

# General FAQ's

Below are some of the most common questions Homeowners ask that are not addressed in other specific FAQ articles

**Q: How do I make a routine common area maintenance request, or report damage to the common areas?**

A: Call Management, don't email. For a variety of reasons involving the level of detail they need to fully understand the problem, its cause and exact location and to select the 'best' contractor to fix it, a phone call to Management is your best first step.

**Q. What does the term Common Areas mean?**

A: Common areas are those physical parts of the association structure and land that are not owned by individual owners. In a condominium association the roof, sidewalks, parking areas, swimming pools and the exterior of buildings are typical common areas. Pipes for utilities paid for by the association (water, sewer, storm water drainage) are mostly common area property.

The issue can become complicated. For instance the transition point between where the main water supply in a wall is common versus private is usually where the main supply line is branched off. At that point it usually falls under the control by the homeowner via a valve in the home.

The formal definition can go on for pages. In short, anything within the floor space your four interior walls is probably your private property. If it is outside of your walls, and outside of a permanent part of your overall plot, it is probably a common element. Your Bylaws and Declaration provide greater detail. Although these documents are in 'legalese', they may help you with a specific definition in regard to your home.

**Q. What does the term Limited Common Area mean?**

A: Limited Common areas are those physical parts of the association structure and land that are outside of your four walls, but are limited in use or access to only a single owner or a small number of owners. For instance, the front entry, just outside of the door of many homes is often a limited common area. An example of a shared limited common area is an adjoining balcony shared by two homes. Reserved parking spaces are another example of a common area limited to a specific owners use.

**Q: Who is responsible for repairs IN my home? And - who pays for the repairs?**

A: With rare exception, homeowners are fully responsible for making repairs to damages inside their homes. Except in rare circumstances, the association neither arranges nor pays for the work done in your home. The association does not require you to use their

preferred contractors. As a homeowner you have full rights to use any qualified contractor to make in-home repairs to your personal property.

Sometimes the cost of repairs can be reimbursed. Cause of the damage is always a determining factor. For instance, reimbursement for repairs can sometimes be obtained from a neighbor if they were responsible for the damage. In some cases, the association will reimburse some costs if the damage was due to a failure of a common element such as a roof. Read your Bylaws regarding Owner Responsibilities, or contact the Managing Agent for specific information.

**Q: Who is responsible for repairs OUTSIDE of my home?**

A: The homeowner association is always responsible for making repairs to the common areas of the association. The cost of normal wear and tear repairs are usually covered by the association through your dues and assessments. However, the cost to make repairs to common areas damaged by a resident (owner or tenant) are usually billed to the homeowner responsible for the damages.

**Q: I think I have a foundation problem! What do I do?**

A: Most foundation movement your property experiences results from seasonal soil movement, a water leak, or ordinary age and wear, not a failure of the foundation.

Your homeowners association is responsible for repairing 'failed' foundations. Normally it will not repair or stabilize an older foundation that is experiencing ordinary seasonal movement - nor is the association required to do so. It is best to report the issue to Management anyway. Especially if you suspect a water leak, as these will occasionally cause the movement.

If you suspect a 'failed' foundation, call and tell Management. Depending on the symptoms you report, they may take a look to determine any variance from the normal seasonal movement many homes experience.

If they see signs of a 'failure', they will ask your Board for permission to hire a consulting engineer to confirm the failure and provide repair plans. However, if, in their opinion, you are only experiencing seasonal soil movement or ordinary age and wear, they will tell you.

If you disagree with Management's analysis, you may retain a licensed engineer, one who possesses qualifications to study foundations, to confirm your suspicions. If the engineer finds 'failure' under generally accepted engineering standards, the association will reimburse you for the customary costs of such a study, and obtain bids for repairs. However, if the engineer does not diagnose a failure, the association usually will not reimburse you for the cost of the engineer's study.

**Q: Can I attend a Board of Directors Meeting?**

A: Absolutely. The only part of a meeting that is usually closed to homeowners is the executive session in which the Board discusses issues such as owner delinquencies, collection efforts, or sensitive issues regarding resident behavior that should not be made public. Email management at any time to learn of the next Board meeting date.

**Q: When does the Board of Directors hold its meetings?**

A: Your Board of Directors holds its meeting periodically (at least four times) throughout the year. Please email Management to learn of the time and location of the next meeting.

**Q: Can I address the Board at their Meeting?**

A: Yes. Normally a written request is needed. Please email Management several days before the proposed meeting with your agenda item so it can be included in the formal agenda.

If your question is not answered here, or within any of the other FAQ categories on this website, please call or email Nolan Management for assistance.