

Petiquette: Condo Pets & You

A Guide to Living & Enjoying the Condominium Lifestyle

Condo pets & you

Living in a condominium is all about creating a strong sense of community while respecting each individual's space and place within it. Your Condominium Documents outline all of the Rules & Regulations of your Corporation. But it's just as important to follow the (sometimes not so-common) common sense rules that, if we think about it, we all know and understand.

We've created this guide to living to help foster harmony and avoid unnecessary conflict within your new community. (It's really a "living guide" as it will continue to evolve with the community.) Just like there are guidelines and consequences for people living in the community, there are also some for our pets. It is important for everyone, especially pet owners, to understand the information in the Guide so that their pets remain welcome in the community.

Unfortunately, careless owners demonstrating abuse, neglect or irresponsibility may lead to the involvement of the condo Corporation. In extreme cases, this may result in the total elimination of any pet ownership in the community. A common misconception is that pet ownership cannot be banned. This is true with rental communities, but not in residential condominiums governed by the Condominium Act and Condominium Declaration where pets can be prohibited.

It never has to get to that though. Common sense and courtesy plus a commitment to following the Rules & Regulations of the Corporation will generally result in a safe happy living environment, where everyone respects the community as a whole. Whether or not you're a pet owner, keep this useful Guide. We all need to know what to expect about our pets, so everyone in the community gets the most out of their new condominium lifestyle.

Pets & People: some smart facts

Pets have taken on an increasingly important role in the lives of Canadians. Some attribute it to our aging population, decreasing size of households, a decline in the number of births and/or marriages, etc. Pets are proven to be a contributing factor in longer, healthier and happier lives. Whatever the reason, Canadians continue to opt for this companionship.

According to Leger Marketing:

- 53% of Canadians have at least one household pet
- 30% have a dog
- 28% have a cat
- 10% have another kind of animal such as a fish or reptile
- 32% of dog owners also own a cat
- 5% have another type of pet

Canadians are dedicated pet lovers. Survey results suggest that there are over 7 million cats and over 5 million dogs living in Canadian homes. Statistics Canada says Canadian spending on their pets has increased per household from \$277 in 1999 to \$377 in 2005. Canadians spend in excess of \$3 billion annually on pet food.



About pets in the community

Condominium rules, including those pertaining to pets, need to fit the dynamics of each community and meet the needs and priorities of its residents. When you purchased your condo you received and formally acknowledged that you were provided a copy of your Corporations Condominium Declaration. In that document under the Club & House rules, there are details relating to pets in your condominium.

As a condominium is a shared living space, the Corporation must consider the interests of both pet-owners and non-pet-owners. The specific pet policies have been created to promote the co-existence of peace and pet-ownership within your community. It's worth noting that pet policies predominantly address people with pets, more than the pets themselves since it is the pet-owners responsibility to always ensure that their pet's behavior is managed and in-line with what benefits the whole community.

Are pets allowed?

Yes. Every resident can have a maximum two (2) pets per home or legally speaking "dwelling unit". However not all types of pets are allowed. Additionally, they must be registered with the Corporation through Property Management.

How and why do I register my pets?

Your Property Management team works together with you and your elected Board of Directors to coordinate the most important aspects of your community. Among these is the critical resident information for the day-to-day operation of the condo. Most important is Emergency Response. So, as part of your Emergency & Fire Safety Plan, all residents and their pets are registered with the Property Management team.

Registering your pet is easy, free and only takes a few minutes. Just talk to your Property Manager or the Concierge.

What pet documents are needed for registration?

Each community's Property Management team decides what's required for registration, but it is generally good to have all of your pet's important information readily available. The following documents can be important if your pet is lost, there is an emergency and you are not home, etc.:

- A current photo of your pet – if you don't have one, visit our office and we can take one for you
- Record of Pet's Vaccinations, any medical conditions and required medication
- Contact information for your veterinarian (name, address, email and telephone number)
- Documentation of pet's identification (tattoos, microchips, license tags)
- Emergency Plan for Pets - Most emergency response / disaster plans focus on life safety, asset protection and recovery activities relating to humans. People consider their pets part of their family. Pre-planning for the needs of families with animals decreases their risk of injury as well.

What types of pets are allowed?

Pets are defined to include only:

- A small bird that is kept in an appropriate enclosure at all times
- A hamster, a gerbil, a guinea pig, rabbit or a mouse that is kept in an appropriate enclosure at all times, even while transported through common areas
- A turtle that is kept in an appropriate enclosure at all times, even while transported through common areas
- An aquarium of fish
- A Service Animal (see next page).
- A domesticated dog or cat that is sufficiently small in both weight and size so that it can be easily lifted and carried throughout all common areas by the pet-owner (see exclusions on 6th page)

About service animals

Actually a Service Animal is not deemed to be a pet. Service Animals will be given all rights and protections as outlined in the AODA, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. Section 9 of the AODA's Regulation 427/07 establishes accessibility standards for customer service and prescribes the following criteria as to whether an animal is properly qualified as a service animal:

- (a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- (b) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Service Animals are very well trained and will be under the control of their owner. Anyone or any pet-owner whose pet harms a Service Animal within the common area element of the community (i.e. interior and exterior) will be responsible for the full monetary compensation to the owner of the Service Animal including, any veterinary costs or replacement costs of a Service Animal for any pet which harms it.

As wonderful as they may be, Service Animals are not to be touched or petted in anyway. They are working and it is important that they are not distracted.

What types of pets are *NOT* allowed?

Pet exclusions:

- All animals, reptiles and rodents not listed in the definition on page 5
- No livestock or fowl of any kind
- Dog breeds typically bred or trained as guard or attack dogs (i.e. Pitbulls, Dobermans, Mastiffs, Rottweiler's) and other similar breeds
- Nuisance pets.

A Nuisance Pet includes, but may not be limited to, any of the following:

- A pet which repeatedly lunges or otherwise acts aggressively to another resident, guest, staff member or pet
- A pet that, without provocation, physically harms another resident, guest, staff member or pet within or on the common area elements of the community
- A pet that repeatedly harms or interferes with a Service Animal
- A pet that repeatedly harms or otherwise acts aggressively to another pet
- A pet who makes noise continuously and/or incessantly for extended periods of time creating a disturbance with another resident, guest, staff or pet.

Just as they would with people who abuse the Corporation and its residents, the Property Management and Board of Directors will be obligated to act to preserve the community. So, pets that have been deemed a "nuisance" by the Board or the Condominium's Property Manager (in their sole and absolute discretion) may not be permitted to remain in the community, including a homeowner's unit or any area of the common elements. Nuisance pets can be restricted or be removed permanently from the community upon written request from the Board. When this does occur, the pet-owner is typically provided two weeks to make arrangements for their pet elsewhere.

Where can pets go in the community (entrances, exits and elevators)?

In general all pets must be contained within the homeowner's suite and must not be allowed to roam free or be tethered anywhere within or outside the condo. This includes leaving pets, unattended on patios or balconies.

When being transported within the community, all pets must be on a leash, carried or otherwise adequately restrained (such as in a pet carrier) within the indoor and outdoor common elements and accompanied by their respective owners at all times.

Many condos designate preferred access points for pet owners and their pets to minimize the need for extra cleaning and to proactively prevent the pets from becoming agitated. This also helps the residents who are unfamiliar with or who may be intimidated by pets from becoming uncomfortable.



As a pet-owner, if waiting for an elevator, stand back from the door so that you can get a good look at who's in the elevator or coming off. People on elevators have a tendency to stand in front of the door and exit as soon as the door opens. If you're standing directly in front of the door this could pose a serious problem.

When boarding an elevator that already has passengers, ensure that they are comfortable sharing the space with you and your pet. Offer to take the next elevator. Usually, you and your pet will be welcomed. But, for those who are uncomfortable with pets, this is tremendous gesture – one readily accepted. Have your dog walk next to you when you enter the elevator. Don't let them enter ahead of you and always stay in control.

Remember it's nothing personal. Residents may have sensitivities (i.e. allergies, fears) and this common courtesy will go a long way towards facilitating positive community relations between pet-owners and non-pet-owners.

Poop & Scoop (and other matters).

Pet-owners, especially dog-owners, who have to take their dog out several times a day, have a greater challenge and responsibility to make sure that their pet fits into the community. It is important to know that if you do not clean up after your pet, it may be deemed a Nuisance Pet, which can lead to it being banned from the community.

Arrangements for dog-walkers need to be carefully planned and coordinated. Learn more by talking to your Property Manager. They understand that responsible dog-owners rely on these services and that they help to prevent "accidents" in the common areas when pets have been kept indoors for too long.

Common courtesy of any responsible pet-owner is to clean up after their pet and to report any damage that their pet may do. Your community may have a designated area for walking your dog or they may have a Pet Convenience Station complete with baggies for you to use, so you do not have to transport your scooped-poop through the community. Even if your community does not, it is important that you are always prepared to clean up after your pet and that you dispose of its waste in the garbage chute properly (i.e. double bagged). You also need to be prepared in poor weather to take care of those muddy paws!

A final note on "poop & scoop": In the spirit of community and neighbourly relations it is always appropriate to respect your own property and that of your surrounding neighbours. Irresponsible pet-owners, and sometimes it is only one, can create tremendously difficult situations that in some instances lead to the total prohibition of pets. This should never happen and it is in the best interest of all pet-owners to ensure that everyone exercises these common courtesies of cleaning up after their pet.

Litter boxes and porch potties for cats and dogs.

New condo cats and their owners often are concerned about how to manage their kitty litter. Always double-bag your litter before disposing of it down the garbage chute on your floor. As long as the bag is not over-filled and it is double-bagged and secure, it can safely go down your chute.

There are also new and innovative litters that are actually flushable but, before using yours, check with your Property Manager that they're safe for condominium use.

Porch or balcony potties are relatively new and are advertised specifically for condos. It is critical that they completely contain all of your pet's waste and that you maintain the sanitation without affecting the common elements of your condo. Usually made of a realistic, synthetic grass area and some form of built-in drainage system, it allows you clean up after your pet through a removable container. It is recommended that you obtain approval for any porch or balcony potty from your Property Management team to ensure its use is allowed and appropriate for your community.



We know accidents happen. Pet-related damage and injuries.

Just because an accident occurs does not mean your pet will be deemed a nuisance but you need to make sure it is handled correctly. Report any incident to your Property Management team, so they are aware of all the circumstances surrounding any property damage or injury to another person or pet within the community.

As you would expect, pet-owners will be responsible to the Corporation for any monetary costs incurred to repair damages to common area element premises, including exclusive use common area element premises, caused by their pet. Again a pet that causes damage to common element premises repeatedly may be deemed a Nuisance Pet, which can lead to permanently removing the pet from the property.

However, pets and pet-owners who are having issues within the community can take proactive steps with their Property Management team to prevent these situations. A dog that is nervous adjusting to their new home and other pets may require a muzzle. Similarly, the pet-owner can be sure to take their nervous pet through a less busy route or ensure their pet does not board a full elevator or one with another animal on board.

Remember, it is up to the pet-owner to know their pet and keep their pet under control at all times. Responsible pet-owners anticipate and respond preventively which is a win-win for everyone.

Pet peeves and what to do about them.

It is in every resident's best interest to report any issues that may affect the community. If you ever observe or are subject to any issue that concerns you please report it to your Property Management team. Ideally, they can respond before consequences become more serious.

Non-pet owners and pet-owners alike have a range of concerns and if you feel comfortable you can speak together directly to resolve the situation but if you do not, always seek the assistance of your professional Property Management team who has been trained to deal with these issues. If you don't know the pet or resident, note the date, location and time. With the sophisticated building surveillance systems, your Property Management team should be able to identify the pet-owner responsible for the concern.

A common pet owner concern is people approaching their pets without permission. It can often excite their pet. Similarly, keeping children in control around pets is often a pet-owner concern that can be avoided through common courtesy.

Pet-owners responsible for pet related noise, disturbances, damage or who do not clean up after their pet, need to be held accountable, so that all the rest of the responsible pet-owners and their well behaved pets continue to enjoy the condominium lifestyle and community without greater restriction.

Another way of providing your feedback about pet relations in your community is by participating in the Community Surveys issued by your Board of Directors and Property Management team or by giving feedback at your Annual General Meetings (AGM). By staying involved you help to shape your community into the lifestyle you expect and deserve.



How to foster positive pet relations in your community.

Non-pet-owners should share their concerns before they become a problem, so pet-owners and the Property Management team can respond with a workable solution for everyone.

Pet-owners and their pets often form committees and groups that share important information like the best local vets, parks, dog-walkers, flushable kitty litter, etc. They even form support networks in case of emergencies. Many invite non-pet-owners to play a part, so that issues in the community are identified early and resolved effectively.

It is also a good idea to make sure every new pet-and-pet-owner to the community is welcomed to the committee and is given an orientation to the *petiquette* in your community.

Can a guest bring their pet to visit?

Yes, as long as they are on the allowable list and they are registered with your guest on arrival with the Concierge. It is also your responsibility to make sure they are informed of and abide by all the Rules & Regulations set out by the condo Corporation.

Is pet-breeding allowed?

No, not under any circumstances. Pets shall not be kept, bred, or used for any commercial purpose.

What happens when there is a complaint about my pet and what are the consequences?

One of the most challenging yet necessary functions of your Del Property Management Team and Board of Directors is to ensure that all of the community Rules & Regulations are followed. It can be tremendously stressful and difficult on your community's staff when they have to enforce compliance of the rules with any resident or his/her guest. When they do, they do so out of an obligation and commitment to preserve your community, your safety and trust.

In our experience, we find that the majority of residents and their guests fully understand and participate in supporting the Rules & Regulations. We also understand that sometimes a resident may make a mistake. This is why we have created some very clear and important steps that will be invoked by the Del Property Management Team or the Board of Directors at their sole discretion to manage non-compliance of the rules. These include an escalating series of consequences, which may lead to fees for damages and/or a formal written request to remove a pet from the community, usually within two weeks.

Forgive the legalese but our lawyers insisted.

The consequences may include but will not be limited to the following:

1. Notification in writing to the resident on the first instance. If relevant, the resident will be given seven (7) days to rectify the violation and to signify his or her future willingness to abide by the rules.
2. Notification in writing to the resident and, if relevant, the off-site owner, upon the second instance, requiring written acknowledgement of receipt of such notice and a commitment that the recipient will comply with the rules within two (2) days.
3. Notification in writing from the Corporation's lawyer upon the third instances. Cost of the legal fee to the Corporation as a result of the violation will be billed to the resident. If this consequence is served to a tenant, then the non-resident owner will also be sent a notification and in the case of default of payment by the tenant, will be held responsible for payment to the Corporation.
4. On the fourth instance, the Board reserves the right to have the Corporation's solicitor commence enforcement proceedings against the delinquent or offending unit owner, resident, tenant or guest, in accordance with the provisions of the Condominium Act 1998, S.O. 1998, as amended, and all legal fees and disbursements incurred in connection with any such proceedings (together with any damages incurred as a consequence of the offence) will be sought against the offending party.

delpropertymanagement.com

This summary is intended as a general guide only and reflects programs and information in effect at the time of publication. Del and design are registered trademarks of Tridel Corporation . Used under licence.
© Tridel 2014. All rights reserved. E. O. & E. August 2014