



CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION • NEW WESTMINSTER POLICE SERVICE

Volume 6, Issue 2

Summer/Fall 2007

Creating a Crime Free environment

Managing a residential apartment community is hard work. No doubt about it. As a manager, rarely do you have a day go by without a complaint from a resident, maintenance to the building or completing paperwork. The job is a 24/7 responsibility.

By implementing the concepts of the Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH) program, you can reduce some of the stresses. When you attend the Phase One workshop, you get the tools that will assist in the daily management of the property: Working Together With Police, Residential Tenancy Act, Applicant Screening, Reducing Crime With Maintenance, and Identifying Illegal Activity.

Some of the tips from the workshop include:

- Be proactive and consistent with policy enforcement.
- Take the time to screen applicants and do not let standards or criteria slip.
- Clearly communicate acceptable behaviour to residents.
- Recognize quickly if behaviour is not appropriate or a breach of the contract has occurred and act swiftly to address.
- Document, document, document.
- Be prepared to follow-through on RTA actions (warnings, breach letters, evictions).
- Provide a safe environment by keeping up maintenance on property.

Contact the Crime Free Coordinator at 604-529-2494 or vmetchie@nwpolice.org for the next scheduled Phase One Workshop.



Suite Inspections

When was the last time you inspected all the suites in your building?

The Crime Free Coordinator regularly attends with other City officials on inspections of properties who may be violating the *Business Regulations and Licensing (Rental Units) Bylaw*. The inspectors look for maintenance deficiencies such as leaky faucets, broken tiles around tubs, appliances not working properly, and health and fire risks. On occasion, there are units where the residents' habits are encouraging deficiencies. The residents may

be long-term and experiencing mental health or aging changes and are unable to maintain their units properly. Long-term tenants quite often do not alert management to things not working in their suite. A small problem can escalate into a much bigger issue.

The Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) allows monthly suite inspections upon proper notice. A good practice for established tenants is to inspect suites at

least every six months, more often for newer tenants. Look in areas that may cause significant damage to the building such as under kitchen sinks and around tubs and toilets for leaks. Ensure locks on windows and patio doors are functioning properly and that the smoke alarms are connected as residents often disconnect them. Regular suite inspections also protect against marijuana grow-operations from establishing.

Continued next page

Continued from page 1

Also take note of the tenant's personal housekeeping habits. Excessive articles such as clothing, furniture and newspapers can violate the fire code. Food and garbage not stored properly can promote rodents and insects. It is management's right to insist that tenants keep their units at an acceptable level that will not be a hazard to others in the building. In addition, if you allow pets, it is also advised to ensure they are properly cared for and not creating damage to the suite.

A recent city inspection of a building turned up the following:

- The tenants had disconnected the smoke alarms in 25% suites.
- A suite with an elderly, long-time tenant was overwhelmed with cat urine; significant wear and tear on the walls and carpets; and the stove was heavily soiled making it a fire hazard.
- Three suites were over-filled with the tenants' possessions and deemed a hazard by the fire department.
- Many dripping taps and tiles around tubs allowing water penetration to the floors and walls behind promoting mould growth.

While the outside of the property looked well kept, the suites' condition were causing significant damage to the interior of building and putting other residents at risk. With a proactive approach in maintenance inspections, you avoid bigger problems, protect your investment and minimize turn-over and down-time for suites.

The \$200 Solution

Creating a safe environment for your residents doesn't have to be expensive. There are many areas around your apartment building where security can be enhanced for as little as \$200. Being proactive is one of the best defenses in crime prevention and makes your building less of a target for theft and vandalism.

\$200 (Approx.)

Astragals: Install full-length astragals on entries leading into the building. Astragals are metal strips covering the space between the lock and doorframe and prevent the doors being pried open. Ensure the metal strips wrap around the doorframe to fully protect the lock.



Reinforce Mailboxes: Adding additional hardware to secure a bank of mailboxes can reduce mail theft. Check out Bell Locksmith at www.preventmailtheft.ca for details.

Timers: Install a timer on the mailbox key that limits the ability to activate Canada Post's key and prevent counterfeit keys gaining entry to your building. Install a timer on the intercom, limiting times when residents can activate the front door (ex. 7:00am to 9:00pm) which reduces the opportunities for intruders to get "buzzed" into the building. To protect the timer system, install in the electrical room.



Cylinder Guards: Protect your lock (called the mortise cylinder) with either a ring around the lock that prevents it from being twisted off or with a metal plate.



Under \$200

Flush Bolts: Install locking flush bolts on the stationary door of your building entry to eliminate someone from leaving this door unsecured.

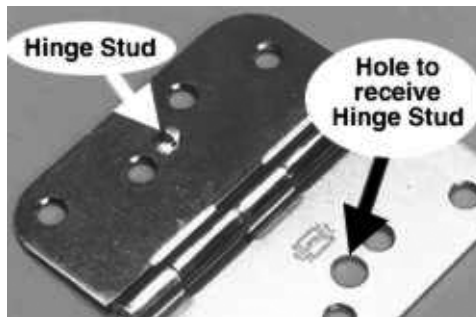


Man Doors on Garage Gates: Many fire exit doors in garage gates (also called man doors) are easily opened with a leather belt. Installing plexiglass over the grill area next to the door handle eliminates this risk.



Auto Door Closer: Adjust your auto door closer on the front entry to reduce opportunities of someone gaining entry after a resident has entered or exited. There are two adjustments: the Closer – how long it takes for the door to reach the frame and the Latch – secures the door in the latch. Each adjustment should be strong enough to close quickly, without causing harm to the user.

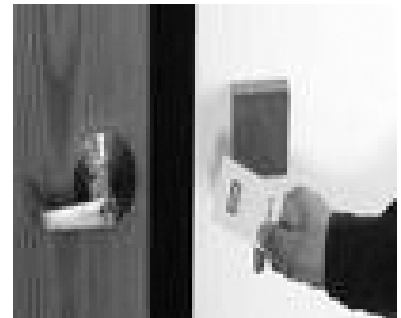
Door Hinge Pins: Doors that swing outwards and have the hinges exposed are vulnerable to being popped open by removing the pins (often found on storage lockers). Installing pegs inside the hinge removes this risk. Pegs or locking hinges may be purchased from locksmiths or use double-headed masonry nails.



Over \$200

Intercom Cameras: Installing a camera system in your intercom allows residents to see who is buzzing them for easy identification.

Keys: Change common area keys to High Security Keys that cannot be duplicated easily. Or change to an electronic key fob system. Electronic key fobs allow individual keys to be deactivated immediately without inconveniencing others and incurring extra costs. It also allows for monitoring the activity of users.



Parking Gate Sentry Alarm: Installing a Sentry Alarm in the parkade prevents other cars or people from sneaking in after the first legitimate user. The spray beam gives off a high pitch alarm and strobe light.

Security assessments are offered through the New Westminster Police Service Community Services Section at no charge. Contact the Crime Free office to make an appointment.

Crime Corner

Copper Pipe Thefts

Electrical rooms and underground parking lots are being targeted for copper pipe thefts. Thieves often come at night and cut the pipes from the ceiling or other exposed areas. Reminders to be particularly aware of unusual sounds in the night coming from your garage or perimeter area or persons who might be scouting out your building for locations of pipe. Report any suspicious persons immediately to Police and take as many precautions as possible to secure your electrical rooms, pipes or other metals such as vent covers or screens.

Fire Safety Plan

NW Fire Prevention officers would like to remind building and property managers about the *BC Fire Code Fire Safety Plan* requirement. Among other things, all properties must have a plan outlining emergency procedures, conduct fire drills, and designate and train supervisory staff to carry out fire safety duties. Contact the NW Fire Prevention office at 604-519-1004 for more information.

The Power of Knowledge: Investing in your own Security

Let's face it, your time is valuable. When it comes to demands on your time, today's busy and hectic life requires that you invest your time wisely. So, when it comes to your home and personal safety, where do you get helpful and current information in one stop? New Westminister Police have recently opened an educational resource centre for the public. The *Crime Prevention Resource Centre* is located in the lobby of the police station at 555 Columbia Street. There is a variety of information on topics related to protecting yourself, your family, and your property:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Auto Crime | Business Security |
| Bicycle Safety & Theft | Graffiti & Vandalism |
| Block Watch | Robbery Prevention |
| Crime Free Multi-Housing | House & Apartment Security |
| Child Safety | Personal Safety |
| Driving & Road Safety | Internet Safety |
| Drug Awareness | Calling the Police |
| Fraud & Scams | |

The Resource Centre is open 24/7 so come on down and take a bite out of crime!

Keep informed on what's happening in New Westminister.

Get valuable news releases and other crime prevention information emailed directly to you. Simply provide your email address by sending a message to vmetchie@nwpolice.org providing your name and property address.



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

This newsletter is published by:
New Westminister Police Service
555 Columbia Street
New Westminister, BC V3L 1B2
Tel: 604-525-5411
www.nwpolice.org

