



Report Compliments of **Homes and Lifestyles of Colorado** - *Finding Your Place Called Home*

Denver Office: <http://www.DenverHomeLiving.com> - (303) 816-9199 Office

## Organization: The Key To Effective Management



***Can you find that paper you're looking for with minimal effort, or does it take hours?  
Organization is key to minimizing the time it takes to perform any task.***

We all know that there are a multitude of things we need to keep track of for each property in the association. Setting up a useable file system is invaluable.

### **Homeowner information**

Are you saving the computer generated correspondence sent to homeowners by their names or addresses? How about the homeowner information sheets or census forms? People move to and from Associations all of the time and the homeowner's names change frequently. Filing these documents, whether paper or electronic, by the unit address will make it easier to find down the road. I don't know about you, but I certainly don't remember who lived at a particular address a year or more ago! However, if I need to find information from the past and it is filed by the property and unit address, chances are good that I'll find it.

### **Maintenance concerns**

A homeowner doesn't care if it is the dead of winter or 110 degrees outside. They want that dead bush replaced now! Many Associations perform landscape inspections and replacements once or

twice per year. Keeping a list by street, then by address, of the problems reported since your last inspection and replacement will help make sure that nothing is overlooked. Set up a template in your computer for each property. List all of the street names in bold and underlined type so they are easy to find. When you receive your first landscape or concrete or asphalt complaint (or whatever other item you may need to track), open the template and save it under a new name, such as "Fall 2005 Landscape List." Add the appropriate address, approximate location of the problem, a short description enough so you understand what you need to look at and save it! If you add to your lists each and every time you receive a report, when the time comes to meet with the contractor and/or the Board you have a current, well organized list to work with. It is also important to make sure that the homeowners know the approximate time frame in which these inspections occur.

### **Audits and Auditors**

Every year, the auditors ask for copies of contracts and minutes for the past year, sometimes with very short notice. Set up a file --- every time the minutes are approved, or a contract is signed, make a copy and add it to the Auditor's file! When the time comes around for the audit, you're prepared and won't have to spend time pulling everything out of multiple files and making copies on short notice because it is already done!

### **Be Prepared**

When you are ready to become organized, make sure that you have all of the necessary supplies on hand. Paper files require manila folders, labels, hanging file folders, etcetera. You'll need to decide whether the new information should be filed in front or in the back of the file. Once you decide, everyone who may add things to the newly organized files needs to follow the program. Computer generated labels will make it easier for everyone to read, especially if your handwriting tends to resemble that of most physicians. Computer files may require diskettes or writeable/re-writeable CD's, depending on your computer's hard drive. If you do a lot of typing from multiple locations, have disk, will travel! Set up files by property, by type, by the way you will be able to retrieve the information. For homeowner files, use their address, not their name, and the date the document was created. If you also include the date the document was created, year first, then month and day, you'll have a chronological record at your fingertips!

Once you've organized yourself, keep it that way. Set up pre-filing files if necessary. Use A to Z folders, street name folders, anything to sort out that pile of papers you need to keep on hand. Having some semblance of order when you don't have time to do it all will make it easier to spend that five minutes between appointments constructively!

Getting organized will help you in the long run. You'll have more time, be able to do more in the same amount of time, and maybe even, do I dare say . . . have a little free time! Be the envy of all around you, be organized!

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