

Select Reflects

Fall 2011

ON-CALL CORNER: LET THERE BE LIGHT!

By Michael Henricks, National Field Services Director

Changing out an existing light fixture is a simple task that many people can accomplish without an electrician. The first job is to verify that power to the fixture has been tripped. Locate the switch that operates the fixture and test to see that it is operational. Leave the fixture on and find the breaker that supplies power to the switch. Put a sticky note on the breaker that let's others know that, "This breaker is off for a reason! Please do not turn on." Once the breaker is turned off, verify that the fixture switch has no power. If you have a voltage meter, you can check the fixture to ensure the power has been cut.

Set up your ladder and test it for safety. Make sure you are working at a height at which you are comfortable. Remove the fixture's mounting screws one at a time while holding the fixture. If the fixture is heavy, make sure you have a second set of hands to help you! Disconnect the black and white wires, as well as the ground (typically exposed copper wire).

If assembly is required on your new fixture, do it on the ground prior to scaling the ladder. Connect your wires first, white to white, black to black and ground to ground. Make sure you are using wire nuts that are designed that gauge of wire you are dealing with. How will you know? Match them to the ones you just took off, as they are color coded to the gauge of the wire. If you have enough slack in the wire, test the fixture prior to final installation. Alternate tightening the mounting screws.

You want to snug them up equally and secure the fixture evenly.

Finally, splurge a little and start fresh with new bulbs. Once finished, turn on your breaker, flip the fixture switch and enjoy your new light!

If you're not crazy about working with electricity, or you have another home improvement project outside your comfort zone, contact your local branches' maintenance operation.

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Why a Maintenance Schedule is Important

From time to time, residents submit maintenance requests and become frustrated when something isn't attended to immediately. Part of the reason for the delay is that the association develops and follows an annual maintenance schedule, and the manager knows that next month's routine maintenance will take care of it. We also use the schedule to address small unseen problems before they become noticeable.

The association schedules routine maintenance for a number of reasons:

- ◆ It eliminates unexpected replacements and breakdowns.
- ◆ It keeps costs down because repairs are not made on an emergency basis.
- ◆ It extends the lives of expensive common elements and reduces reserved funds.
- ◆ It stops problems before they occur.

The association works with a qualified engineer and other experts to develop the maintenance schedule. The schedule specifies when common elements

will be routinely inspected, adjusted and repaired. Regularly monitoring the property eliminates surprises. We're able to catch minor problems and correct them before an expensive repair is needed. This, of course, helps control costs by extending the life of the common elements, which in turn reduces the money that must be reserved for an eventual replacement.

The maintenance schedule is a useful tool that keeps costs down and property function and appearance up. Bear with us; eventually everything will get done in the most efficient, economical way.



january



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AssociaLiving.com

AssociaLiving is a fun and insightful online magazine created specifically for our Associa communities and homeowners.

A resource of useful and inspiring information for residents and community associations across North America, AssociaLiving includes relevant stories about Entertaining, Home, Practical Living and Community, each geared toward enriching our homes and building stronger community associations.

Sign up for AssociaLiving (www.associaliving.com) to get great recipes for fall or to discover activities for the whole neighborhood. Keep reading to be inspired with holiday decorating ideas or to learn the ins-and-outs of weatherproofing your home. AssociaLiving has something for everyone in your family and community.

For those everyday clever ideas, visit AssociaLiving's NeighborlyNotes blog. NeighborlyNotes provides quick and savvy ideas to help make your home a happier, healthier and more efficient place to live. Blogger Carol, like many of our

homeowners, juggles a life comprised of many roles: spouse, parent, child and working professional, to name just a few.

She has hectic days like everyone else, but no matter where they are spent, she ends them all at the same

place: home. The editors of AssociaLiving hope the helpful tips and tricks about everything from organizing things around the home to entertaining with a twist will help make your days run a little smoother.

Celebrate the best of community living.

Visit www.associaliving.com and sign up to get the latest ideas in Home, Community, Entertainment and Practical Living.



HOSTING HOUSEGUESTS *with ease*

By Beth Francesco

'Tis the season to host houseguests! Whether you're expecting the in-laws for Thanksgiving or Junior is trekking home for the holidays, here's how to ensure their stay is just right.



A little bit of privacy goes a long way, says Washington interior designer, Tami Jones. Taking the time to prepare a haven for your weary traveler can make them feel instantly at home. Smart social planning can make a stay even better, advises tourism expert Jessica Robinson. Think local, and your guests will thank you for a unique take on a familiar place.

Before they arrive

- ✦ A guest's arrival is not the time to redecorate. A pulled-together room makes any space — a converted home office, an air mattress, the family couch — inviting. Invest in a quality, raised airbed, says Jones, owner of Tami Jones Interior Designs in Fall City, Washington. Make sure linens coordinate and are clean, and don't forget an extra blanket and pillows!
- ✦ Clear out the clutter, advises Jones. "Avoid the temptation to make your guest space the home to your collections or childhood memories that you don't know what to do with," she advises. Think hotel amenities on home budget: provide a place for their suitcase, like a luggage rack or bench. An empty drawer and a place to hang items are even better.
- ✦ Your tiny guest room exudes luxury if you treat your guests well. A heartfelt gift basket — homemade sweet treats, a gift card to a favorite café, basic toiletries, or a welcoming note — can make any situation more comfortable, Jones says. A bedside table should have a lamp with good lighting, light reading material, and an alarm clock. Bonus points: Keep a bowl of Hershey's kisses on hand to top off pillows each night.

While they are here

- ✦ You love to look at family photos, but your son-in-law isn't interested. Turn looking at family photos into a game. Play "Who's that baby?" or "How old is Aunt Maude in this picture?" using your albums. It'll indulge your desires without becoming boring.
- ✦ Instead of pre-planning each meal, write the name of your favorite local eateries and toss them in a festive basket or bag. When you decide to eat out, leave it to chance — have the guest draw from the bag. Your pre-screening means they'll get the best in town, and you don't have to worry about taking votes and leaving people disappointed.
- ✦ Indulge in the experiences unique to your town, Robinson suggests. "In our case, that might be something unique, such as a sleigh ride, a wine tour, or even something daring like rock climbing," she says.
- ✦ Strike up conversations with your neighbors to try to "see" the city through their eyes, Robinson says. You might disagree about personal preferences, but everyone can agree that they love something specific about their hometown. Take their cues on something new to try.

Before they leave

- ✦ No one likes to leave empty-handed. Guests will love an off-beat souvenir hunt with a great prize waiting at the end.
- ✦ Have your loved ones sign an official houseguest book. They'll love the formality, and you'll have your own keepsake of the visitors you've hosted through the years.

Clarifying the Manager's Role



Our association employs a highly qualified professional community manager, and we think residents should know what the manager has—and has not—been hired to do. The manager has two primary responsibilities: to carry out policies set by the Board and to manage the association's daily operations.

Some residents expect the manager to perform certain tasks that just aren't part of the job. When the manager doesn't meet those expectations, residents naturally are unhappy. Since we want you to be happy, we're offering a few clarifications to help you understand what the manager does:

- The manager is trained to deal with conflict, but he or she will not get involved in quarrels you might be having with your neighbor. However, if association rules are being violated, the manager is the right person to call.

- While the manager works closely with the Board, he or she is an advisor — not a member of the Board. Also, the manager is not your advocate with or conduit to the Board. If you have a concern, send a letter or e-mail directly to the Board.
- Although the manager works for the Board, he or she is available to residents. That doesn't mean the manager will drop everything to take your call. If you need to see the manager, call and arrange a meeting. If a matter is so urgent that you need an immediate response, call the association emergency number or 911.
- The manager is always happy to answer questions, but he or she is not the information officer. For routine inquiries, like the date of the next meeting, please read the newsletter or check the association website.
- The manager is responsible for monitoring contractors' performance, but not supervising them. Contractors are responsible for supervising their own personnel. If you have a problem with a contractor, notify the manager, who will forward your concerns to the Board. The Board will decide how to proceed under the terms of the contract.
- The manager inspects the community regularly, but even an experienced manager won't catch everything. Your help is essential. If you know about a potential maintenance issue, report it to the manager.
- The manager does not set policy. If you disagree with a policy or rule, you'll get better results sending a letter or e-mail to the Board than arguing with the manager.
- The manager has a broad range of expertise, but he or she is not a consultant to the residents. Neither is he or she an engineer, architect, attorney or accountant. The manager may offer opinions, but don't expect technical advice in areas where he or she is not qualified.
- Although the manager is a great resource to the association, he or she is not available 24 hours a day except for emergencies. Getting locked out of your home may be an emergency to you, but it isn't an association emergency. An association emergency is defined as a threat to life or property.



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