



March 7, 2009

Dear Fellow Owners of the Venus,

I am writing to you about floods and washing machines. As you must be aware, the Venus has suffered far more floods in recent years than could reasonably be expected.

In 2008, there were five reported floods caused by a washing machine or its operator. This damaged over 30 apartments. In most cases, the residents of the apartment where the problem began were not at home when the machine overflowed. Essentially they started the machine and then went out. The owner of the apartment which caused the flood is responsible for the first \$10,000 of the deductible according to the Strata's current insurance policy. For those of you who have been flooded from either above or beside you, it is a very upsetting and disruptive experience. As well as the mess and inconvenience, it takes months for the damage to be repaired. You may also not be covered for upgrades such as new flooring that you have made to your unit. There have been cases where residents have had to move out of their apartments.

The Strata Council has discussed how best to deal with this situation. Appeals to residents that they must never leave their apartments when a washing machine is operating have been made. We have asked that everyone be cognizant of where the shut-off valves are located. This advice will continue. However, the floods have kept happening. Various extra shut-off valves have been suggested but these are expensive and not readily available. Similarly, installing extra drains in the laundry rooms would be a prohibitive cost.

Those of you who were present at the last Annual General Meeting may recall that the Property Manager, Leo Buonassisi, announced that the Strata's insurance company may not be prepared to insure the building with a deductible of \$10,000 in the event of a flood when the policy is renewed. The company is considering raising the deductible to \$20,000 or even not insuring the Venus for flood damage at all.

In order to be proactive, our Special Projects Chair, Vicki Cox, was asked to look into the matter. After reviewing the record as it exists and speaking to expert appliance repair people, she was not able to come up with a definitive cause for the flooding. (At AGM's in the first years of the building's existence, it was reported that the water level sensor may be the problem. However, an attempt by the previous Property Manager, several years ago, to contact Whirlpool was not successful in finding any compensation or agreement that the sensor was the problem.)

The experts with whom Vicki consulted offered the following advice:

- Never overload your washing machine.
- Load the clothes first and then turn the machine on.
- Never leave the machine unattended when it is working. The Property Manager, Leo Buonassisi, suggests: Landlords should consider making this a term of the Tenancy Agreement along with another that tenants **must** have insurance.
- If the load becomes unbalanced and the machine vibrates loudly, lift the lid and re-arrange your clothes so that it will spin easily.
- Make sure that the washing machine hoses are stainless steel and replaced every 8 – 10 years.

At the same time, the appliance repair experts suggest that the washing machines, which were originally installed in this building, are nearing the end of their collective lives. Vicki contacted some appliance companies and found that the best prices on new machines at Coast Wholesale Appliances. Robb Byrd, a representative of the company, quoted the following prices:

Samsung 24" Front Loading Stackable Washer and Dryer	\$940 + taxes and delivery*
Frigidaire 27" Laundry Centre (GCET1031FS)	\$795 + taxes and delivery*
Frigidaire 27" Front Load Washer and Dryer	\$990 + taxes and delivery*

\*Delivery is invoiced at \$71.00 +GST per laundry set. This pricing is effective until June 30, 2009.

So, after considerable debate, **the Strata Council strongly recommends that owners replace the original washing machine water hoses with stainless steel hoses.** They cost approximately \$40 plus installation. You can call any local plumbing company of your choice for this service.

**We would also urge you to consider replacing your washing machine.** I bought new units in November after the AGM and after being flooded twice. They are a name brand from a large department store, and cost almost twice as much as Coast Wholesale Appliances is quoting for the Samsung 24". Of course it is a big initial outlay and these are not easy economic times, but the gains will be evident in the long term.

If you decide to take advantage of the Coast Wholesale prices, the company is located at 8488 Main Street, Vancouver. The phone number is 604 321 6644 and their website is [www.coastappliances.com](http://www.coastappliances.com). Make sure you ask for Robb Byrd, identify yourself as an owner in the Venus whose property manager is Leo Buonassisi from Baywest. Of course you may find even better deals elsewhere. If you do, please share that information with all your fellow owners at the Venus through the Strata Council.

Yours sincerely,



Sue Wagner  
Venus Strata Council President (LMS 3639)