

October 1, 2016

Dear Highlands Owners and Tenants,

Water leaks, large and small, have been a recurring issue at the Highlands this year. Both the Association and individual unit owners have spent an inordinate amount of time and money responding to leaks from sprinkler systems, faulty water heaters, and worn pipes from toilets, garbage disposals, showers, tubs, and sinks. Washing machines, air conditioner drain lines and water line shut-off valves are additional sources of risk.

Within a condominium, as many of us know only too well, the escaping water from a leak can migrate from unit to unit, doing damage to the property of numerous owners.

While some leaks occur behind walls or underneath floors and are not immediately apparent, there are preventive steps we can all take. The Association has already taken and is continuing to investigate additional steps that could be taken to prevent future major leaks, especially in the sprinkler system. But there are some systems that are the responsibility of the individual unit owner, and that only the unit owner can prevent.

The Board is requesting the cooperation of all owners and tenants in getting ahead of as many future leaks as possible. This is a reminder that all Unit Owners are responsible for:

- Replacing water heaters before the warranty expires
- Using braided metal hoses or their high-pressure equivalent on washing machines, dishwashers, ice makers, etc.
- Keeping condensation pans in air conditioning and heating units clean and draining properly
- Using only licensed plumbers and electricians for electrical or plumbing work within their units
- If away during the winter season, turning off the water main to the Unit, setting thermostats at 58 degrees, and leaving closet doors open
- Reporting immediately, in writing, and deliver to the Trustees, any evidence of the following: leaks, water infiltration or excessive moisture in their Units or in the common areas; any signs of mold, or mold or fungi growth within a Unit that the resident is unable to remove with a common household cleaner; and any major failure or malfunction of a heating or cooling system (for example, if furnace is not functioning, or is functioning but unable to maintain a temperature of 58 degrees inside the Unit, or is leaking any fluid, or if there is an odor of gas).

These preventive measures are all required in the Highlands rules and regulations, and Unit Owners can be held liable for any damages resulting from their failure to take these steps.

Other steps we can all take to prevent some leaks include:

- Checking pipes around toilets regularly; noticing and immediately addressing any water on the floor or other signs of a possible leak.
- Checking the pipes underneath all sinks for any signs of leaks.
- Shutting off our main water valve before leaving the unit unoccupied for more than 48 hours.
- Having an on-going air-conditioning maintenance contract, which requires periodic inspections of the systems, addition of chlorine tabs for the drain lines, and a periodic blow out of the lines.

Owners who lease their units should let tenants know, that, should anything seem amiss, even a small drip, they should inform the owner immediately.

One of the worst things we can do to transform a minor plumbing inconvenience into a full-blown crisis is to turn a blind eye. You notice a tiny drip on your way to work, you ignore it, then you come home to find your entire unit under two inches of water — water that is rapidly raining down into the unit below you. A fix that would have required a \$10 part from Home Depot now requires a restoration company, drying out and re-doing floors, sheet rock, installation, repainting, etc. Ten dollars can turn to \$10,000 surprisingly quickly.

There's no question that we all would like to see fewer leaks. If we all work together, we should be able to significantly reduce their number.

Thank you for your cooperation,

The Highlands at Ocean Point
Board of Trustees