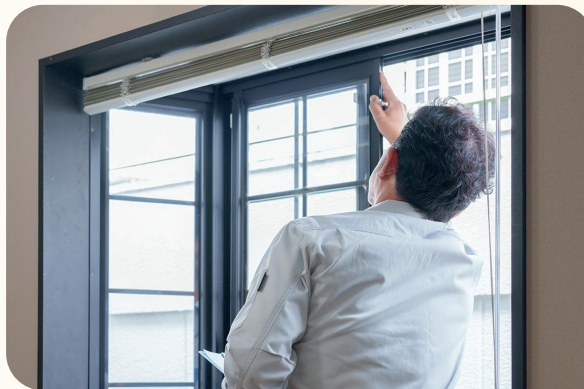


Spring Home Maintenance Tips

Spring is the opportune time to do some preventative maintenance around your condo and get ready for the spring and summer months. Read on for a handy checklist of helpful maintenance reminders.

- Schedule an HVAC annual inspection if it hasn't been done yet. You want to ensure that your AC is in good working condition before the weather gets hot.
- Check seals around windows and doors and re-seal if necessary to prevent water damage and reduce your energy costs.
- Inspect plumbing for leaks, such as under sinks and around toilets.
- Clean and replace or repair damaged screens.
- Degrease range hood filter.
- Vacuum bathroom exhaust fans and dryer ducts.
- Change carbon monoxide and smoke alarm batteries. If they don't have batteries, check if they need to be replaced (repeat every 6 months)
- Replace the filter (generally do so every 2 to 3 months) if you



have an HVAC system in your unit.

- If you have carpets, have them deep cleaned.

Remember regular preventive maintenance will help maintain the value of your property and nip small problems in the bud before they become big and expensive.



Planting the Seeds of a Balcony Garden

March brings the first day of spring ... the perfect time to plan a balcony garden, which can be both exciting and overwhelming. So, where do you begin?

First, consider **how many hours of sunlight exposure** your balcony gets, and check your area's **hardiness zone** for which plants will thrive best. Perennials are great since you don't have to re-plant them. Choose a variety of plants that bloom at different times, so you **always have something colourful** in your garden.

Next, **measure your containers** to know what and how much you can plant. Planting vertically will maximize space and provide privacy. Also, put fresh soil in your containers and ensure there is good drainage.

Consider including **hardscape materials** for visual interest, such as lighting, upcycled found objects, and elements of stone and wood.

Be sure to **check your condo rules** regarding balconies. Some condos have rules about hanging baskets and balcony railing planters.

Once you have weighed all these factors, **map your garden on paper**. Choose a few plants to start and grow from there.

Happy gardening!

Making Your Condo Eco-Friendly

On March 22nd, the world will mark Earth Hour, an hour to turn off your lights and acknowledge the effects of climate change. What better time for some changes around your home that can make a positive impact every day, such as:

- Invest in energy-efficient appliances that are ENERGY STAR® certified (some of the highest energy consumption appliances are dishwashers, washing machines, dryers, ovens, and microwaves).
- Immediately fix any broken or leaky plumbing.
- Switch to LED light bulbs, which use less energy and last longer than other light bulbs.
- Use natural and eco-friendly cleaning products.
- Wash with cold water. Hot water cycles use about 75 percent more energy by heating the water.
- Install low-flow plumbing fixtures. A low-flow toilet can reduce water usage by 20 to 60 percent annually.
- Invest in a smart thermostat (if compatible with your building's systems) and smart lighting to control them from your phone and reduce usage.
- Use a water filtration system instead of plastic water bottles.

A recent survey found one-third of millennials and Gen Z home buyers



prioritize homes with eco-friendly features. While you may not be looking to sell, there are immediate cost-saving benefits and possibly rebates with some relatively simple changes around your condo.