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Keep Fences and Gates in Good Repair

By Tamra Mitchell

Taking care of a community's fences and automatic gates can save lives. Fences and automatic gates are the first defense against a pool accident, a steep fall, or a vehicle crash. When paint is peeling, fences are rusted or an entry gate is malfunctioning, a community is not only vulnerable in terms of security but also to a potential decrease in property value.

Regular maintenance of an association's fences and automatic gates can prevent deterioration and failures and can preserve the safety of a community. Every community with a fence or automatic gate should include fence preservation and gate maintenance in its budgets. The risk of not properly maintaining these functional features can cost more than just a monetary expense, it could cost lives.

Automatic Gate Systems

Any fence or automatic gate vendor cannot discuss gate maintenance without mentioning the UL 325 Standard. **UL 325 Standard is the law in Nevada.** You may have heard of the young boy who tragically died when he attempted to crawl through an automatic gate system in 2015. The boy was trapped when the operator was triggered as the gates began to open. This event could have been completely

avoided. The gate was not compliant, and the community either did not know or chose not to upgrade the system.

The UL 325 Standard includes a number of entrapment devices specifically placed in areas where human entrapment can occur. All automatic gate companies should adhere to this standard, and any qualified company can provide you with an inspection to let you know if the community meets or exceeds the necessary devices put in place to avoid physical harm. We urge all communities to do their due diligence and verify if they are compliant as soon as possible.

On a more lighthearted note, there is no louder complaint that we hear than when a community entry or exit gate does not open or malfunctions in some way. It's always an emergency but it should never be a surprise. In nearly

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all Nevada gated communities, automatic gates are in operation 24 hours a day, seven days a week. More times than not, a community will choose to repair the failure when it occurs rather than commit to the monthly, quarterly, or biannual maintenance it deserves. A community should evaluate their maintenance requirements in three simple ways: 1) the age of the operator, 2) the frequency of its use, and 3) known issues with the system.

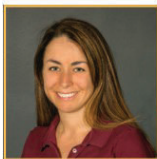
If you are unsure how to assess any of these factors, you should call an automatic gate maintenance company to perform a thorough inspection of the system at minimal cost. An expert can tell you how frequently the gates should be maintained to prevent failures. Keeping a routine maintenance contract with a trustworthy contractor can save the community from astronomical repairs while also preserving the lifetime of the operator and gate system.

Fence Maintenance and Preservation

Rust is the worst enemy of a fence. If a fence is rusted on the inside, its strength is compromised. A weakened fence can fall and cause damage to the residents or property. Painting over rusted areas is a temporary cosmetic solution and a risk to the community masking a more serious issue. Always consult a licensed, experienced fence contractor when dealing with rusted areas. In most cases where rust is present, an association will spend more money repainting an unstable area of the fence than if they had replaced the section.

There are a number of preventable factors that cause rust to occur. Irrigation lines, landscape, and vegetation are major causes of rust. Keeping irrigation lines and plants away from the fence will help avoid early deterioration. If repainting is recommended, always keep in mind that there is a right way and a wrong way to paint weathered and aged fences. Be careful to pay attention to the method a vendor is using to repaint or repair a fence. The wrong way is faster, so, as you would imagine, it is normally cheaper. Existing paint should be stripped from the fence prior to any new application. Ask what method the vendor is using to repaint a fence, and make sure the scope is written on the proposal in the same way it is verbalized to you.

Well-maintained fences and automatic gate systems add value and a sense of safety to a community. Find a trusted vendor who can provide you with the standard of care that your community requires and who will treat your fences and gates with the respect they deserve. 🌟



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