

Spring Exterior Inspection Checklist

By Michelle McGlothlin, CMCA, AMS

As spring blossoms, we all emerge from winter hibernation to rediscover the outdoors. Homeowners taking leisurely walks through their communities can be pleasantly reminded of "what they pay for" in their community association fees...if you get out there before they do.

Common Areas

A thorough inspection of the common areas after winter is a must. Snow, ice and freezing temperatures take a toll on the property. A punchlist of items needing attention should be compiled and issued to maintenance staff or a contractor as soon as possible.

● **Landscaping/Grounds** – Make a detailed list of all dead or suffering plant material that requires removal after a harsh winter. Note any sinkholes in the lawn areas; pay special attention to areas around storm drains, buildings, and sidewalks.

● **Recreation Facilities** – Complete an extensive inspection of tot lot and exercise station equipment. Take a minute to ride on a swing or merry-go-round, or do a few reps on the pull-up bar, and you may discover it was well worth your time; putting the equipment to use will reveal any problems that are not evident upon a visual inspection. Walk

(or jog) the entire pathway system to look for problems. Don't forget to schedule a follow-up inspection of the pool with your contractor so that any winter damages can be noted for pre-opening repair.

● **Concrete** – Ground freezing during the winter can make concrete walkways shift, buckle and crack. Sometimes after the thaw, the walks will fall back into place – *and sometimes they don't*. A trip hazard in a common walk leaves the association with a serious liability problem. Problem areas should be marked for repair or replacement.

● **Roadways** – The community's roadways and parking areas take a beating during the winter months. Be sure to schedule patching of potholes that have surfaced as a result of plowing, repair any damaged speed bumps, and arrange for painting of peeling fire lane curbs. Check to be sure all water valve box covers and sewer cleanout caps are in place.

● **Gutters** – Gutters and downspouts should be checked and repaired immediately. A good way to spot problems is to grab your galoshes, raincoat, and umbrella and do a complete gutter inspection in the rain. Look for water spilling over the gutter, indicating a blockage, or water falling behind the gutters, indicating the need to retilt the gutters to the building.

● **Signs** – Check all signs and sign posts – firelane, towing, and other community signs – for damage. Be sure to reference an existing sign map to confirm none are missing. Also be sure to replace signs that have been faded by the sun.

Individual Lots/Units

Now that the common areas are in good shape, what about the old dresser and car tires on Mr. Smith's balcony or the paint peeling from Ms. Jones' roof trim? These are conditions that also detract from the appearance of your community. Whether you manage a condominium, or townhome or single-family home community, the association has responsibilities for ensuring that each individual owner maintains his/her own property.

● **Condominiums** – When inspecting a condominium, take a print out of property addresses with you and note next to each address if there is a problem with window screens, patio/balcony storage, etc.

● **Townhomes/Single-Family Homes** – While inspecting townhomes or single-family homes, your inspection should be more intensive. Look for poor lawn/landscaping maintenance, peeling paint, missing siding or roof shingles. In addition, now is a good time to look for any unapproved exterior changes and report them to the architectural committee for further action.

The scheduling of a spring cleanup weekend for the community prior to your inspection may result in fewer problems on individual properties. Ask your board to approve a few hundred dollars to rent dumpsters to place in the community for a weekend, and you may motivate homeowners to dispose of bulk items and do any necessary property cleanup.

Spring into action now, and you and your homeowners will be glad you did.



BLADE RUNNERS, INC.
Landscape Design & Installation

Class A Licensed Contractor

- ✓ Complete Grounds Maintenance
- ✓ Yearly Maintenance Contracts
- ✓ Creative Landscape Design and Installation

(703) 273-8873 FAX(703) 273-8720

3150 Spring Street ♦ Fairfax, VA 22031
Contact: Eric Storck
eric@blade-runners.com

Add Us to Your Bid List!

Michelle McGlothlin, CMCA, AMS is a community manager with Condominium Venture, Inc. in Greenbelt, MD. Michelle is a member of the Publications Committee.