



We are pleased to announce that in recognition for his hard work, dedication and loyalty, effective January 1, 2012, Anthony Irwin, R.C.M., Vice President of Operations will become a partner with Gabriel Dolnicianu, R.C.M. AIHM, President and Andreea Dolnicianu, iBBA, Regional Manager.

With this partnership, Comfort Property Management Inc. will not only strengthen its service to our clients, but also create a stronger, more supportive atmosphere for all staff members where they can learn, grow and enjoy.

Congratulations Anthony!

Anthony can be reached at 905-605-7788 or by email at anthonyi@comfortpm.ca

Happy Holidays!

Comfort Property Management Inc. wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season. Our team would like to thank you for a great business relationship and we look forward to another prosperous year together in our communities.

As always, we thank those corporations who have already entrusted their properties to our care and we look forward to a lengthy partnership with you. We also invite any condominium corporations interested in learning more about our unique management philosophy to contact us.

*The Comfort Chronicle is intended for informational purposes only.
Please consult the appropriate professionals before taking any action on behalf of your Corporation*

Vacation/Extended Absences

Does your corporation have a large population of owners who are absent from their units for extended periods of time? If so, the following list would be helpful to remind those owners of the necessary precautions:

- Arrange with a neighbour/mail carrier to hold your mail or have it forwarded (contact Post Office).
- Cancel newspaper delivery for duration of your vacation.
- Make sure all windows are closed and locked.
- Notify Management of the duration of your

absence and contact name in case of emergency.

- Make sure you sign any necessary permission forms for management and maintenance to enter your unit for periodic/annual inspections.
- Contact Management about disconnecting cable service during your absence. There is usually a minimum and maximum allowable. In some instances this may have to be done by the owner
- Have a neighbour check

your unit to ensure that there are no broken windows or water leaks etc.

- If you decide not to shut off your insuite water supply, have a neighbour/friend run the kitchen and bathroom faucets and flush toilets twice a month in order to prevent sewer gas fumes from backing up into the Unit.

Again, this unit is not all-inclusive but represents a starting for Boards to develop a corporation specific suggestion list for extensive unit absences.