




# Strata Management Guide

For Strata Council Members - The Ultimate Guide  
To Running Your Strata Corporation (And Avoiding  
Conflicts With Owners)



# So you're in a strata council and feel lost at sea.

It's understandable - so much goes into strata management, it's hard to pinpoint where to begin!

This ultimate guide is tailored to give you confidence in your role as a strata member.

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# The Complete List Of Council Member Responsibilities

**To be in your strata council, you must be elected into your position. Here's who can vote:**

- Owners
- Current council members
- Attendants by proxy - an owner assigns someone to vote on their behalf when they can't attend the election. Anyone can be an attendant, except a Strata Manager.

**You and others on the council are in charge of:**

- Daily decisions that keep the strata running smoothly, such as:
  - Elevator maintenance
  - Curbside garbage pickup
- Proper operations under the Strata Property Act
- Bylaw creation and enforcement

**Here's a deeper breakdown of strata council responsibilities:**

- Planning and executing meetings, such as:
  - The annual general meeting (AGM)
  - Special general meetings (SGM)
  - Consistent general meetings
- Writing out the budget of the strata, which includes:
  - Capital planning
  - The contingency fund
- Collecting strata fees (also known as levies) and fines
- Attaining strata corporation insurance - it's legally required!
- Being easy to contact, by either:
  - Phone
  - Email
- Hiring contractors and supervising them to ensure jobs are done correctly

- Keeping important documents, such as:
  - A list of owner and tenant names
  - All strata corporation records. For example:
    - Depreciation reports
    - Invoices
  - Filling out Form B's and Form F's when required
  - Granting owners and tenants usage of common property for short periods

## Strata property owners vote to approve any actions. The 2 main actions that require a vote are:

- Creating/changing bylaws
- Approving special levies, such as:
  - Roof replacement
  - Budget shortfall



Not interested in doing all of this yourself? Many strata corporations hire a Strata Manager (who can take care of these duties for you).

**But remember** - regardless if you hire a Strata Management company or not, you are still responsible to follow the Strata Property Act.

# The 4 Strata Council Roles: Is Your President Doing Your Secretary's Job?

The 4 standard council roles are:



## President

You're the face of the strata, and the first person people turn to outside of your selected property manager.

You:

- Set and attend all meetings
- Communicate with homeowners by:
  - Ensuring meeting minutes are given to owners
- Set agenda for meetings (what's the purpose of the meetings?)
- Oversee the rest of the council - ensure everything is getting done.



## Vice President

You assist the president and step up when the president's not around.



## Secretary

You're in charge of:

- Tracking meeting minutes
- Communicating with owners for:
  - Concerns
  - Questions
  - Suggestions
- Keeping all records/documents in a safe and accessible place.



## Treasurer

You are the finance guru of the council.

You're in charge of:

- Review the financials, such as:
  - Budget
  - Contingency fund
  - All invoices
- Advise the council on budget alterations
- Sign cheques for:
  - Contractors
  - Insurance
  - Strata fees

A council needs a minimum of 3 people who split the roles above fairly.

The maximum amount of people who can be on the council is 7.

If property owners decide to elect more than 4 people onto the council, they then decide what position and duties to give the remaining 3 people (also known as members at large).

## Here are some extra duties that can be given:

- Maintaining landscape around the building
- Hiring security

## Here's who can fulfill these duties:

- A committee created and overseen by the council
- Extra members of the council

Feel like you're going to implode with information?

That's when a Strata Manager comes in.

## What Your Strata Manager Does For You

**The room's on fire.**

**People are screaming.**

**There are 6 different doors, but only 1 that actually leads to escape.**

**Pick the wrong one, and the whole building crumbles. Panicked arguments ensue.**

**Then a figure steps up and settles everyone down.**

**They confidently point to a door.**

**It's the right one, and everyone makes it out alive.**

**Think of your Strata Manager as the person who knew what door to take. They were able to calm the room and lead everyone out of the flames.**

## They know which door to pick because they're good at:

- Financial Organising
- Integral Communication
- Legal & Upkeep Services

## Financial Organising

### Financial Planning

They're here to advise you with structuring your budget.  
They assist with:

- Your budgeting process
  - Most reasonable budget for each independent strata
- Capital planning.
  - Depreciation reports (planning and preparing for maintenance)
  - Reroofing
  - Repainting
- Contingency fund requirements
  - Put in place as a safety net for all emergency needs.

### Financial Records and Transactions

They help you keep accurate records of:

- Payables
- Receivables
- Payroll services
- Employee bonding

They also produce:

- Strata fee schedules
- Operating budgets
- Monthly financial statements

HomeLife's bookkeepers are always available to answer



## Revenue Assurance

Hate collecting fees? Your Strata Manager does it for you!  
They process all fees that are collected through:

- Mail
- Auto-deposit
- In-person transactions

They also deal with:

- Levies
- Miscellaneous charges
  - Bylaw infractions
  - Lien process
  - Interest
- Collection of delinquent accounts
  - Outstanding strata fees
  - Fine assessments

They deposit all funds to your Strata Trust account.  
Ready for a proposal? [Request a proposal from us!](#)

## Integral Communication

### Consultative Meetings

If your Strata Manager can't do something because they're not experts in that field, they assist you in finding the right person.

Examples of required experts are:

- Architects
- Lawyers
- Engineers

### Constant Communication

You're always able to contact HomeLife, and your manager always keeps you up to date with changes, such as:

- AGM (annual general meeting)
  - Required once a year
- SGM (special general meeting)
  - Called at any time by owners or council.
  - Deals with bylaws
- General council meetings
  - Meetings with elected officials
  - Deals with the month to month details of strata.
  - Regularly scheduled.

They help enforce attendance by emailing reminders, and preparing and distributing agendas.

## Emergency Services

If the worst happens (e.g. fire or flood), your Strata Management supports you and your council through the difficult times ahead.

HomeLife as a whole offers:

- A 24-hour emergency service for all owners
- Organisation of:
  - The clean-up
  - Insurance claims
  - Anything else that crops up in an emergency.

## Legal & Upkeep Services

### Repairs and Maintenance

Your strata is responsible for the upkeep of the building's common property - which changes with each strata.

Here are examples of what needs to be kept up

- |                         |           |            |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| ● The roof              | ● Windows | ● Roadways |
| ● Landscape maintenance | ● Paint   | ● Doors    |
| ● Underground parking   | ● Carpets | ● Elevator |

Because of HomeLife's size, your Strata Manager has huge negotiating power when it comes to repair and maintenance contracts.

They also aid with:

- The bidding process
- Administration of all contract services

## **Insurance and Government Responsibilities**

Your Strata Manager assists your council in the organization of the Annual Appraisal of Assets (industry standard insurance appraisal) and any insurance claims.

Their expertise gives you an advantage in negotiating insurance premiums.

Every year, your management company prepares and submits a T-2 Taxation Form to Canada Revenue Agency.

They also prepare and submit any documentation required by Work-Safe BC.

Contractors always need WorkSafe to work for strata corporations.

Your manager confirms they have it.

If they don't, they can't be paid until they do.

## **Site Management**

Your Strata Manager acts as your representative in all Site Management responsibilities, such as:

- Regular property inspections and reports
- Supervision of on-site maintenance workers
- Assistance with bylaw and rules enforcement procedures
  - They work with the contractors on site
  - They monitor what the contractor is doing

- They explain to the contractor what's expected
- They ensure work is done satisfactorily
- If there are issues, they act as the voice of the strata council.
- They enforce any contracts.

## Legal Services

Your Strata Management company acts as your registered office for all:

- Legal documents
- Meeting Minutes
- Registers
- Financial records pertaining to your strata property

They also liaise with your lawyers on any legal matters, such as:

- Wording of bylaws
- Wording of any resolutions of expenditures
- Enforcement of bylaws
- Foreclosure proceedings.
- Negotiating deals with the city in regards to land requisition.
- Land acquisition.

They liaise with the council through the civil resolution tribunal for any small claims.

It's required to have a legal address for all strata documents to be stored and delivered to.

With HomeLife as that point of contact, there's no worry over registering a different address every year (which happens if you use a council member as the point of contact). You only have to register HomeLife once.

# How To Tell If A Strata Management Company Is A Good One For You

How do you even know if your management company is doing their jobs?

It's not obvious, and it's probably a big pain to audit every aspect of their systems.

We have a secret weapon here.

Use these 3 questions as a "shortcut audit" to find out the quality of your management company:

1. How quickly do you respond to phone calls and emails from your clients?
2. What sort of training do you offer strata councils?
3. How well do you know the ins and outs of Strata Management?

## 1) How quickly do you respond to phone calls and emails from your clients?

One of the biggest frustrations people in strata have is poor communication from their management company.

If the company you're asking doesn't assure you that they respond quickly, it's a big red flag for you.

Poor communication = a crumbling strata.

HomeLife's solution? investing the time to discuss with any particular client their specific requirements and build a tailored proactive line of communication

## 2) What sort of training do you offer strata councils?

If you're on a strata council, chances are you didn't go to SCU (Strata Council University - that's just a little bit of strata humor for ya).

You're elected and then left out to dry.

Get a strata management company that will train you so you feel like you DID go to SCU. Ask to see their training processes.

Here's an example of the training process you'd want to see  
(this is the one we use):

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### Council Training Process

**Step #1:** Your manager sets a meeting with your council.

**Step #2:** They advise you on how to set up processes and procedures for:

- Meetings
- Bylaw creation
- Budget
- Maintenance

**Step #2:** Your manager discusses how to:

- Openly listen to all opinions
- Not judge ideas
- Listen to all sides of a story
- Encourage excellent communication
- Conduct business in a respectful manner

### 3) Can you tell me about the recent strata legislation changes this year?

You probably assume all Strata Managers go through extensive training before they're released into the wild - er, workforce.

Not the case.

The law requires all Strata Managers to have licenses through the Real Estate Council Of BC (attained through the Sauder School of Business of UBC) but that doesn't mean they're competent.

This means that important shifts in legislation, which in turn affects you and your strata, slip by unnoticed if you have a Strata Manager who doesn't actively pay attention.

You want a manager who:

- Is aware of all legislation changes
- Keeps up with changes in the Strata Property Act

Some companies don't keep their managers aware of changes in the industry.

What companies should do is hold regular meetings to keep everyone aware of legislation and Strata Property Act changes.

# Avoid These 4 Strata-Crumbling Mistakes

A strong, well-informed strata is the goal. To reach that goal, council members should never:

- **Be difficult to contact** - (e.g. never answer your phone). Your Strata Manager can't do anything until they have authorization from the council.
- **Be a bully** - don't be a bully to anyone in the strata, which includes:
  - Other council members
  - Rental tenants
  - Property owners
- **Work alone** - you must always work as a team. Major decisions aren't made by 1 member of the council.
- **Break bylaws** - council members are role models for everyone else. You set the bylaws, you comply with them. Most common bylaws people break are generally the ones that deal with the 3 P's:
  - Pets
  - Parking
  - Pet poop

## How To Run The 3 Different Kinds Of Council Meetings

There are 3 kinds of meetings that a council sets:

### 1. **Annual General Meeting, or AGM** -

This meeting is mandatory and must take place every year.

This meeting covers:

- a. The annual budget and strata fees (must be voted on by the strata owners)



## 2. **Special General Meeting, or SGM -**

This type of meeting takes place when bylaws must be changed/added to. Owners or council members can call an SGM any time.

Bylaw adjustments must always be voted on by owners.

You also call an SGM if you wish to hire or change your Strata Management company.

## 3. **General Meeting -**

This type of meeting happens regularly. Only the council and 3Strata Manager needs to be present. It covers:

- a. The month to month details of the strata, such as:
  - I. Maintenance
  - II. Issues that have been brought up by owners, tenants, and council

While the different kinds of meetings cover different aspects of the strata, they all follow the same basic procedure. Each council member/owner taking part in the meeting must:

- **Share all relevant information** - don't keep secrets that can harm the strata! Did you overhear a tenant claiming they won't follow certain bylaws? Bring it up!
- **Focus only on the subject at hand** - don't focus on individual responsibilities - just discuss the problems.
- **Be specific** - use coherent examples to illustrate what you're talking about during the meeting.

For example - if some repair work needs to get done, come into the meeting with what specifically needs to get repaired. Gutters? Windows? If you don't, the meeting takes much longer than necessary hashing out the specifics.

It's also important that the members in the meeting:

- **Actually listen** - All opinions have value, even if they're coming from someone you don't really like. Listening closely to all concerns and suggestions can solve many strata issues before they become worse. Plus, just the mere act of showing that you're listening (paraphrasing their concerns back to them) can resolve issues (even if you don't offer any real solutions).
- **Meeting minutes** - Be sure to send all meeting minutes to owners so they're kept in the loop. This tells owners that you're working on all current issues. Always get minutes to owners within 2 weeks after the meeting.
- **Support the consensus** - if the vote for something isn't unanimous, it's important that those who are in the minority don't make a fuss. Gracefully support the decision that's made by the majority.

Your Strata Manager attends every meeting to advise you and mediate any debates that crop up.

## **Ready To Hire A Strata Management company? Follow This Simple 4 Step Process!**

Whether it's your first company or you're switching over, the process is as follows:

### **Step #1: Special General Meeting**

First things first - have an SGM meeting to ensure everyone approves changing/hiring a new Strata Management company.

### **Step #2: Sever Ties**

This step only applies to you if you're changing companies.

Your council must approach your current management company and ask to be let out of their contract.

### **Step #3: First Contact**

Request a proposal and phone us at (604)858-7368

Is your previous company reluctant to let you go? The Strata Management company you're changing to can aid you in making the switch.

### **Step #4: Agency Agreement**

As per the Real Estate Council, your new company can't provide any services until the Agency Agreement is in place. It goes hand in hand with the proposal.

You need to bring the minutes of your SGM (where you decided to change/add your company) before the agreement can be finalised.

They can work behind the scenes (give guidance) until the agreement is set.

This takes a maximum of 2 days. Once set, the changes are official!

## **Is Your Strata Non-Conforming?**

You're not sure if the strata bills are being paid.

If they are, by who?

There's not a single bylaw in place (that you know of), and you're pretty sure the roof has about 10 different leaks. Not to mention all of the paperwork has disappeared.

While this situation isn't common (new buildings that don't have an elected council are led by the developer until the first AGM), it does happen from time to time. This is called a non-conforming strata.

And guess what? A non-conforming strata can cause upset tenants to sue, or for unapproved alterations (like patio construction) to take place. If you try to sell, the process becomes incredibly complicated because you can't get the paperwork you need.

If your building is in need of a proper council and you don't know where to start, contact us so we can:

1. Sit down with you to figure out what needs to change in your strata
2. Give you direction on how to set an SGM for the Agency Agreement

After those 2 steps, the rest of the process is the same as hiring or changing your Strata Manager.

## **Strata Management Glossary (We Swear It's Not As Boring As It Sounds)**

### **Strata Property Act:**

The legal framework that all strata corporations and strata owners must follow in BC.

This framework is affected by judicial decisions from court cases and other legislation.

### **Capital Planning:**

A budget put in place for annual maintenance, such as:

- Roof replacement
- Elevator repairs
- Painting

### **Contingency Fund:**

A fund set aside for emergency needs, such as water or fire damage.

### **Agency Agreement:**

An Agency Agreement is a document that the strata corporation and Strata Management company both need to sign.

It gives a general outline of the services that are going to be provided and the length of the contract.

It also includes the disbursements and management fees.

## **Proposal:**

The proposal is a document that is unique to each strata corporation (or board of directors).

It outlines the services you'll receive and breaks down the fees.

It also covers HomeLife's terms and conditions and company history.

## **Strata Fees:**

Collective fees divided between all strata owners. These fees are approved annually by owner votes. The fees cover all common expenses, such as:

- Strata budget
- Contingency fund
- Capital planning

## **Depreciation Reports:**

A report which helps the strata corporation plan and pay for any maintenance

of the development's common property, such as:

- Roof replacement
- Painting
- Parking lot repairs

## **Budget Shortfall:**

If the budget goes over its specified amount, a special levy is put in place to fund the difference - which all owners must add to their existing strata fees.

## **Form B:**

A Form B is an informational form that covers a number of details regarding the home/strata lot. It's typically requested during the sale of a home. Some examples of what's in this form:

- Strata fees
- Outstanding fees
- Liens
- Special levies
- Amendments to bylaws
- Strata lot number

## **Form F:**

A Form F is a form that's required during the sale of a home. It formally states that there are no outstanding fees on that unit and that the homeowner is in good standing with the Strata Corporation or Homeowners Corporation.

## **Common Property:**

Common property is all land and building areas that aren't a part of a particular strata unit, such as:

- Roof
- Parking lot
- Elevator
- Hallways
- Stairwells

## **Employee Bonding:**

An agreement put in place that protects the strata against theft or damage by a hired worker (e.g. a contractor). If the worker causes damage to the strata development, they have to pay for the repairs.

## **Strata Trust Account:**

A bank account kept strictly for all strata funds (which means the account is legally under the name 'Strata Corporation').

**Are you ready  
to hire  
HomeLife  
Advantage?**





### **Streamlined Council**

Each member has their specific duties and knows how to carry them out.

### **Professional Conflict Resolution**

Your property managers are trained to solve conflicts within your strata.

### **Bylaw Enforcement**

You don't need to enforce your bylaws or collect fines - we do it for you.

### **Council Training**

Your property manager ensures your council members are always aware of their responsibilities.

### **Large Team Of Property Managers**

If your property manager is unable to fulfill their duties for some reason (e.g. illness), there's always someone who can fill their shoes.

### **Competitive Maintenance Rates**

Our strong relationship with contractors means you get competitive prices on your development's maintenance.

## **6 Benefits Of Working With HomeLife**