



HOA FUNDAMENTALS

For New and Returning Board Members



**BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY
ONE HOME AT A TIME**

We have been providing HOA management resources to Southern California residents for over 30 years. Our priority is to consistently deliver relevant information and useful resources for each homeowners association we work with, spanning over 60,000 units across Southern California. We've compiled the HOA fundamentals for new and returning board members to use as a resource to help them be effective members of their community.

In this eBook, you'll learn why property inspections are essential to your community, how to work together to build up your community, and tips for addressing water restrictions in your homeowners association.

PROPERTY INSPECTIONS: ESSENTIAL FOR MAINTAINING PROPERTY VALUES

Property inspections often get a bad wrap. As an HOA management firm, we believe that regular property inspections are not meant to solely identify issues and give citations. Rather, regular inspections are the most effective way to maintain or increase a property's value. Property inspections are the key to protecting your valuable investment in your home and community.

DETAILS ARE CRITICAL

Part of community management includes identifying necessary repairs or equipment updates right away. Doing so enables a community manager to avoid inconveniencing residents or incurring more costly or serious fixes down the road.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AESTHETICS

Simply put, aesthetics matter. A neighborhood that looks good has higher resale values that attract a higher caliber of buyer. Peeling paint, shabby fences, and battered garage doors reduce property values for all the homes in the area. Neighborhoods with cohesive color schemes, attractive driveways and uncluttered lawns promote an upscale image that has a direct impact on each home's value.

LONG-TERM VALUE ADDED

Though your home might not currently be on the market, maintaining high property values within your community is still important. For starters, it's a courtesy to your neighbors who are selling their homes. Secondly, homes with higher property values attract more desirable buyers, which generally leads to safer, more peaceful neighborhoods. Lastly, your home's increased equity can impact other areas of your life including refinancing, credit lines, and loan collateral.

INSPECTIONS IDENTIFY PROBLEMS EARLY

Though many community managers limit property inspection to once per month, at Keystone Pacific, we conduct twice-monthly inspections. Twice-monthly inspections enable us to catch issues early on so they can be remedied before they become serious problems. Inspecting communities often also allows the HOA manager to become intimately familiar with your community so issues are immediately apparent.

UNDERSTANDING CITATIONS

Citations and courtesy notices are typically issued to remind residents about a range of matters, from forgotten curbside trashcans to necessary aesthetic fixes. It's essential to strike a balance between the needs of the community and the needs of individual residents, in order to promote increased property values which benefit everyone. We have found that addressing issues right away acts as a helpful reminder for small things and provides sufficient notice for residents to make larger changes.

COURTESY AND MUTUAL RESPECT ARE KEY

All residents should be treated with respect and understanding during the inspection process. Communications should be customized to ensure that even when faced with an inspection violation, community members understand why they are receiving a notice and feel confident that their needs are heard and recognized.

KEEP IN TOUCH

If you have any questions about property inspections or would like to report an issue on your property or with a common space, be sure to contact your HOA manager right away. The quicker an issue is reported, the quicker it can be addressed and fixed.

Maintaining the appearance and value of personal and community property is something every homeowner in your community has a stake in.

Main Areas Reviewed During a Property Inspection Include:

- Safety issues that could lead to injury or liability
- General maintenance, including properly functioning pools, fountains, lighting fixtures, and electric gates
- Sports facilities and common area cleanliness and safety
- Landscaping in need of trimming, replacement, or pest control
- Homes that violate the community association regulations

HOW TO BUILD A FEELING OF COMMUNITY IN YOUR HOA

Community management is about more than landscaping and lawn care. It's about creating a welcoming atmosphere that promotes security, safety and community for all residents. At Keystone Pacific, we focus on helping HOAs develop action plans to bolster residents' feeling of community through shared experiences. Creating a feeling of community isn't something that can be done overnight, but we've put together tips and ideas for creating a strong feeling of community in your homeowners association.

TIPS TO ENHANCE YOUR COMMUNITY

Creating a sense of community requires organization, enthusiasm and follow-through. Because most associations do not employ a recreation director, sustained success will depend on the help of dedicated resident volunteers. Here's how to get started:

- **Make a plan** with concrete timelines and goals so you can measure progress and allocate appropriate budgets.
- **Understand the demographics** in your community to encourage the cross-cultural traditions and events in which everyone feels welcome.
- **Develop community spirit and traditions** by asking residents to share family traditions or unique cultural practices that can be adopted by all members of the community.
- **Invite participation** by clearly posting invites in common spaces, door-to-door fliers, or spreading the word through email or social media.
- **Share your success** through a community eNewsletter, Facebook page, website or other online bulletin board. If your community has a printed newsletter or periodical, send updates including upcoming events calendars and "press releases" detailing neighborhood news or recaps of recent events. Be sure to take lots of pictures during events and record the names of residents to accompany each picture.

GET CREATIVE: MAKE MEMBERS FEEL VALUED

There are many ways to make residents feel like they're special and valued members of your community:

- Organize a monthly group to assist an elderly resident with household chores
- Maintain a bulletin board in common spaces with fun, candid photos
- Host your own neighborhood holiday parade

You can also brainstorm community-building ideas for events and activities. Things like:

- Holiday home decorating contests
- Classes: home improvement, gardening, dancing, fitness, sports, cooking
- Sports or hobby-based clubs
- Game nights
- Potlucks, BBQs, pancake breakfasts
- New Neighbors Welcome Orientation
- Donation drives and charity fundraisers
- Talent shows

STAY CONNECTED

Communication is important—not just between neighbors, but also between residents and community management. There are many ways to connect residents of a community with HOA managers. For some, it's emails or texts, for others it's a phone call or mailed letter. The more consistent the outreach, the more quickly community bonds begin to strengthen.

“Community events give residents the opportunity to get to know everyone in the community and create special bonds between neighbors,” explains Kayla Stephenson, Recreation Director of the Woodbury Community Association. “We encourage residents to participate in our holiday home decorating contests and our classes and clubs. We also offer classes for the younger kids in the community and we have an awesome music class that parents and kids seem to love.”

MANAGING WATER RESTRICTIONS IN YOUR HOA

HOAs can have an enormous impact on water conservation. As managers of the shared grounds in residential communities and arbiters of rules regarding lawn maintenance, landscaping requirements, and residential car and driveway washing, every homeowners association has a responsibility to balance the needs of residents with the water conservation requirements set forth by state and local agencies.

Here are some ways to keep water consumption under control while working with your homeowners association to maintain an attractive neighborhood.

REDUCE USAGE

The most immediate way to reduce large-scale water consumption is to simply reduce the amount of water dedicated to irrigating ornamental landscaping. Your HOA management team has likely already spoken with your groundskeeper to amend the watering schedule for common space landscaping in your neighborhood, but here are more ways that all residents can help:

- Cut back on the number of days you water your lawn and garden
- Reduce the amount of time spent per watering session
- Water at night to avoid water loss through evaporation
- Inspect sprinkler heads to ensure that they are facing greenery
- Fix leaky connections on sprinklers or faucets
- Wash your car less often or use water-free cleaning methods

BE PROACTIVE

Speak with your homeowners association about launching initiatives to update individual homes and neighborhood landscaping to include more drought-friendly plants that are attractive alternatives to water-hungry grass.

Drought-friendly landscaping alternatives include:

- Replacing foliage with drought-resistant plants
- Replacing lawns with artificial green turf or rock gardens
- Covering greater areas with wood chips or pebbles
- Reducing communal lawn space by replacing with pavers, tile, colored cement or asphalt
- Including more plants indigenous to Southern California
- Converting ornamental fountains into planters filled with drought-resistant greenery



UNDERSTAND PENALTIES FOR INFRACTIONS

Penalties for over-usage could result in additional charges from water utilities, municipal fines, citations, or misdemeanor charges with accompanying fines or jail time.

Specific penalties vary by region so you should speak with your HOA management team for detailed regulations regarding the penalty for violations.

STAY INFORMED

State water cutbacks can conflict with current HOA landscaping regulations, so the best course of action is to contact your HOA manager. As each homeowners association responds to new regulations in their area, communication with residents is important. Each homeowners association should create a water reduction plan with measurable goals that should then be shared with residents. A written plan will assist with tracking month-over-month progress and keep water reduction goals top of mind at HOA meetings.

As residents of Southern California, we must all do our part in reducing water consumption to ensure that our region is an inhabitable place for generations to come. With organization, cooperation, and perseverance, individual residents and homeowners associations can have a huge impact on preserving this precious natural resource.

ABOUT KEYSTONE PACIFIC PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

We believe in long-lasting partnerships. The cornerstone of any partnership is trust. We believe that trust must be earned with team members that demonstrate transparency, accountability and excellent customer service. With quick responses, superior technology, and solid attention to detail . . . we will exceed your expectations. [Contact us](#) today to start a conversation.

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