

COVID-19: Vulnerable Populations in Condominium Communities

By Ashley Winberg



On Wednesday, the World Health Organization declared the eruption of COVID-19 as a pandemic, which can have serious health consequences and be fatal for the elderly and individuals with underlying medical conditions.

The Government of Canada has advised that certain individuals are at a greater risk of getting or spreading COVID-19, and that said individuals include:

- anyone who is:
 - over the age of 65;
 - at risk due to an underlying medical condition (such as heart disease, hypertension, diabetes chronic respiratory disease, diabetes and/or cancer); and/or
 - at risk due to a compromised immune system from a medical condition or treatment (such as chemotherapy); and/or
- anyone who has:
 - difficulty reading, speaking, understanding or communicating;
 - difficulty accessing medical care and/or health advice;
 - difficulty doing preventive activities like frequent hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes;
 - ongoing specialized medical care; and/or
 - ongoing support for maintaining independence.

Condominium communities in Ontario are comprised of a large number of individuals who are over the age of 65 and as such, every individual who forms part of a condominium community in Ontario (i.e. all owners, residents, employees, contractors, Board members and property management staff) must take proactive action in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within their community.

Posted Notices

Condominium corporations can help limit the spread of COVID-19 and help prevent the vulnerable individuals within their community from getting or spreading COVID-19 by posting notices that provide clear instructions about hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes, which are:

- one page;
- written with large font and use graphics;
- written in the most commonly used languages in the condominium community;
- clear, short and succinct;
- explain the simple steps to be followed with respect to handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes; and
- posted in all lobbies, elevators, common element change rooms, common element washrooms, the property management offices, common element entrances and exits, and recreation areas.

Increased Cleaning and Sanitation

In addition to posting the notices described in further detail above, condominium corporations can also help limit the spread of COVID-19 by:

- increasing the availability of hand sanitizers in all common element areas; and
- disinfecting common surface areas several times a day (i.e. elevator buttons, door handles, lobby surfaces, etc.);
- increasing the cleaning and disinfecting of common element areas.

Annual General Meetings

If a condominium corporation is planning on holding an annual general meeting in the coming weeks, the condominium

corporation can also help limit the spread of COVID-19 at said meeting by:

- trying to limit the number of persons attending by: a) limiting the attendance to one person per unit; b) encouraging the submission of proxies as opposed to in-person attendance; and c) requesting that anyone who is ill, exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms or who has been in contact with anyone who is ill or who has exhibited any symptoms or has recently travelled abroad, stay home and attend the annual general meeting by way of submitting a proxy form instead;
- avoiding the serving of any food or refreshments;
- divide registration times by blocks or floors;
- ensuring that the venue is large enough so that there is a sufficient amount of space between each attendee;
- ensuring that there is ample hand sanitizers, waste receptacles and tissue throughout the venue at various different locations;
- encouraging all attendees in person to bring their own pencil and pen; and
- limiting the duration of the annual general meeting, so that only essential matters are discussed and/or voted on and addressing any new or other business at an upcoming town hall meeting that is held when the threat of COVID-19 is not as serious.

“Buddy” System

Condominium corporations may also want to consider putting a list together of potentially vulnerable individuals within their community and implementing a "buddy system" for said individuals with their consent.

By taking the preventative measures discussed in greater detail above, condominium corporations can limit the spread of COVID-19 within their communities and as such, reduce the threat that same poses to the members of their community whose health is particularly at risk.

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