



## What Should Owners do with The Standard Unit Bylaw?

As you know, it is our opinion that the *Condominium Act, 1998* requires that all existing condominium corporations pass by-laws to define the "standard units" in the condominium. According to the Act, the by-law must be passed before the corporation's first insurance renewal after May 5, 2001.

The standard unit by-law gives a description of the unit as unimproved. It is the responsibility of the condominium corporation to obtain insurance covering the unimproved or "standard" unit (subject to a reasonable deductible). Insurance for any improvement to the unit is the responsibility of the owner.

An improvement is any feature, which is not part of the standard unit description.

Therefore, when the standard unit by-law is passed, each owner should take a copy of the by-law to the owner's insurance broker. The owner should also give the broker a list of all features of the unit, which are not included in the standard unit description. Those are the unit improvements. The broker should then be asked to make sure that the owner's insurance policy provides adequate coverage for those improvements.

At present, most unit insurance policies provide an arbitrary amount of coverage for unit improvements - usually set at a percentage of the coverage for the owner's personal property or "contents". With a precise list of the unit improvements in hand, many owners and brokers may find that they can actually reduce the coverage for improvements. [They may find that they have actually been over-insured up until this time.] On the other hand, in some cases the insurance coverage may have to be increased.

At the end of the day, the standard unit description should enable owners and their brokers to more carefully assess the insurance requirements of the owner.