



CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION • NEW WESTMINSTER POLICE SERVICE

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Closing the Door on Crime The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program



Ten years ago, the New Westminister Police Service started a pilot program designed to lessen illegal and nuisance activity in rental properties. Over the years, the Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH) Program has proven to be effective in reducing police calls for service to the rental properties that participate. Property owners and managers also realize the positive economic benefits of the program and it contributes to better living conditions for the residents.

The CFMH Program provides the tools and knowledge to proactively deal with situations that may occur in and around apartment communities. Training is provided for property owners and managers on the importance of thorough applicant screening, the role of police when attending calls to the property, and how to spot potential problems that face today's rental market such as grow-ops, drug dealing and other illegal activity.

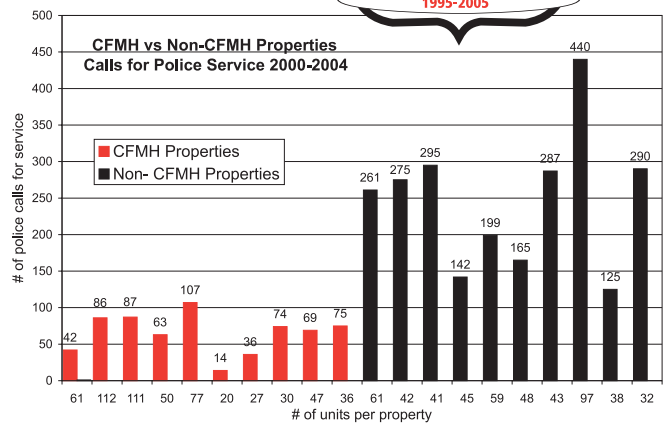
Crime Free vs Non-Crime Free

A recent study was conducted on comparing properties that are active in the program versus properties that are not and how many police files are associated to the properties. The results: properties that are involved in the CFMH Program have up to one-third less police files than properties that are not involved.

A police file can be everything from a report of a noisy party, vehicle theft, disputes between tenants or management, break-ins, or reports of suspicious persons or activity. The study looked at the number of police files to the addresses of 52 CFMH properties and 32 non-CFMH properties over a five-year period. Across the board, CFMH properties experienced less criminal, nuisance and repeated incidents. Furthermore, the longer a property is involved in the program, the less incidents occur. The success rate of lowering police calls for service and nuisance behaviour after implementing the CFMH Program can be as high as 90 per cent!

Who benefits from this program? Everyone!

Property owners benefit through less maintenance costs, less



resident turn-over, reduces loss on revenue due to suites that are damaged, and reduced business license fees thanks to the 10% discount the City of New Westminister offers to fully certified properties.

Managers benefit with less time spent on crisis control, more job satisfaction, more time to spend on routine maintenance, and less time spent in arbitration or disputes with undesirable tenants. These benefits also affect the residents. They tend to reside longer in the building when they feel safe in their home and maintain the property better.

What's the cost of NOT joining?

The cost of criminal or nuisance activity on rental property can be limitless! Costs may include decline in property value when criminal activity affects the reputation of the neighbourhood; property damage arising from abuse, retaliation, neglect, or police searches; fire damage from drug manufacturing or grow operations; loss of rent during the eviction and repair periods; fear and frustration when dealing with dangerous and threatening residents or their guests; and loss of valued residents.

It's easy to get involved.

Contact the Crime Free Coordinator at 604-529-2494, New Westminister Police Service for details.

Crime Free Multi-Housing 5-Year Report (2000 – 2004)

“High calls for police service not only decrease the wealth and productivity of an apartment community, but also increases fear among residents, and reduces the amount of police resources available for patrolling other problems in the city.”

—EXCERPT FROM STUDY CONDUCTED BY
RAFFAELA MANDARINO, BA CRIMINOLOGY,
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

| | Crime Free Properties | Non-Crime Free Properties |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Properties Studied | 52 | 32 |
| Total # of Living Units | 2,433 | 1,465 |
| Total Calls for Police Service between 2000 – 2004 | 4,591 | 5,561 |
| Average # of Police Calls/ Unit/Year | 0.38 | 0.76 |
| Properties involved in CFMH more than 5 years Average Police Calls/Unit/Year | 0.25 | |

This study looked at certified CFMH properties (passed all three phases and display a CFMH sign) as of December 31, 2004. Twenty-one properties have more than 5 years of active participation. The remaining properties joined the program as recently as December, 2004.

All properties studied are located throughout New Westminster and range in size from 4 units to 118 units. Non-CFMH properties were selected based on their limited interaction with the CFMH program and similar size and location to CFMH properties. A call for police service may include vehicle theft reports, noise disturbance calls, break-ins, domestic disputes, mental health issues, reports of suspicious persons, etc. Multiple files may be generated for one incident, example multiple vehicle break-ins in underground garage on same day.

For complete study details go to www.nwpolice.org/cfmh.html.

Keep It Under Wraps – Protection of Personal Information Act (PIPA)

In January 2004, the BC Legislature passed into law the *Protection of Personal Information Act (PIPA)*. PIPA sets out how private organizations (including businesses, charities, associations and labour organizations) may collect, use and disclose personal information. As an apartment owner or manager you are subject to the provisions of PIPA and should be aware of how this Act affects your business and your obligations.

Collection of Personal Information:

Get consent for collecting, using and disclosing an individual's personal information.

Tenancy application forms should include a consent line that allows the management to contact references provided and perform a credit check for purposes of verifying information provided.

Storing Personal Information:

An organization must protect personal information in its custody or under its control by making reasonable security arrangements to prevent unauthorized access, collection, use, disclosure, copying, modification or disposal or similar risks.

Tenant files should be stored in locked file cabinets. Limit access to files to only to those employees who require it for their positions. Clear files and documents containing personal information off your desk at the end of each day. Shred papers containing personal information, rather than placing them in a garbage or recycling bin. Protect computer files with passwords.

Social Insurance Numbers:

It is not illegal to ask for an applicant's Social Insurance Number (SIN), however, the applicant is not required to provide their SIN. Under PIPA, only organizations or circumstances that require the collection of SIN's, such as banks for interest bearing accounts or employers for payroll purposes, may require its collection. An organization that asks for the SIN for identification or credit check purposes only must clearly indicate that the SIN is optional.

PIPA prevents an organization from requiring an individual to give personal information as a condition of supplying a product or service unless that information is necessary to supply the product or service.

For further information on PIPA contact the *Office of the Information & Privacy Commissioner for BC*- www.oipcbc.org.

Congratulations New CFMH Members!

Over 60 properties have successfully completed all three phases of the CFMH Program. The benefits in joining the Crime Free program include 10% discount on business license fee, regular communication from the police department on crime trends and prevention, and manager network meetings with guest speakers. Promoting safer apartment communities appeals to residents and makes your apartments more desirable. For a full list of properties in the Crime Free program go to www.nwpolice.org/cfmh.html.

To get involved in the CFMH program, contact the Crime Free Coordinator at 604-529-2494.

Upcoming Events

September 22, 2005

CFMH Continuing Education

Seminar

How to be Successful in the Arbitration Process

Personal Information and Protection Act

Identity Theft

Hilton Metrotown, Burnaby - \$45

October 2005

Crime Free Multi-Housing Workshop

Phase One of the CFMH Program

Location & Date TBA - \$40

Smoking Marihuana & Grow-Ops

Marihuana smoking in apartments is a common problem facing managers. Resolving the issue can sometimes be difficult. Possession of marihuana is an offence under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, however proving possession and establishing grounds for criminal charges is labor intensive and doesn't always bring a quick resolution to the problem.

As a manager, there are ways to tackle it:

Use the Crime Free Lease

Addendum.

This form, available to those who attend the Crime Free Manager Workshop, clearly states that use of a controlled substance is prohibited. The addendum and other expectations of your tenants' behaviour should be clearly discussed during

the interview stage. The CF Lease Addendum is signed and agreed to at the time of entering into the rental agreement.

When other tenants complain. Identify which suite is responsible. Have those that are affected write out their complaints with times and dates of occurrences. Or, have the affected neighbours keep a diary of the occurrences and commit to appearing at a Residential Tenancy Arbitration Hearing as a witness if necessary. An eviction notice can be issued under section 47(e) of the Residential Tenancy Act providing you can sufficiently demonstrate that the quiet enjoyment or physical well being of another occupant has been jeopardized. Refer to the Residential Tenancy Policy Guideline #32-Illegal Activities for details.

Grow-Ops

Marihuana grow-ops do occur in apartment suites. They can create extensive damage to the unit and building. Fires, water damage, and mould are just some examples. As well, when a marihuana grow operation is found, services to the unit are disconnected and the unit must undergo municipal inspections and fees before being re-occupied. This can run into thousands of dollars.

To minimize the opportunity of someone setting up a grow-operation do the following:

- Thoroughly check references of applicants
- Inform them that regular inspections of units are conducted.
- Conduct those inspections! Under the RTA, you are permitted to conduct monthly inspections of units with proper notice. All new tenants should have monthly inspections. Once established, it is advised to inspect units quarterly.





Apartment & High-Rise Fire Safety

What causes most apartment fires?

- Cooking/kitchen fires
- Heating equipment such as space heaters
- Candles
- Smoking

Fire safety is everyone's responsibility. Every resident should plan to be fire safe. Most high-rise buildings (over ten stories) are constructed of fire resistant materials and contain closed stairwells. Fires in these buildings are usually confined to individual rooms or apartments, furnishings or possibly one floor.

Two or three storey wood frame buildings have either enclosed stairwells, or if an older building, external fire escapes. Enclosed stairwells have fire doors that must be kept closed at all times!

An apartment or high-rise fire is no cause for panic if you plan ahead. Post these tips:

Managers:

- Ensure your Fire Safety Plan is current. The plans should be posted in a visible area on each floor and include floor plans and evacuation procedures.
- Know how your fire panel works. This helps to identify the location of the fire alarm.
- Have your fire alarms, sprinklers, smoke detectors, and extinguishers serviced regularly.
- Ensure your fire doors are kept closed. Check the doors, including suite doors, for any gaps that may occur due to a building settling and shifting over time. Repair where necessary.
- Keep a current list of residents in an accessible place.
- Know which residents may need assistance out of their units.
- Conduct and practice fire drills with the residents.

Residents:

- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Keep matches and lighters out of sight and reach of children.
- Never smoke in bed or under the influence of alcohol or medications.
- Replace worn out or damaged electrical cords. Do not overload electrical outlets.
- Replace space heaters that are more than 10 years old. Keep heaters away from combustibles such as curtains, newspaper and furniture.
- Do not disconnect smoke alarms in your suite. Ask the manager to service the smoke alarm if it is hyper-sensitive.
- Do not use balconies for storage. This can block a means of escape, as well as become fuel for a fire.
- Know two ways out of your suite and building.
- Be familiar with the building's posted Fire Safety Plan.
- Do not ignore fire alarms. Know where your property's meeting place is located, usually across the street to the main entrance.
- Only use exit stairways. Do not use elevators.

Protecting yourself and others is the top priority! Each and every resident is responsible for your building. Planning and awareness can save minutes and lives.



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 require-

ments 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:

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