



# Continuing Shortages

## in the Condo Industry Due to the Pandemic

By Vince Bennett, RCM

No one could have predicted that two years after the world declared a global pandemic, we would be facing continued uncertainty, ongoing lockdowns and restrictions, and increased challenges to perform our responsibilities as condominium service providers.



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Condo management is a high-paced environment. Many condominium managers handle a portfolio of properties with an ongoing list of urgent 'to-do' items. We like to promptly address our action lists to service our clients and residents with a level of service that we would expect. On top of our everyday action items, we respond to emergencies and are almost always planning reserve fund proj-

ects. Most of our RF projects require carefully thought-out plans. They are coordinated to consider many factors, including the timing of equipment and material deliveries, weather, and the impact on residents.

The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on our industry with little end in sight. We are all aware that almost all sectors that service our communities face employment challenges. Service providers from management companies, to accounting firms, to security companies and plumbing companies; most have reported that they are understaffed.

One auditing firm noted, "We have eliminated our in-house bookkeeping services and are just focusing on year-end audits due to a lack of staff." And an employee from a security company

wrote, "The company I work for has provided security for some apartment buildings in the downtown area. We are struggling to hire enough guards right now. Too much work and not enough people to staff the sites. Wish I could help."

Other issues that we face include difficulty acquiring materials and long lead times on custom or ordered material and components. Longer lead times make it difficult for project planning and lead to disappointed and angry Boards and Owners.

One plumber reported, "Sorry, we simply can't help with this project. Our wholesaler is only selling a certain number of feet of piping per contractor per week." And during a recent paving replacement project, an Engineer wrote, "The Contractor has indicated that the drainage board has

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been ordered. The anticipated arrival time is indefinite.”

One of the most critical issues we’re facing is the increased cost of material and equipment. An HVAC contractor on a heat pump order recently advised, “The manufacturer’s quote is \$550,000.00, but can only hold that cost for two weeks. We can expect that to increase by 20% or more in the new year.”

Not only do these challenges make it difficult to service our clients and schedule major repairs and replacements, but it also makes managing expectations nearly impossible. Boards and Owners are becoming frustrated and impatient, and that added stress is placed on managers.

We can expect to continue with these challenges for the foreseeable future. It will take some time to correct the current issues that have created the staffing issues, shortage of supplies, and back-ordered components. The most important thing we can do as managers is to communicate these challenges to our Board and residents. Our Boards and residents may not ‘know’ what

we know and, in some cases, may not believe what is taking place in the market right now. Educating your Boards and residents on these current issues will help manage expectations. Communication is critical, and if there was ever a time to over-communicate, this might be it.

As managers, we must interact with other managers, peers, assistant property managers and other support staff. This interaction acts as a support system in a very challenging industry. For many, working from home or remotely may not have that interpersonal connection and feeling alone with the additional stresses from the issues noted above. We are all experiencing these same challenges and added stress, and it is essential to know that you’re not alone. ■

**Vincent Bennett**, RCM, is the President of Bendale Property Management, servicing Southeastern Ontario. Vince manages a vast portfolio of Condominium Corporations and currently serves on the ACMO Board of Directors. [bendale.ca](http://bendale.ca)

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