

VareseNews

A condominium is like a car; what you should do to keep the common areas “oiled”

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The first part: “Co-owners, did you know you had purchased a whole building?”

The second part: “Where ‘what is mine’ ends, and ‘what is ours’ begins”

If you have any doubts or questions on the matter, ask the expert in the comments section: today, it is **Alessandro Zanardo** (see photo; from today onwards, Alessandro will identify the articles he writes).

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The condominium structure affects the lives of every individual apartment, but a good owner doesn't feel besieged by responsibilities, and knows that some decisions and many good habits will lead to more utilities with respect to the cost and the time they require.

Let's compare a condominium to a vehicle: it must have fuel, but it must also be in order with the road tax, insurance and vehicle inspections, and above all, must not stop in the middle of the road! When approving a cost estimate, we should bear in mind these simple points:

Under “fuel”, include all forms of consumption: electricity, water and gas (where centralised) can be calculated on a “historical” basis, cautiously adding a bit to cover any increase in tax or in the cost of raw materials (alas!). We might also look for a new “petrol station”; **ask the administrator to check among the countless gas and electricity suppliers**, to see if there are any offers ideal for your building.

Insurance is not mandatory by law, but might be according to the regulations, and, in any case, is highly recommended. A lot of additional clauses protect against small accidents, and these nuisances may be moderately expensive; but consider the expense due to a domestic blaze: isn't it better to be safe rather than sorry?

There are also mandatory, periodic checks (vehicle inspections) **in a condominium:** depending on the type of system (lifts, heating, electricity, fire), these will require regular checks if they are to be considered “in order”. If a system is running but you're not sure whether the checks have been made, contact the administrator. Like a car with smooth tyres, or worn brake pads; if we wait to have an accident, the cost of the repair will be greater than that of the check, but more importantly, someone might get hurt. Just as the inspection is recorded in the logbook, there must also be the relative documentation for every system that needs it.

For cars, servicing by a mechanic is not mandatory, but is suggested by the manufacturer. Similarly, there are some **jobs in the condominium that help to prevent any small, hidden damage from becoming a major problem over time:** there is the more immediate

maintenance, like checking the sewers, or inspecting the roof, and the more specific, like verifying that the water pipes do not filter forbidden substances. So, it is essential to know your condominium, to decide what work needs to be done, and how often.

Finally, a little bit of “**cleaning**”, of the **stairs, gardens, and common areas in general**: if you live in a small condominium, get a calendar so that you can take turns, and write down any work that has been done; however, a large, complex condominium will need capable service suppliers. You should also bear in mind **extraordinary work, carried out professionally**, for example, **to return any marble or floor tiles to their previous radiance**, to prune hedges, even to paint and renovate the areas that have deteriorated over time. **All of this work has a cost, but it is necessary to maintain the value of the whole building over time.**

Then, there are the relations with people outside the condominium: are we

in order with the suppliers (payments and any withholding taxes)? Do the contracts stipulated respect the existing norms, and are the companies employed qualified to carry out certain jobs (even climbing onto the roof is certified)? In short, have we put someone with the right driving licence at the wheel of our condominium? This is everything that needs to be checked for the common areas.

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