



# CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION • NEW WESTMINSTER POLICE SERVICE

Volume 2, Issue 2

Summer/Fall 2003

## Image Makes the Difference

**You can't always judge a book by its cover, but it can tell a story of what's inside. The same can be said for apartment buildings.**

If the first thing people see when approaching your property is over-grown grass and landscaping; balconies filled with boxes, furniture, and clothing hanging over the edge; and peeling paint or desperately needing a good power-wash, their impression will



**GOOD IMAGE:** Only patio furniture and flower pots are allowed on balconies. Exterior, landscaping, and blinds are well-maintained.



**POOR IMAGE:** Boxes, mattresses, and other furniture fill balconies. Exterior shows visible signs of dirt.

be less than positive. Potential residents will be making a decision as to whether they want to live in your building and how active the management is based on how the exterior and common areas are cared for. By maintaining your property, you advertise that the people who live here care and are watchful of the surrounding area.

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program recognizes that desirable tenants will move less often and cause less damage when they have a sense of pride and ownership for their home. Cutting the grass, trimming hedges and trees, and decorating the building with good visible signage and flowers can

build a better sense of ownership and private space.

Keeping the property clean is important. Remove graffiti, garbage and discarded furniture as quickly as possible. Paint or power-wash the exterior and parking lot. The curtains or blinds, since they are visible from the outside, should be in good shape and the same type and colour across all units.

Another important feature is the front lobby. This is the entrance to your home and contributes to first impressions. When an applicant walks in, the first thing they will notice is the carpet. Make sure the lobby and hallways are vacuumed and washed regularly, and

not too worn. On average, carpets should be replaced every ten years. The walls of the lobby, hallways, and stairwells should also be clean and painted on a regular basis.

Properties that are well maintained and actively managed, experience significantly lower incidents of crime. If you follow some of these tips, you not only enhance the image of your building, you also encourage better residents to rent your apartments. The goal of the CFMH Program is to keep illegal and nuisance activity out, and the appearance of your building is the first step to doing just that.

# Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program

*Could This Be You???*

Shortly after 8:00 am on January 31st, a small blaze ripped through a vacant suite in New Westminster forcing the building residents to evacuate. Over 30 people hovered outside in the cool weather as the Fire Department rushed to put out the flames from the third story apartment. As Police and Emergency Social Services staff arrive at the scene, it is obvious that this blaze has caught them unaware – virtually no one appeared prepared.

As in most apartments, it was thought that this was “just another false alarm” until residents realized that the hallways were filled with smoke. Outside, residents stood huddled, wearing only housecoats and pajamas... there was no time to grab jackets, sweaters or even socks. Several residents approached staff wondering when they could retrieve the cats they had left behind. As residents were evacuated to a secondary location, families began their requests for clothing, food, diapers, medication and pet rescue.

The city of New Westminster provides our community with a FREE program called the Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program. NEP is a neighbourhood-based disaster response program that focuses on teaching emergency preparedness and disaster response “as a team” when a situation arises. If this had been a NEP-trained apartment building, the residents could have evacuated their building with their emergency grab n’ go kits which would have basic supplies, diapers and clothing they needed. They would know to evacuate with their pets in emergency carriers. The “Leader” would automatically take a master list of residents to ensure everyone had left the building safely and to know if someone was “left behind” in order to notify emergency personnel. Members of the Fire Suppression and Utilities team could have assisted in contacting residents on each floor to let them know they needed to evacuate and assist those that needed help. Shelter and Care Giving participants could have everyone gather at the pre-identified meeting location to ensure that emergency personnel that arrived could meet immediate needs of blankets, diapers and medication quickly. Unfortunately, this was not a NEP building. As Coordinator of the NEP Program, I urge you to consider becoming a part of the local NEP Program. Your own safety could depend on it...

For more information contact Cindy Pulvermacher, NEP Program Coordinator at 604-529-2521 or Email: [Cpulvermacher@nwpolice.org](mailto:Cpulvermacher@nwpolice.org)



## Fire Safety Plan A Useful Document

For most apartment buildings a Fire Safety Plan (FSP) is a B.C. Fire Code requirement. It is also a great reference document. The FSP provides information on emergency procedures; maintenance schedules for fire and life safety equipment, assigns responsibility for fire safety duties and provides direction for typical hazards found in the building. Your FSP is required to be kept on site with all records of maintenance, inspection, and testing of all code requirements. (E.g. fire alarm tests, extinguisher servicing, and sprinkler maintenance). The FSP provides building information to new tenants; new managers, new caretakers and new strata counsel members, so they are quickly brought up to speed with the safety features of the building. If you don't yet have an FSP for your building, contact the New Westminster Fire Prevention Office at 604-519-1000. I urge you to use your Fire Safety Plan; it is a good document to have around.

Dan Wilson, *Fire Inspector*  
New Westminster Fire Department

## **Congratulations New CFMH Members!**

**Since January 2003, the Management of the following properties have successfully completed all three phases of the C.F.M.H. Program which promotes safer apartment communities:**

700 Park—700 Park Crescent

Ashley Mansions—815 St. Andrews Street

London Square—1206 London Street

Mandalay Terrace—325 Ward Street

Montego Apts—319 Knox Street

Park Astoria—430 Eleventh Street

Plaza Five-Thirty—530 Ninth Street

Princeton Place—1021 Howay Street

Royal Ridge Apts—315 Agnes Street

Tiffany Place—1115 Fourth Avenue

Currently, 41 properties are fully certified in the New Westminster CFMH Program, with many more working towards that goal. For a complete list of properties, go to <http://www.nwpolice.org/cfmhproperties.html>.

Benefits in joining the CFMH program include: regular communication on criminal activity in your neighbourhood, crime prevention tactics, security meetings with residents, and discount on renters insurance. Property owners also experience improved property values, stable and satisfied resident base, increased demand for suites from desirable residents, and lower maintenance and repair costs.

To find out if your property is ready to be certified, contact the CFMH office at 604-529-2494.

**Ashley Mansion residents at their first Resident Safety Social.**



## **Mail Security**

**M**ailbox thefts in apartment buildings are increasingly common. It can result in financial loss and inconvenience for your residents, who may also question the overall security of the building. Here are some tips to protect the mail:

- Remind residents to pick up mail as soon as possible after delivery.
- Residents should arrange for someone to pick up the mail when going away on vacation or use Canada Post's Hold Mail Service.
- Provide a secure box or empty mail slot for returned mail, rather than leaving it unprotected.
- Check the physical condition of mailboxes. If panels are easy to pry open, consult a locksmith to install a security bar or astragal across.
- If badly damaged, replace the mailboxes. Solid front mailboxes are more secure than those with openings that show when letters are inside.
- Re-key the mailbox locks when new tenants move in.
- Install a timer on the intercom that only allows entry an hour before and after Canada Post's regular delivery time and blocks out weekends.
- Remove the exterior lock boxes.
- If you notice any suspicious activity around the mailboxes, contact police immediately.

## **F o r R e n t**

**T**he sign goes up in front of the building and ads are placed in the newspaper. The phone starts ringing and potential applicants come to view the apartment. As a manager, your job is to interview the applicants and determine who is most suitable to fill the vacancy. It is not uncommon for managers to interview ten applicants to find the right one. An "Application Criteria" should be established to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly. This would include requiring all adult applicants to: show identification, supply references, proof of legitimate income, and complete the application form in person. Legitimate and desirable applicants will come prepared. Those that are considering using the apartment for criminal activities will

try other tactics to convince you to accept them as residents.

### **Beware of applicants who:**

1. Offer lots of cash up front.
  2. Is "in a hurry!"
  3. Does not take time to visualize where their furniture may be placed.
  4. Has suspicious memory loss or is vague on information.
  5. Does not produce photo identification.
  6. Argues about your application criteria.
  7. Is only interested in ground level apartments, easily accessed from the outside, or near a side exit.
- If applicants use any of these tactics, be cautious of renting to them.

## Important Contact Numbers

**A**s apartment managers, you are responsible for not only the properties, but sometimes for the residents themselves. Elderly residents with little family contact or individuals having difficulty coping may need someone to contact an agency on their behalf. These needs can range from social services, senior care, or mental health. Please keep these local contact numbers on hand for reference.

### Ministry of Children and Family Development

The Ministry of Children and Family Development works to ensure that some of our most vulnerable children and families have the best chances possible to succeed and thrive. They offer a variety of programs and services from childcare to youth justice.

1065 E. Columbia St. Phone: 604-660-9495

### New Westminster Mental Health Centre

Provides services for adults ages 19 and over, who have acute and/or persistent mental disorders with significant functional disabilities. Programs and services include assessment, individual or group treatment, case management, community living support, residential care, consultation, and referral/bridging to other community services. Holds a dual diagnosis support group for adults who have a mental health disability and a substance addiction.

2nd Floor-403 6th St. Phone: 604-660-8626 or 604-527-0009 (After Hours)

### Simon Fraser Health Region

For health related concerns about rental housing as well as the services provided by the New Westminister Health Centre.

537 Carnarvon St. Phone: 604-777-6740

### Seniors Bureau

Provides many different resources and referral services for seniors.

330 6th St. Phone: 604-524-2938

### Century House

Provides a wide variety of social, educational, leisure, peer-counseling, and support group for seniors.

620 8th St. New Westminister Phone: 604-519-1066



The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is designed to help owners, managers, and residents of multi-unit rental property work with the police and other agencies to keep illegal and nuisance activity off such property. The result of this team effort is a safer, more habitable environment in which to live.

The program consists of three phases:

*Phase One:* Residential Managers attend an 8-hour workshop

*Phase Two:* Meet minimum requirements from a Security Assessment

*Phase Three:* Management hosts an annual Resident Safety Social.

Following completion of all three phases, the management will earn the privilege of posting signs on the property and using the CFMH Program logo in advertising.

For more information, contact:

Veronika Metchie

CFMH Program Coordinator  
New Westminister Police Service

Tel: 604-529-2494

[vmetchie@nwpolice.org](mailto:vmetchie@nwpolice.org)

This newsletter is published by:  
New Westminister Police Service

555 Columbia Street

New Westminister, BC V3L 1B2

Tel: 604-525-5411

[www.nwpolice.org](http://www.nwpolice.org)

Articles contributed by:

Lydia Kim

Cindy Pulvermacher



**New Westminister Crime Free Multi-Housing Program**  
**604-529-2494**