

## *Ask the Condominium Specialist*

Q. We are a small condominium association. During this pandemic we would like to keep everyone in our association and community as safe as possible by doing what we can within the limits of the law. What are some basic steps that we can take, or do, to minimize the risk of getting a corona virus infection in our association?

A. As a starting point, check existing government sources for COVID-19 proclamations. Look to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), the federal government authority for health matters; State of Hawaii proclamations from Governor David Ige; and the proclamations of the neighbor island county mayors on COVID-19 for guidance. Check your condominium governing documents as well as they may provide authority for certain board actions relevant to a health crisis and finally, confirm any steps taken by your association with the advice of professionals, including your management company or attorney.

To keep your condominium community safe, start with basic CDC recommendations: 1)

social distancing of at least 6 feet; 2) washing your hands frequently; and 3) wear a face mask in public. Take these guidelines and use them in the context of your community living situation. For example, you may want to recommend that residents wear masks when stepping outside of their unit, in hallways, elevators, stairwells or other common areas. Emphasize these measures to your owners. Make signs reminding people of these steps and post them where they're likely to be seen by owners and residents. If there are common areas, keep a supply of hand wipes for people to use. If your community has an elevator, encourage owners to wipe down the buttons before using them. If your association has a resident manager, ask the resident manager to wipe down any common areas a few times a day. While you cannot prevent risk 100%, by implementing government guidelines and protocols it is possible to minimize the risk of the virus to association members.

Simple, practical steps can be taken by your association while following government guidelines. If there are areas where people congregate and socialize, remove or cover the furniture so that people cannot sit and chat; this is consistent with government recommendations

to not gather in large groups. If available, place hand wipes for use in areas where people will touch door handles, mailboxes or near elevators or stairs.

The Community Associations Institute suggests that if your association has a community laundry room, create a schedule for people to do their laundry to control the number of people in one place at any given time. This will encourage government recommended social distancing while allowing people to do their laundry. And post signs asking people to wipe down the machines before use.

Everyday life will continue in your community, just in a different form than you've been used to. Following government advice and guidelines to the extent possible within your condominium association will increase your community's chances of coming out of this pandemic a healthy and strong community.

Here are the websites for the sources noted above: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov); [www.governor.hawaii.gov](http://www.governor.hawaii.gov); [www.honolulu.gov](http://www.honolulu.gov); [www.mauicounty.gov](http://www.mauicounty.gov); [www.hawaiicounty.gov](http://www.hawaiicounty.gov); [www.kauai.gov](http://www.kauai.gov); and for the Community

Associations Institute, [www.caionline.org](http://www.caionline.org).

Please review our [COVID-19 flyer](#) for more information and free multi-language posters regarding the pandemic.

*This information is subject to change. The information contained herein is intended to provide general information and cannot be deemed to provide any specific advice. Readers are advised to seek legal advice or advice from a health care professional or assistance from other competent professionals to address their particular circumstances.*