

Monthly Newsletter

March 2015

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Rooftop parties are a problem in San Luis Obispo.

Every rental market has its own set of problems. In San Luis Obispo, one such problem is tenants who use their rooftops for parties and other recreational activities.

On March 7, a group of Cal Poly students hosted a “St. Fratty’s Day” party which drew some 3,000 people to Hathaway Avenue and resulted in a garage roof collapse which injured at least nine people. This was not a California West managed property.

Obviously, it is possible to build a rooftop deck. However, San Luis Obispo residents are often young and inexperienced. Such tenants somehow fail to recognize the difference between a rooftop deck that is designed for furniture and an ordinary roof that is designed only to shed water.

Subject to some obvious exceptions, such as rooftops specially engineered for furniture, the San Luis Obispo Municipal Code expressly prohibits people from putting “chairs, mattresses, couches, recreational furniture, or other materials ... on any roof, patio cover, carport, shed top, or similar structure.”

From a property owner perspective, if tenants are hosting parties on a roof, then this will deteriorate the life of the roof by many years and most likely will result in thousands of dollars of damage.

At California West, when we drive by the properties that we manage, if we see tenants using any part of the property for unintended purposes then we follow up immediately.

In addition, at the request of one of our property owners, we recently changed our standard lease to now expressly prohibit tenants in San Luis Obispo from accessing their roofs.

There are other sections of our lease which also prohibit such conduct, because of the damage it causes, but express language is often better because it makes our job easier when confronting tenants about inappropriate behavior.

For property owners who expect California West to make property tax payments, please check your monthly financial statements and make sure that those payments have been made.

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Property insurance should include lost rent coverage.

In Grover Beach, California West is currently working to repair damage from an angle stop which broke and flooded an entire unit with over 600 gallons of water.

The tenant got home late on a Saturday night and did not catch the problem in time to prevent substantial damage. Early on Sunday morning, the tenant called our emergency maintenance line and a California West employee was immediately on the scene to fix the angle stop and call a water extraction company.

By Monday, we had called Smith & Sons Disaster Kleenup to coordinate remediation and repairs, including lead paint and asbestos testing. We also made an insurance claim and have been working with insurance adjustors to agree on the extent of the damage.

At this point, repairs alone are estimated to cost in excess of \$18,000.

The unit itself is currently torn back to the studs. We are having to replace insulation, drywall, cabinets, and flooring. Needless to say, the tenant cannot live through these conditions and was told that he had to find other accommodations. This type of situation is never easy, but there is simply no way that a person can live in a unit while we do this type of disaster cleanup.

Fortunately for the property owners, they had lost rent coverage with their insurance policy. So, despite the fact that this cleanup will take several weeks, at a minimum, it will not be too expensive from the property owner's perspective because they will be compensated for any lost rent.

2nd Installments of property taxes will be late after April 10.

Property tax payments are late after April 10 and will incur a 10% penalty if not paid by that deadline.

For property owners who expect California West to be making payments, please check your monthly financial statements and make sure that those payments have been made.

Call us if you have any questions.