

## **Companion to the Myrtle Trace Condominium Documents 7 February 2010**

This information has been compiled for the purpose of acquainting you with the new condominium documents and the areas of responsibility for both the owner and the Association. This is written in common language for better understanding, and is consistent with both Florida State Statute 718 (2009) and the new condominium documents.

### **Definition of Responsibilities:**

**Common Element:** All grounds, plantings, roads, street lighting, drainage systems, electrical network, and parking areas are the obvious common elements. Those not often thought of include the maintenance building, carts, tools and equipment used by maintenance personnel and volunteers. Those elements we often wonder about include the attic space of all buildings, all building electrical systems, sanitary plumbing systems, internal cable and telephone wiring, and all water pipes.

**Limited Common Element:** Limited common element items reserved for the exclusive use of the unit owner include the driveway, original patios, courtyards, and entry areas. In addition, the windows, screens and doors are considered in this category (if original to the unit configuration). The external portion of the air conditioning system is also considered limited common element since it resides on the common element but serves only one unit.

**Owner Responsibility:** Everything within the drywall envelope of the home (inside the gypsum board walls, below the ceiling and above the concrete slab). This includes all wallboard surface finishes (paint, wallpaper, and ceiling popcorn), floor surface finishes above the concrete slab (carpet and tile), fixtures (door bell and smoke alarms), fans, appliances, and all home contents. In areas without drywall (garage and lanais) the surface paint/finishes are the owner's responsibility.

**Encroachments:** Any owner who "takes" common element space for their own use is fully responsible and liable for the area. Typical instances can include installation of a drop down stair case for attic storage, or installation of patio blocks or pavers on the common element for a pseudo-patio. These homes are not designed for attic occupancy and any damage to the structure, access issues to utilities, or hazards from installed lighting are the responsibility of the owner. See insurance issues below.

### **Maintenance and Services:**

#### **Common Element and Limited Common Element:**

1. Maintenance contracts include the following:

a. Whole building washing, including the roof, walls, and sidewalk is performed every two years. Painting is performed every fifteen years (per budget policy Nov 2009) based on the recommendation of the paint manufacturer.

b. Road and driveway sealing is performed every four years.

c. Landscaping: Grass is mowed each week during the summer season, and every two weeks during the winter (dry) season. Leaves and other small debris are raked three times a year. Shrubs are trimmed periodically depending on the season, blooming schedule, and type of shrub. Palms are trimmed twice a year, in the fall, and in June preceding hurricane season (to reduce the wind load on the tree). Large trees are maintained by an Arborist. The hardwood tree canopies are trimmed as needed with three visits a year by the specialists.

d. Insect Control: The “bug guy” is on the property weekly. The exterior of the buildings are sprayed. One fourth of the buildings are treated each visit, with the entire property being covered each month. Other treatments are by specific work order only.

e. Dryer Vent Cleaning: The dryer vents are common element, and to assure no risk from fire hazard, lint build up must be controlled. Vent cleaning companies recommend that the vents be thoroughly cleaned about every three years.

f. Preferred vendors (outsource contractors) who are the best value bidder (not necessarily the lowest price) who consistently offer the same price over the years are used repeatedly for like services. These include finish carpentry (siding and door replacements), plumbing (piping and common element fixtures), garage doors, and pipe leak detection. Others can be added at any time, depending on the frequency of need.

2. On-site maintenance personnel perform the following routine maintenance:

a. Garage door lubrication and inspection

b. Roof sweeping and gutter cleaning

c. Pool cleaning and maintenance

d. Irrigation testing and head replacement as needed.

e. Inspection of the property and remedial action for cleaning drainage drop inlets, debris cleanup, and other incidental requirements.

3. Non-routine maintenance is performed ONLY by work order. Any resident may call in a work order to the management company for items noticed needing work on the common element. The procedure is as follows:

a. The management company is Lighthouse Management. Call them at (941) 9474-5300 (Engelwood office). Provide them a clear description of the problem and exact location.

b. Maintenance personnel and certain oversight committees are provided the work order. Maintenance personnel respond to the issue. Feedback is provided to the owner by door hanging cards. The committee tracks recurring issues for possible contract support or changes to maintenance procedures. The Board of Directors monitors maintenance performance and repetitive issues monthly.

**Owner Responsibility and Use:** These are suggestions made by the original developer of the property, and experiences over time of the owners. For equipment within the unit, always retain the operator manuals, and if the unit is sold, transfer them to the new owner. Where manuals are not in the unit, they are often available on the internet if the make and model of the device is known.

1. Aerators (Screens on water faucets): Check the aerator located at the nozzle of water faucets for clogging on a routine basis. The screen element unscrews for ease of cleaning. Note: Close the sink drain to not risk losing the small parts down the drain.

2. Air Conditioning: The air handler in your residence is located in the equipment closet (if not altered by a prior owner), or the garage on the "II" models. In the event the air conditioner or heating element ceases to operate, you should make sure that the thermostat is on the proper setting and that the circuit breaker has not been tripped. Note: There is a time delay on the heat cycle when it is first turned on or off.

The air conditioner in your residence is designed to operate automatically for both heating and cooling. The most efficient way to use the system is to:

- Set the thermostat on "auto",
- Dial the temperature you prefer, and
- Select either "heat" or "cool".

The system will turn on or off automatically to maintain the temperature.

Over the years systems have been replaced. Newer thermostats have programming instruction printed on the case, or inside the front cover.

The air conditioner should not be turned on if any windows are open. The intrusion of outside air will cause moisture to accumulate on the vents. This moisture may result in damage to paint and wallpaper. Should you find it

necessary to introduce outside air into your residence to quickly rid rooms of smoke, etc., be sure to watch the air conditioning vents for moisture accumulation. Moisture should be wiped off immediately.

To assure the most efficient operation of your air conditioning unit, check the filter which is located in the return air vent in your equipment closet every 1 or 2 months. Frequency for change will, of course, be dependent upon use.

3. Appliances and fixtures include the dishwasher, garbage disposal, range, refrigerator, bathtub, hot water heater, door bell, and smoke alarms.

Instruction manuals have been supplied by the manufacturers of your appliances, which also contain a description of the warranties. These contain information on their proper use and care.

Specifically:

#### Disposal

The disposal power cord is plugged into an electrical receptacle below the sink. In the event that the unit ceases to operate:

- Check the plug,
- Check the circuit breaker,
- Press the reset button which is located at the bottom of the unit.

#### Refrigerator

Your refrigerator has an automatic ice-maker, which is fed by a flexible cold water supply line behind the unit. In the event of a malfunction, or if the refrigerator/freezer has to be moved, the valve for the supply line should be turned off. In most residences, the shutoff valve is behind the unit. Some also have charcoal filtration systems. The replaceable module should be changed every three years, or according to the manual recommendations.

#### Hot Water Heater

The hot water heater is located in the equipment closet, or the garage on "II" models. This heater is equipped with a hot water pressure relief valve which eliminates excessive pressure in the event of malfunction. In order to put the heater into operation, the circuit breaker should be on, and the cold water valve located at the top of the unit should be open. In the event of malfunction the cold water valve should be turned off. **NO HOUSEHOLD MATERIALS SHOULD BE STORED IN THE EQUIPMENT CLOSET.**

4. Other devices/systems used by the resident:

a. Cable Television: In the event of an electrical storm, it is recommended that you disconnect the cable from the television set as well as unplug the set from the wall. In accordance with the Comcast contract signed in Feb 2008, each residence is provided one digital box and "Digital Starter" channel selections. All cable wiring in the home is owned by the Association and is maintained by Comcast following a work order call be the owner.

b. Circuit Breakers: Circuit breakers are located in the electrical distribution panel. No fuses are used. In the event that an overload is created on an electrical circuit, the circuit breaker for that particular circuit will be tripped and should be flipped into the "off" position and then into its original "on" position to continue operation. The reason for the overload should be investigated and eliminated. A separate circuit breaker is provided for the major appliances such as the air conditioning unit and the hot water heater. A schedule identifying each breaker is located on the inside of the door to the electrical distribution panel. NEVER ATTEMPT TO FORCE A BREAKER TO REMAIN IN THE "ON" POSITION.

c. Disconnect Switch: Pursuant to Sarasota County Electrical Code, the main disconnect switch for all electrical power to your residence is located outside the building at the electric meter center of your building. These meters and switches should be utilized only by Florida Power and Light Company employees. If you wish to turn off all electrical power in your unit, you may do so by switching all circuit breakers in the electrical distribution panel to the "off" position.

d. Drapery Grounds: There are drapery grounds behind the drywall above the windows in all rooms as well as above the sliding glass doors. A drapery ground is a solid wood plank behind the drywall that serves to anchor the fasteners for curtain rods. This saves looking for studs. These grounds extend approximately 8" above the head of the windows and doors and approximately 8" to each side of the jamb. In the end units, the windows on the side of the unit have drapery grounds extending approximately 3.5" above the windows and 8" to each side.

e. Light Switches: In most rooms in your residence the main toggle switch to each room controls the power to one of the receptacles in the duplex outlet so that lamps may be turned off and on at the switch. The electrical outlet (or chandelier connection) in the ceiling over the dining area is controlled by a rheostat (dimmer) on the dining area wall. The installation of a chandelier is the resident's responsibility. The exhaust fans in the bathrooms are controlled by a separate toggle switch.

f. Telephone Service: Telephone outlets are located in the bedrooms, dens, family rooms, and kitchens. These outlets have been pre-wired and are in

locations designated by the General Telephone wall plates. To arrange for service, contact the telephone service provider.

g. Keys and Locks: The entry doors and the keys in them are common element. A key is retained by the Association. In the event you change keys, you are required to furnish a copy to the Association. The front door to your residence is locked from the outside with the use of a key. The unit is locked from the inside by turning the thumb latch. When storm doors are added by the owner with permission of the Association, a key to any locking mechanism must be provided to the Association.

h. Vanities: The following are the recommendations of the original vanity manufacturer for proper care:

- Use any type liquid cleanser (no abrasives) to clean
- Use any paste type car wax to polish tops and to protect finish.
- An electric buffer may be used for a high luster.
- Scratches are usually corrected by sanding with the finest grade sandpaper and then waxed. It is not recommended that this be attempted by a novice.

i. Voltage: The voltage used by the electrical items in your residence is either 110 or 220 volts, depending on the size of the appliance. All the electrical fixtures in your unit have been supplied with lamps of the wattage and size recommended by the manufacturer. When replacing, be sure to use lamps of the same wattage and size. The voltage for the appliances is normally as follows:

<u>Appliance</u>	<u>Voltage</u>
Range	220
Dishwasher	110
Refrigerator	110
Air Conditioner	220
Hot Water Heater	220

The duplex electrical plugs may present some difficulty in receiving a plug until the receptacle has been broken in by use.

j. Water Shut-Off Valve: All water serving your residence may be turned off in case of emergency. In most cases, the water shut-off valve is located at ground level outside your residence near the air conditioning unit. In addition, there are water shut-off valves under each sink, at the hot water heater, behind the water closets and from the water line to the ice-maker. If a problem occurs with any of these items, the valves should be turned off immediately until the cause can be corrected.

k. Smoke Alarms: The original smoke alarms were hard wired to the 120 volt electrical service, and had no battery backup. These fixtures are the responsibility of the owner. The life of a smoke alarm is approximately 5-7 years, however many of the original units are still in place from the mid 1980's era, and

are not functional. The date of manufacture is located inside the cover of an alarm. Any old alarm in excess of 5-7 years should be replaced, including a battery backup as a recommendation. If an owner rents the home, this is mandatory by State Law.

5. Other resident issues:

a. Insurance: The Association maintains insurance on common elements, and on management, maintenance, and Board personnel. The Association also maintains wind storm coverage for the structures for replacement value (not including interior finishes or contents). It is the owner's responsibility to acquire insurance for the interior finishes, appliances, furnishings, contents, and for liability on any encroachments onto the common element (attic and ground "takings"). Owners must also maintain insurance for injury and damage where the owner has encroached on the common element by using attics, or installing paving stones on the common element. Condominium insurance does not typically cover these unlawful "takings".

b. Going Away Checklist for Owners

Listed below is a suggested checklist for you to follow in the event you are leaving your home for an extended period of time.

- Clean perishables from your refrigerator. Turn the ice-maker to "OFF" but leave your refrigerator "ON" low.
- Run your garbage disposal and check to make sure it is clean. Add a tbsp of vegetable oil run for an instant to prevent rust while gone.
- Switch off your hot water heater.
- Disconnect your TV from the power and cable to prevent lightning damage.
- Set air conditioning thermostat anywhere between 80-82 degrees with controls set on "AUTOMATIC". If there is a humidistat next to the thermostat, set it on 65.
- Leave inside closet doors ajar.
- Be sure to cancel your paper.
- Leave a change of address card for the mailman
- Bring all porch furniture inside
- Pull draperies if you are concerned about the sun fading carpeting, etc.
- Check all doors and windows to be certain they are locked.
- Turn all lights off inside and outside; but not the power.
- Make arrangements with management if you wish to have anyone enter your home in your absence; e.g., package delivery, etc.
- Notify the Property Manager if you plan to have guests occupy your home during your absence, or if you have a House Watcher.

c. **Water Softeners:** When the homes were originally built, some owners added water softeners to treat the local water. Copper pipes began experiencing deterioration. Professional articles have been written focusing on water that is too clean, ionized, with few minerals, adversely affecting the integrity of the pipe. These sources also point to adverse effects of water softeners. In 2006 Sarasota County changed the way they treat water to reduce the impact on pipes, and improve water quality. Water softeners negate those effects. The copper pipes in our homes are “Common Element”. If pipes begin leaking it is the responsibility of the Association to make repairs or replace the piping. To minimize these issues, water softeners will NOT BE APPROVED to be added to any home piping system.

### **Other Guidelines:**

These guidelines have been drawn up as a handy reference guide to assist residents in remembering the rights of neighbors and the courtesies owed to others in accordance with the condominium documents. Please feel free to contact the Management if you have any questions.

1. **Building Appearance:** You are reminded that the Declaration of Condominium prohibits you from:

- Changing the appearance of the outside of your unit with unapproved decorations.
- Installing antennae or aerials, or permitting signs, or advertising on your unit or common areas.
- Installing screens or enclosures on balconies, patios, or other areas of your building without prior written approval. This includes solar film on windows. Approval forms may be obtained from the Property Manager or the Myrtle Trace Web Site.
- Hanging clothes, swimsuits, towels, laundry or unsightly items where they can be seen outside your unit.
- Locating pots, gazing balls, statues, or other lawn ornamentation anywhere on the common element.

2. **Garbage Pick-Up:** Garbage pick-up is provided by Sarasota Environmental Services once a week, early Friday morning. Secure all garbage in a plastic bag before placing in trash cans at the end of your driveway. Environmental Services can provide guidance on recycling programs and special pick up services if called.

3. **Golf and Country Club:** The numerous amenities that comprise The Plantation Golf & Country Club are carefully designed for the enjoyment of both members and their guests. The following levels of membership may be acquired: Golf, Tennis, and Social. For information call 493-4223. If you are interested in a tour, ask about being assigned to an ambassador.

4. Maintenance Fees and Yearly Assessment: The maintenance fee for your unit is due quarterly, in advance, on the first of January, April, July, and October of each year. **YOU WILL NOT BE BILLED FOR THIS QUARTERLY CHARGE.** Your check should be made payable to Myrtle Trace Condominium Association, or arrange for direct debiting with the management company. For those writing checks, the coupon system is used. Prior to the start of each year a coupon book and address labels for envelopes will be provided. To assure that your payment is properly credited, please include your unit number on the check. In addition, you will receive a bill for The Plantation Management Association annual assessment each year in the month of December. Payment is due on January 1.

5. Management:

- It is strongly urged that residents not give instructions or suggestions to maintenance employees. It is also requested that residents do not engage them in lengthy conversations.
- All requests and/or complaints should be in writing to be properly handled.
- All exterior plantings require approval from the Board of Directors prior to planting.

6. Outdoor Cooking: A barbecue grill is provided at the recreation area near the swimming pool.

7. Resale/Transfer of Units: If you wish to resell or transfer your unit, you need to obtain the necessary approval form from the property manager. Upon approval by the Board of Directors, a Consent and Waiver will be issued. Prior to approval, all encroachments and violations of the rules and regulations must be corrected.