

# Tips for a Safe & Enjoyable Condominium Experience

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## Exterior tips

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GPM has lots of tips for the safety and enjoyability of your suite, but how about some tips and information that can help you with exterior related items such as windows and balconies.

## Windows

**Window Cleaning:** Typically, Condo buildings only have a contractor clean the windows once or twice a year. During the window cleaning the contractors usually clean the windows that Residents cannot access to clean themselves. If the balconies have glass, the contractor will usually only clean the outside of the glass. Otherwise, Residents are usually expected to clean their accessible windows and glass.

**Window & Screen Replacement or Repair:** Double check your Declaration, but most commonly window and screen replacement/repair are the responsibility of the Corporation. Unfortunately, this could differ if the damage was caused by the residents of the unit (including damage caused by pets).

**Pro Tip!** Your window frames have small drainage holes called "weep holes". Make sure to keep your window tracks and the weep holes clear of debris to allow rainwater to drain off.

**Window Condensation:** Residents often see condensation build-up, on their windows or balcony door, as a sign that something is wrong with them. Most often the opposite is the truth. Condensation is usually a sign that your windows and door(s) are working so well that they are creating a complete seal for your home.

This condensation is often caused by elevated humidity levels in the air inside the unit, that is then collected as condensation on the cool dry surface of your windows, balcony door and sometimes even exterior walls. Sometimes it's even so much water that Residents think they have a water leak. In the winter the condensation can freeze on the interior side of the window. The best solution is to identify what is causing the extra humidity level in the air, and then take steps to mitigate it.

### Contributing factors could be:

- the unit being kept very warm;
- stovetop cooking;
- neglecting to use exhaust fan(s);
- hanging clothes to dry;

- poor air circulation;
- showers without exhaust fan;
- improperly vented dryers;
- use of humidifiers;

Numerous residents/pets and even excessive house plants can contribute too.

If the condensation is excessive or causing damage/mould you may need a dehumidifier.

### If the situation isn't quite that serious, some easy solutions might be:

- lower the temperature in the unit;
- open a window a crack to let in cool air, or open curtains to allow air circulation to windows;
- make sure your heating fan is running to circulate air, even if you turn the heat down or off;
- always use exhaust fans.

**Window Coverings:** We all want to decorate our homes so they feel inviting, but before Residents go shopping they should check the Declaration & Rules regarding window coverings. Most Condos have regulations about the exterior colour of window coverings. The general idea is to keep the exterior of the building looking uniform and tidy.

**Window Air Conditioning Units:** This may be pretty rare these days, but some older Condos may not have central air conditioning. In these Condos, Residents often use window air conditioning units. Please check with your Condo Manager first. Consider using indoor portal A/C units instead. An improperly installed window air conditioning unit could be dangerous.

## Balconies & Terraces

**Barbeques/Grills:** Everyone enjoys some BBQ'd food! But, unfortunately, the Ontario Fire Code, dictates that barbeques are not permitted on balconies. There may be some exceptions for ground floor terraces (that do not have overhead coverage), but you will have to check with your Condominium Manager/Board and the Governing Documents. In fact, you might even have to check with the local fire department. Some Residents might think the way



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around this is to use an electric grill on their balcony, but many Condos have rules about this as well. Plus, your neighbours may not realize it's an electric grill, and they could report you due to thinking you have a barbeque.

**Patio Furnishings:** Most Condos only permit patio furnishings to be kept on the balcony. Space can be limited in Condos, but the balcony is not a recommended place for general storage. Also, most Condominiums do not permit Owners or Residents to drill any holes into the balcony railing, walls, dividers, floor, etc. Check in with your Condominium Manager before hanging that lovely new plant.

**Washing your Balcony:** Washing the balcony can be tricky business, but should be done with care and minimal water. Dirty wash water accidentally running off of a balcony can leak down onto balconies below. Residents below might become upset if it lands on them or their patio furnishing.

**Pro Tip!** Residents should avoid hanging anything over the balcony rail. In all honesty, it looks a little unsightly, and the neighbours or Board may not appreciate it.

### Smoking & Cannabis in the Condo or on the Balcony

**Smoking & Cannabis:** These days, many Condos have adopted rules and regulations against smoking cigarettes and cannabis. Of course, both of these activities are legal in Canada, but please remember that Condos come with their own Declarations, By-laws, Rules & Policies for governing the community. This may seem unfair, but the idea is that Residents live in such close proximity that they must share the air.

**Smoking Permitted:** If your Condo does not have rules preventing smoking cigarettes and/or cannabis, please just try to be considerate. Many residents prefer to smoke outdoors, so if you smoke on the balcony please try to have a weighted ashtray handy. And, please never throw cigarette butts or matches off of the balcony. It may seem harmless, but they can land on balconies below, and they could start a fire.

### Pets

**Pet Regulations:** Pets/Dogs are welcome & loved members of most Condominium Communities. It is always suggested that pet parents check the rules and regulations for any pet related restrictions. Many Condos have restrictions on the type, size, and quantity of dogs/cats/pets you can have. Some Condos may even have a No Pets restriction in place. Service pets may be an

exception, so just check with your Condominium Manager and Board ahead of time.

**Pets in the Unit:** We all have responsibilities outside the home, but dogs/pets that are left alone may bark or cry. It's just good to be aware that this can be upsetting to neighbours (in most cases they just feel sad for the loney pet).

**Pets on the Balcony:** Fresh air and bathroom time are important things to consider when you have pets (especially dogs) in a Condominium building. It is recommended that the balcony space is not the ideal place for pets to use for washroom purposes. With that being said, there are some great products on the market to facilitate such situations. Of course, there's the tried and true pet potty mats, but there's also pet grass pads. There's even environmentally friendly options where dog owners can purchase self-contained patches of live grass. Clean-up should be quick to protect the balcony floor, and to avoid the possibility of contaminated rainwater running down onto balconies below.

**Pro Tip!** Register your pets with Management or Security. This is very important should there be an emergency event in your Condo building.



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For more info please contact us:

242 Applewood Crescent | Unit #5 | Concord | Ontario | L4K 4E5 | 905.669.0222  
gpmmanagement.com | info@gpmmanagement.com

