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## Maintenance Checklist to Enhance Your Community's Value

*By Sherwin Lewis / Published May 2024*



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**A**s acclaimed author Deniece Schofield describes the importance of proactive maintenance, “Don’t start today by doing yesterday’s work.” There are many steps Florida community managers and association board members should implement now to bolster their community’s value and curb appeal.

On-site team members have many daily needs to address to keep communities fully operational, so creating processes can ensure the team stays on track and is prepared to address any future issues that come up. Establishing a written maintenance checklist can empower team members to spring into action faster and anticipate the community’s needs. Create sections that cover the “daily run” checklist that encompasses everything the team does during the day; the “always” checklist for building rules and permanent settings for lights, thermostats, and alarms; and the “special” checklist for emergencies or big events.

Important considerations when developing a community checklist include the following.

Review the age of a building's technology infrastructure. Many communities were not originally constructed with modern technology in mind. Identify what is missing from a community's technology stack to help optimize its present and future operation.



*Photo by iStockphoto.com/years*

HVAC systems account for the highest monthly consumption in a building. Having an in-depth understanding of how the community's air conditioning units, cooling towers, furnaces, vents, ducts, and related equipment work will help save substantial money on future repairs. It takes a long time to recognize the source of a problem such as air quality. By the time a maintenance team gets to the bottom of it, repairing the issue could be as much as 10 times more expensive than it would have been if team members knew what to look for.

Consider it the same as owning a car, as car owners could spend twice as much money because they did not know their tires were not aligned properly.

Create specific preventive maintenance checklists for each month. For instance, January's checklist could cover making sure elevator inspections are up to date with elevator licenses properly displayed, confirming that doors and hardware are operational with doors and frames in mint condition, and checking exhaust and sprinkler systems. Then add different systems and sections of the building to check in February and each month after that. In time, the team will have a clear road map for the entire year.

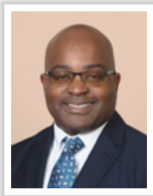
Communicate the checklist objectives to team members clearly and effectively. Keep it simple and stay on message, as the many elements of a checklist can be overwhelming. Make sure to repeat key points of emphasis as once is not nearly enough to cover everything. A conversational tone is also recommended as team members may tune out if they are being lectured at. Emphasize that this is being done to make their work lives easier.

Stay up to speed on Florida's new laws governing building inspection requirements. Any building that is at least three stories in height and 30 years old before July 1, 2022, must complete a milestone inspection by Dec. 31, 2024. That deadline becomes Dec. 31, 2025, if the building reaches 30 years old between July 1, 2022, and Dec. 31, 2024. Additionally, associations must have a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) study performed by a law enforcement agency or certified practitioner by Jan. 1, 2025. The on-site team should be completing its separate checklist for compliance with that specific requirement now.

Keep an up-to-date record of a community's mandatory annual (and semi-annual) certifications. This will include life safety systems (fire extinguishers and alarms, smoke detectors, fire doors, etc.), generator, fuel tank, elevator, and pool inspection certifications.

These checklists have the added benefit of boosting morale among team members and helping retain good employees. The job can be stressful and exhausting, but these processes bring consistency and certainty that the team is prepared for any situation that occurs. Residents also appreciate that they can expect a similar experience each day and that measures are being taken to enhance the value of their community.

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