

# QUORUM

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## Spring Cleaning Bust Out The Association Documents

IN THIS ISSUE

LEGAL RETAINER

# Dumpster Days: Ideas for a

By Marie Fowler, CMCA, AMS, PCAM and Douglas S. Levy, Esq.

As residents set out to clean their property after the long winter months, there are a number of ways an association can assist its members in making the community look better.



With spring in full swing, now is the perfect time for community associations to tackle an annual tradition: Spring Cleaning. As residents set out to clean their property after the long winter months, there are a number of ways an association can assist its members in making the community look better.

One way to help is by hosting a “Dumpster Weekend.” A Dumpster Weekend (or Dumpster Week) is a pretty simple concept: the association arranges for a number of dumpsters or large bins to be placed in convenient locations for a limited time for residents to dispatch of unwanted items. Not only does this help residents discard unwanted household items, but it also helps to beautify the neighborhood by providing an easy opportunity for residents to discard unwanted items that clutter up their lawns, porches, and balconies.

One way to approach a Dumpster Weekend is to have different dumpsters or bins for different types of items. For example, one bin could be designated as a paper or “shred” bin, and all paper placed in the bin would be shredded by a shredding company. According to Heidi Carlstedt, events director at South Riding Proprietary in Loudoun County, VA, the South Riding community has hosted a shredding weekend for the past three years with tremendous success. The “Community Shred” event, which is held each April around Earth Day, has two objectives: recycling and security. “With the ever growing threat of consumer fraud and identity theft, we want to be able to provide a secure venue for our residents to have their confidential documents destroyed,” Carlstedt said. And, Carlstedt noted, the event is a hit as “the residents who participate are highly appreciative.”

Another idea is to provide one bin or dumpster for bulky or heavy items that residents might otherwise have difficulty getting rid of. At Westlake Park Condominium in Bethesda, MD, an extra-large dumpster is

brought in annually in early summer and residents are encouraged to dispose of worn out furniture, old appliances, and other unwanted possessions. And even though the dumpster fills quickly, its utility likely saves the association money in the long run, said Westlake Condominium’s General Manager, Sasha Russo, CMCA, AMS, PCAM. In the past, “residents often left their unwanted junk anonymously in the common areas for the association to handle, which was very expensive,” Russo said. But, he added, “getting a dumpster on a regular basis can reduce significantly the chance of residents abandoning their junk in the common areas.”

Of course, if a community wants to host a Dumpster Weekend, it’s important to make sure that a sufficient number of bins or dumpsters are ordered. The last thing residents would want to see is overflowing dumpsters and bins that tend to make the area messier rather than cleaner. No matter the approach, the bins and dumpsters should be clearly marked so residents know what they can and cannot place inside.

By hosting a Dumpster Weekend, an association can simplify the process for residents to discard of unsightly and unwanted items that they may not otherwise have the time or ability to dispose of. This can go a long way towards beautifying the neighborhood and creating an uncluttered environment, all while ensuring that items are disposed of properly and safely.


To have a successful Dumpster Weekend or similar type of event, the following steps are recommended:

1. Budget for the expense.
2. Check with the local government to determine what permits and fees, if any, are needed to dump the materials that are collected. In some localities, the trash removal divisions will assist with the program and/or waive the dump fees.
3. Select an appropriate weekend or week to host the event.
4. Begin advertising the event in January so residents can plan accordingly. Use

# Community-Wide Clean-Up

the community's Web site, newsletter, bulletin boards, etc. to get the word out.

5. Provide a map or detailed description in the advertisements and notices informing residents of the exact locations of the dumpsters or bins. Clearly define what items are and are not permitted. Typically, hazardous materials are not permitted.
6. Work with the company that is providing the dumpsters and ensure that they are placed in the correct locations.
7. Have a company on "standby" in case assistance is needed to remove items placed around or near the dumpster instead of inside the dumpster and to remove excess items from the top of the dumpster if it is overflowing.
8. Review the process annually in case additional or fewer dumpsters are needed the following year.

These simple steps can go a long way toward hosting a successful event and giving all residents an opportunity to participate in cleaning up the residences and the common areas. 



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