

MANAGEMENT TRENDS

DON'T PANIC: How to Devise a Strategic Plan for Emergencies

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With many moving parts to property management, there are bound to be a few crises that even the most tenured property manager or board members encounter over their years servicing a community. From an unexpected heavy winter to water leaks in the middle of the night, it's important to devise a strategic plan that can save you and your community from panicking when it's crunch time.

There are two different types of emergencies that communities could be faced with that require different types of planning: (1) financial emergencies, which can form a severe dent in communities' finances if not properly prepared for; and (2) maintenance emergencies, which can pop up when you least expect it. Financial emergencies require some planning from your financial team, while maintenance emergencies require organization of processes to handle any given situation at moment's notice.

Below is a detailed list of how to prepare for both:

Financial:

- **Analyze** your reserve study for useful years left on common elements. Start to think about how and when you would need to move forward with major reserve items.
- **Review** finances to ensure the community can absorb emergency issues. Before planning the budget, examine your account balances for any deficiencies so you can plan the following year appropriately.
- **Review** historical trends and spending to prepare for weather-related incidents.
- **Create** a separate account to move extra funds if not used in your current budget year.
- **Include** inflation when planning for a budget or larger scale projects.

Maintenance:

- **Create** a list of potential issues pertinent to your community. This list can be created from items on your reserve study or different elements of the association.



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*"Remember, everyone
works better with a team!"*

- **Review** your vendor list and note if they are familiar with the association's buildings. Keep a record of vendor licenses and certificates of insurance to confirm that they are still a valid business and can operate onsite.
- **Separate** the vendor list according to the issue. Provide 2-3 vendors as a safety net if your first choice is unavailable.
- **Make** notes on the steps you took so the next time you are familiar with the procedures and have a base for moving forward.

Remember, everyone works better with a team! Speak with other managers to see how they moved forward with a similar issue and create a network of licensed vendors who are reliable and familiar with the community.

There are countless ways to handle an emergency, but it's important to find an effective way to move forward when a crisis arises. By following the above steps, it should help you prepare for any issue and save time, energy, and stress from an otherwise stressful situation. ■