



Installing Quality Windows and Doors

A Proven Way to Reduce Net Operating Income

by John Stafford

As board members and owners of condominiums, you are constantly keeping your eye on reducing bottom-line expenses while improving your building's energy efficiency and overall attractiveness and appearance. The windows and doors of condominiums are a valuable investment and should be protected, especially for multi-unit communities. Over time, poorly-maintained windows and doors, expired warranties, or no-longer-in-business window companies can result in costly window and door repairs or replacement.

Property managers are concerned with net operating income (NOI)—and how to reduce operating costs that flow to the bottom line. Here are some things to consider when examining your windows and doors.

What to Consider

Choosing windows and doors that provide the weather protection you need for your community is an important decision. You need to know local and state building codes to stay in compliance, wind mitigation insurance opportunities, and new energy tax credit considerations. It is important for board members and unit owners to partner with a project management team that understands the window and insurance industries and the unique needs of your association and community. The Florida Community Association Professionals has just designated its first select group of “Community Association Service Providers (CASP).” This is a professional designation for service providers who have completed a three-step process and are a “cut above” in education, ethics, and history as trustworthy. It is recommended that you look to partner first with these CASP designated members who have completed this intensive training course on the unique needs of community associations.

Repair or Starting Anew

Community property managers and board members are faced with diverse



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needs and difficult decisions, specifically when window and door renovations and repairs are involved. Frequent repairs and replacement services that often need to be made include:

- Replace torn or damaged screen cloths and frames
- Clean and relubricate tracks and sills
- Clean, adjust, and relubricate balancers and lifters
- Clean, adjust, and relubricate roller wheels
- Replace tarnished, scratched, or discolored handles
- Repair or replace leaky windows
- Repair or replace storm doors, hardware, or lock sets
- Change out window grids
- Clean weeping holes and remove water
- Repair water damage caused by caulk failure
- Repair caulking and aluminum capping
- Repair or replace window crank handles
- Repair double-hung window sashes

- Repair stucco damage.

There will come a time when repairs won't do the job, and you'll need to replace the windows completely.

Vinyl versus Metal Windows

When it is time to replace windows, more property managers in Florida are upgrading to vinyl windows with insulated glass. They are more energy efficient than comparable metal products. Vinyl windows with insulated glass offer choices in design, color, and glass to improve the overall appearance of the condominium, reduce energy costs, and give tax credits for the property owner.

Consider the following when making a decision about replacement windows for your complex:

- *Mix and match materials to create a custom look.*

Matching your windows and patio doors to complement furnishings and interior wood trims is the latest trend in home improvement. There are now windows that have a refined look of natural wood grain without the labor



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required to maintain wood. Color choices of these premium-grade vinyl windows include light oak, medium oak, walnut, and cherry interior polymer finishes that will never need treating, staining, or painting and will give the room a sense of warmth and visual appeal. Quality vinyl windows will be durable in all kinds of weather, easy to clean, and require practically no maintenance. There are also new hardware options for consumers to choose from for their windows, such as brass and nickel.


- *Choose from endless color choices.*

Condominium owners in Florida can now choose from a variety of colors and finish choices. Inside windows can be your basic white or beige or can look like real wood—light oak, medium oak, cherry, and walnut. On the exterior of the windows, you can choose a consistent color for all of your units. The colors and finishes now are fade resistant, clean up easily with soap and water, and have a strong adherence to the surface to help resist scratches and scrapes.

- *Find the right type of glass.*

Glass performance in new windows is key to achieving lower energy costs. According to the Federal Government's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) studies, up to 70 percent of energy loss occurs in windows and doors with 90 percent of window heat loss occurring through the glass.

There are numerous styles of glass now available to Florida homeowners that have not been available before. You can give your condominiums



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a custom look with beautiful colonial or diamond grids. Beauty and elegance can be added with custom grooved glass designs like petal, Florentine, marquis, tudor, trellis, diamond, or prairie. There are privacy glass options—for example at Stanek Windows there are rain, pebble, or frosted leaf—that allows light to filter in, while keeping a high level of privacy. Combining a different shape of window like a circle, eyebrow, octagon, oval, or arch with rectangular windows can also create a dramatic affect.

- *Finish the look with wood trim molding.*

To complete the look of new windows, there are options that include pine, poplar, or oak for interior wood trim molding.

Appearance

Community guidelines want continuity of appearance and design, while unit owners want comfort and peace of mind. Board members and property owners should consider the style, size, color, and trim of their condominiums when selecting ways to enhance windows and doors. Choosing the right color of window and door trim and matching it to the condominium's exterior façade, whether siding or brick, is key to maximizing complimentary aesthetic appeal of any home. Traditional colors for front doors are usually black or perhaps dark red. Whatever color or style selected, it should flow with the home's décor. Fiberglass doors are making rich wood grain colors popular once again as exterior color options due to their

incredible resemblance of real wood doors, but without the maintenance.

By adding beauty to your condominiums with new doors and windows, you will be saving money in reduced energy bills. Giving a home an updated appearance will often help the resale value of the property.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 offered businesses tax deductions for the costs of improving the energy efficiency of commercial buildings. The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 extended the provisions until December 31, 2013 (www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/printable_versions/tax_commercial.html).

Energy Star estimates that a 10 percent decrease in energy use could lead to a 1.5 percent increase in NOI with even more impressive savings figures as energy costs grow (www.energystar.gov).

Thanks to the new innovations in windows and doors, replacing these items can change the entire look and feel of every room in a house. Being diligent in efforts to improve the aesthetic appeal of a condominium complex will be well worth it with the reward of a satisfying and welcoming home for your tenants that will undoubtedly increase in value.

John Stafford is General Manager of Stanek Windows, with offices in Tampa/Clearwater, Florida, Cleveland, Ohio, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Stanek is a CASP Designated Member of the Florida Community Association Professionals. For more information, visit www.StanekWindows.com. ■



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