



Community Association  
Management:

# TECH GUIDE



It's easy to confuse a homeowners association (HOA) or condo association (COA) with property management, as they are both involved in the management of housing communities. In most cases, they work together.

If you're a property manager who manages a mix of property types (or you're thinking about branching out into community association management), it's important to understand the important distinctions between the two.

This guide will cover the differences, as well as highlight how property management software comes into major play if you manage properties in an association.



## What Are Community Associations?

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First, let's clearly define HOAs and COAs. Neighborhoods, subdivisions, and condo complexes can contain housing units that are owned by many different owners. At the same time, homeowners may need to share the responsibility for certain things; they may also share expectations for the way that their neighbors will maintain their properties. Thus, these communities form associations to develop and enforce the rules that all property owners need to abide by.

More than **65 MILLION AMERICANS** reside in homeowners associations, condominium communities, cooperatives and other planned communities. There are more than 330,000 communities nationally. (Source: CAI)

The individuals who belong to these organizations also own property in that community. While all HOA members may propose and vote on rules, an elected HOA board usually has the final responsibility for ensuring that rules are followed and other responsibilities are met.



Besides making and enforcing rules, typical HOA responsibilities include:

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- Maintaining common areas (*like playgrounds & swimming pools*) •
  - Setting and collecting dues •
  - Setting budgets for the items that HOA dues pay for •
  - Obtaining insurance for common areas •
  - Hiring staff and contractors •



## What Role Do Property Managers Play in Associations?

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Obviously, the HOA doesn't physically perform all of their responsibilities. For example, they may hire security people, secretaries, and maintenance crews to handle the requests. In some cases, overseeing all of the work requires a separate responsible party with more experience in areas like maintenance and budgeting to assist. To help with all of the tasks involved, an HOA may also hire a property manager or property management company.

**The duties of property managers can vary, but they may include:**

- overseeing paid staff or contractors
- communicating with residents
- collecting dues
- maintaining accounting records and producing financial reports
- handling emergencies

# Property Management Technology Tools to Help Streamline HOA Management

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Property Managers for residential, commercial, and student housing portfolios have a unique set of technical needs to make their job easier. HOA and COA management is no different. There are specific features that property managers who manage community associations should look for to streamline their business.

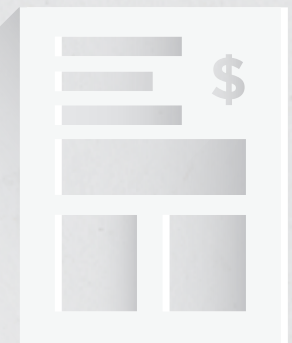
## **COMMUNICATION TOOLS**

When managing a number of properties within a community association, having the ability to send bulk emails, send text messages, and share documents with the board is crucial to getting information out in a timely manner and saving yourself hours of manual entry. It's also extremely valuable because ultimately property managers report back to the board. If you have a way to track roles and responsibilities within your property management software, that's an added bonus.



## **HOA-SPECIFIC REPORTING**

Knowing the status of your business, which owners are late on their dues, how many units are owner-occupied versus renter-occupied, etc., is important. Any property management tool you choose should offer real-time HOA-specific reports and the ability to share them with board members or homeowners instantly online.





### **PAY HOMEOWNERS DUES ONLINE**

One of the distinguishing factors of community properties versus other types is that homeowners associations include fees. These fees typically go toward maintenance, security, general upkeep, and management services. Being able to accept online payments quarterly, biannually, or annually is a plus. Find a software that allows you to schedule dues increases automatically.

### **MAINTENANCE TRACKING**

One of the biggest responsibilities of managing HOA and COA properties is maintenance. Your community guidelines might include very strict rules around what owners can do to their properties—whether it's painting, lawn care, lighting, etc. But a lot of the dues owners pay go toward things like paying for a gardener or maintenance staff worker to keep the communities in tip-top shape. Having tools to track all maintenance requests and work orders for general upkeep of amenities is vital.

There's a huge opportunity out there for property managers who want to add HOA or COA management to their portfolios.

To learn more about how AppFolio can help you manage your HOA properties, visit [www.appfolio.com](http://www.appfolio.com).

