

Dear Cathy Condo,

With all the damage from the recent derecho and warnings of more fierce storms in the future, I'm wondering if I should increase my homeowners insurance coverage. I've heard horror stories over the past few years of people who have had to vacate their condos while they were repaired and one friend in another condo community had to pay for roof damage. If my building were damaged in a storm, what costs am I responsible for? And what costs does the association pay for?

--In a Quandary

Dear IAQ:

A community association must provide insurance coverage against typical hazards that might affect an individual owner, but this coverage does not usually extend to unit owner's improvements, personal property, or personal liability. Parkfairfax has the most common type of master property insurance known as "single entity" coverage, which insures the general and limited common elements – perimeter walls, floor, and ceiling of individual units – and extends within individual units to fixtures, appliances, walls, floor coverings, and cabinetry, but only for like, kind, and quality to that conveyed by the developer to the original owner. This means that any individual unit improvements made subsequent to the original conveyance, such as building a wall to divide a room, or upgrading carpeting or other floor coverings, wall treatments, appliances, cabinetry, replacement windows, etc., are not covered by the master policy.

Resident owners should consider purchasing condominium insurance, also known as an HO-6 policy. This covers personal property, unit improvements, additions and alterations, additional living expenses if you must leave your unit during repair, personal liability, loss assessments, and damages.

Non-resident owners may not need coverage for personal property or additional living expenses; however, they are responsible for damage to all unit improvements. Additionally, non-resident owners can be insured for loss of rental income.

Renters should purchase a Tenants Homeowner (HO-4) policy to provide coverage for personal property, additional living expenses, and personal liability.

Check with your insurance agent or company to determine if you have appropriate insurance to cover damage to your unit. Share the Parkfairfax certificate of insurance with your agent to ensure the policy you choose is right for you. Find the Certificate on the Parkfairfax website by clicking on About Parkfairfax, going to Financial Documents and looking for the link to the certificate (<http://www.parkfairfax.info/about/financial-documents/>).