

FLOAT SWITCH

During the recent PM inspection it has been determined that you have a defective float switch. The role of the float switch is to power off the fan to your unit in the event that an excessive amount of water collects inside the convector pan. With an inoperable switch, water will inevitably overflow the pan and spill onto the floor and ultimately may spill onto the unit below you. Please arrange to have this float switch replaced. Your HVAC technician or calling the office and requesting that the TCGC maintenance take care of this for you can do this. Regularly changing your filter may alert you to the potential of this condition, prior to a mishap that can cause an additional expense to the owner for damages to the unit below.

FAN SWITCH

Inoperable fan switches make it nearly impossible to correctly regulate the airflow in your residence and will add strain to your motor decreasing its operating life. Most units are equipped with a three-speed fan motor. Many of these motors are stuck in the high position or not working at all. Lower level units stuck in the high position may find that they have to continually adjust the thermostat where as top floor units may find they have not enough cooling because the fans are stuck in low or medium speed. The medium setting usually provides comfortable air movement for 1st and 2nd floor units. Correctly working fan switches will not only make temperatures more comfortable, but will also save repair costs for motors exhausted by overuse and the energy wasted running the fan motors in a constantly high position, helping reduce costs to the association and you assessments. TCGC maintenance or an outside HVAC contractor can replace the fan switch if deemed necessary to help regulate your airflow.

THERMOSTAT

The thermostats in our community range from the originally installed models to the more modern digital readout thermostats. Currently most of the thermostats are of the "builder basic" type and have not been calibrated to correctly reflect the temperature inside your unit. If possible, unreliable thermostats should be calibrated, or if not, replaced to keep your unit at a comfortable temperature. Correctly calibrated thermostats will save this association thousands of dollars and will assist the community in keeping the condo fees down. TCGC maintenance or an outside HVAC contractor can replace with the more accurate digital read out thermostat.

CUT OFF VALVES

In the event that a leak occurs from your HVAC unit or any other valve-controlled water source, the ability to stop the water is critical in stopping further damage. These valves must be tested on a regular basis to ensure they are 100% functional. If not, you should talk to a plumber about the need to correct this situation or TCGC Maintenance. This work must be scheduled in advance with TCGC as the primary valve's to stop the flow of water are in the attic. In the instance of your HVAC valve, some owners have decided to replace their entire unit, which would include better placement of the cut off valves and better airflow throughout your unit because of the new, clean coil. If this is of interest, talk to a HVAC Specialist. Maintenance will need advance notice in order to cut the water to your entire courtyard.

GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interruptible)

Current Montgomery County Code requires that all outlets that are subject to moisture have a working GFI protecting the user and the circuit. The purpose of this is to prevent user and their body from becoming the ground for electrical current to pass through. Should this happen the user may be subject to a serious shock and in some instances worse. This is especially necessary in your kitchen near the sink and your bathroom outlets. This building code may not have been required when your unit was built, however it is strongly advisable to ensure that you are not at risk of electrocution. Clearly the risk of fire should also be considered.

SMOKE ALARM

Inoperable smoke alarms are a great risk to you, your neighbors and the building complex. The enormous risk inoperable smoke alarms create will also increase insurance premiums of both unit owners and the association, which may increase assessments. Please test your smoke alarms regularly and replace batteries annually. If your smoke detector is not working with a new battery, arrange to take corrective measure immediately to both comply with Montgomery County laws governing the use of smoke detectors and to help prevent the potential loss of life and home that can be caused by the spread of an undetected fire. MD State law also requires that smoke detector batteries be replaced with a 10 year lithium battery and that the smoke detector have a hush button. Montgomery County Code now requires a working smoke detector in all sleeping areas. TCGC maintenance can schedule to replace your smoke detector if it is not operating properly. We can also help to place battery-operated smoke detectors in the sleeping areas of the home.



RESIDENTS INFORMATIONAL HANDBOOK FOR THOMAS CHOICE GARDENS CONDOMINIUM MAINTENANCE

THOMAS CHOICE GARDENS CONDOMINIUM

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GARBAGE DISPOSAL

If upon inspection of your unit it has been determined that the garbage disposal is jammed, leaking or inoperable, corrective measures should be taken. Disposals when used correctly should provide many years of reliable service. Plates should be scraped off prior to using the dishwasher or placing in the sink. When using the garbage disposal you should always avoid putting rice, pasta, beans, potato peels and other foods that soak up water in the disposal as they will expand in the pipes and create blockages. Don't pour grease, oil or fat into your garbage disposal or drain. Grease will cool and slowly accumulate, impeding your garbage disposal's grinding ability as well as clog drains. Never grind extremely fibrous material like cornhusks, celery stalks, onionskins, and artichokes. Fibers from these can tangle and jam the garbage disposal motor and block drains. When using the disposal you should always grind using cold water and allow the water to run for an additional 30-60 seconds (depending on your floor) after grinding to allow the water to clear the pipes into the main sewer line. By following these recommendations you will help us in helping to keep the drain lines clear. Please call the TCGC maintenance staff to have your disposal serviced or replaced if noted on your inspection or if you have concerns in operation.

DRAIN LINES/P-Trap

If your drain line or P-trap is showing signs of an existing or upcoming problem, it is best to correct immediately. This condition may worsen resulting in substantial leaking of water inside the cabinet and eventually between your floor and your neighbor's ceiling below. This can cause property damage to your unit and/or the neighbors' unit below as well as a preventable expense to unit owners. A service request should be made to address this condition ASAP to repair or replace the existing drain line or P-Trap. This work can be scheduled by owners utilizing the TCGCMV.com website, logging in and making a maintenance request or by calling a plumber of your own choosing.

COMMODOE

If it has been determined that the commode, tank, tank valve or supply in your unit bathroom(s) requires attention, we ask that you address this by calling a plumber or a member of the TCGC maintenance team. Running commodes, leaking valves, loose or bad supply lines can all lead to major property damage. This damage will result in an expense to unit owner that could have been avoided with corrective measures before problem worsens. Proper operation will save you

lots of grief and additional cost from damages that your toilet may cause to your unit or others.

LEAKING FAUCET or SHOWER DIVERTER

If your faucet and/or shower fixture will not turn off completely causing it to continuously drip and waste water; please address ASAP to help control the costs that are associated in operating this community. Utilities are one of the greatest expenses to the community and will continue to rise with inaction causing the association to take further action to alleviate any budget shortfalls. By making certain that we are not wasting water and doing our part towards conserving water we may be able to save anywhere from \$10K-\$30K. This money that can be used towards keeping us and our assessments the lowest in Montgomery Village for communities that include all utilities. We ask that you contact a plumber and have them correct your kitchen sink faucet or contact the site office and schedule for the maintenance department to change the seals or replace the faucet as necessary. The cost will depend on the action necessary to correct the problem.

GROUT, CAULKING and LOOSE TILE

If it is visible that the grout and/or caulk in your bathroom are failing, please make arrangements to address. Failing grout and/or caulk will allow water to seep behind the tiles and may cause the adjacent areas to fail too. Water infiltration will also degrade the surface that the tile it is attached to and may create a worse situation, requiring replacement of the wallboard. In many instances, grout and/or caulk failure will allow water to enter the cavity of the wall by your shower fixtures and leak through to the units below. This will cause property damage to both your unit and the unit below for which you, the unit owner, would be responsible. Please arrange to have the noted repairs made ASAP to avoid creating a worse situation for all.

EXHAUST FAN

The primary reason for having an exhaust fan in a bathroom is to remove the moisture that condenses from showers and use of hot water. Additionally, the fans add to the safety of the air quality by venting fumes from cleaning agents. One of the primary reasons for using an exhaust fan is for odor control, helping quickly draw out any undesirable smells. By maintaining and utilizing the ventilation system that the exhaust fan provides, you will keep your bathroom air quality at its best. Reducing the humidity in a bathroom is also critical because constant moisture in the air can cause paint and wallpaper to peel, vents to rust and, in extreme cases it can cause doors to warp! Extreme humidity can also create the perfect environment for mold growth.

Proper maintenance and utilization of the bathroom exhaust fans will prevent much of the moisture related repairs that could otherwise happen.

CONDENSATION DRAIN PAN

The condensation pan in your HVAC unit shows that it has outlived its purpose. A unit without a functioning tray can be a major source of a problem when your unit drains into your home and potentially the home below yours. The HVAC unit and everything attached to it is the unit owner's responsibility. The pan is designed to function as a security measure and retain water temporarily while it makes its way down the drain. Corroded and dirty pans will cause your line to clog, the pan to overflow and a potential leak into your unit and the unit below. Cracked or nonexistent pans will cause the water to drain directly onto the floor and the water may find its way through your unit and the unit below yours. We advise you to address this situation before a catastrophe happens causing an additional expense to you. Correction is to replace the pan or the entire unit as a whole, which should include the replacement of your valves.

AIR HANDLER COIL

Dirt and dust on the evaporator coil is one of the main reasons for an inefficient system and added expense to the electrical costs for the association. The closet area where the air handler is located should be cleaned regularly and your louver door should not be blocked in any way. Your filter should be changed frequently to help keeping your unit free of air circulation problems. The association changes your filter twice a year as a courtesy, however, unit owners are responsible for changing filters in between the preventative maintenance visits. Filter changes should be done on a regular schedule of no less than every three months, but ideally every month. Removing accumulated dust in the closet and maintaining a clean air filter will help prevent your motor from straining and overheating. Constant overheating could burn out the blower motor or the entire unit. If your unit has not been cleaned on a regular schedule, you may need to have your evaporator coil and fins chemically cleaned. Our maintenance staff is available to do such a cleaning. This work can be scheduled by owners utilizing the TCGCMV.com website, logging in and making a maintenance request.

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