

CONDO CONCEPTS

By Maria Bartolotti

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SOUND ADVICE

What to do about noisy neighbours?

Just because it's called a party wall doesn't mean you can have a party all the time. Noise transfer is a common concern among condo residents who have to share a wall (or ceiling) that can be exacerbated by inconsiderate neighbours next door.

Loud music, 2 a.m. parties, dogs barking, people arguing, doors slamming, blaring TVs, amorous noises, yelling, laughing or talking smack on the balcony, these are just some of the frustrations of living with noisy neighbours.

As a neighbour, you may think: "I'm all for fun and games but, they are constantly creating loud noises. I'm fed up. What can I do to get some peace and quiet, other than selling my condo?"

Noise is one of the most common complaints heard about in condominiums. So what can you do about noise and still be a good neighbour?

To start, getting even is never an option and will likely only make the situation worse. Your first step should always be to talk to your neighbor in a polite and diplomatic manner about the problem. Yes, this means a lot of self-control on your part. Chances are, your neighbours may not even realize how loud their stereo is or how squeaky their bed might be.

If your condo has a noise policy in place then a simple reminder might be all you need to do. However, if after talking to them the noisy neighbour becomes agitated and you fear for your safety, call the police.

If simply talking to them doesn't work, write a letter of complaint to the neighbour. If that doesn't work then write to your condo board of directors and send it through the management company.

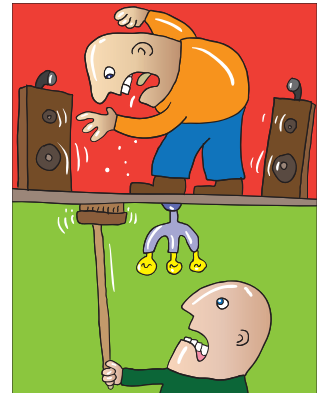
It's a good idea to document the times and dates that the offensive noise takes place so you can include every detail in your letter to the condo board. Include the type of noise you are dealing with and the number of times you've had to complain, when you tried to talk to them and written to them in your attempts to stop their bothersome behaviour. Keeping a paper trail of the neighbours' behavior can help if the matter goes to mediation or court.

In most instances, the management company will follow through with a letter of their own. But, it is also important to understand that you cannot always ask a neighbour to be quiet. A great deal of tolerance is needed when living in such close proximity, it is only when the offence becomes habitual or exceeds the limits set by your condo's regulations that steps should be taken.

If everything else fails and the matter is serious, the Condo Property Act allows for the parties to have the matter dealt with by means of mediation, conciliation or similar techniques to encourage a peaceful settlement of the dispute, or be arbitrated under the Arbitration Act.

Remember: you're a wall, ceiling or a walk away from your neighbours, be considerate and limit the amount of noise coming from the unit. Everyone is entitled to quiet enjoyment of their unit. It pays to get along with your neighbours.

Until next time. ■



Maria Bartolotti is the owner-manager of New Concept Management Inc. She has developed a strong reputation for rendering timely and efficient services to the condominium industry. Maria believes that her company's success hinges on her hands-on approach to condominium management as well as maintaining open lines of communications with her clientele. Maria is actively involved in her industry. For more information, visit www.newconceptmanagement.com