



Who Maintains What?

Frequently, there is some **confusion about maintenance responsibility** of the Association and the homeowners in multi-family, communities in which individuals own their own unit. **The underlying principal is one of fairness to all.**

The briefest summary, other than always first reviewing the governing documents for specificity, is that condominium unit owners are generally responsible for items that serve only their unit, and the condominium Association is generally responsible for common elements that serve more than one unit. In a typical condominium, things that are the owners' responsibility are the inside of their condominium, heating and air conditioning equipment, appliances, interior doors, windows, and window screens. In addition, the owners are commonly responsible for any doorbell, pipes, wires, flues, ducts and conduits that serve only their unit – even if they are outside of the four walls. Conversely, the condominium Association is typically responsible for common elements such as the grounds, parking lots, pool, clubhouse, roofs, siding, foundations, bearing walls, and trash collection areas. The Association is also usually responsible for pipes, wires, flues and ducts that serve more than one unit.

When a question about maintenance responsibilities arises, the answer is not always readily apparent. If a bathtub is stopped up, it could be the result of a clog in a part of a pipe that serves only one unit. However, if the plumber snakes the drain and finds that the problem was farther down in the sewer line that serves more than one unit, the Association may need to reimburse the owner for the cost of this work. In other cases, the opposite may be true: an Association may ask a contractor to do work that appears to be the Association's responsibility; if it turns out to be a problem that a unit owner is responsible for, that owner will be expected to pay the contractor or reimburse the Association for its expense.

It is always important for managers and board members to be able to distinguish between homeowner's and the Association's maintenance responsibilities. That distinction is based upon the Association's governing documents and state law. A summary of those documents and laws are summarized in the **Maintenance Matrix**.

Maintenance Matrix is available on this web site and also posted on the Information Bulletin Board in Upper Garage.