



---

# CHICAGO PROPERTY SERVICES, INC.

BEST PRACTICES  
LIFE/SAFETY  
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS





COMPLEMENTS OF CHICAGO PROPERTY SERVICES  
Salvatore J. Sciacca, President and Founder

**MORE LIVING.** LESS WORRYING.








**BEST PRACTICES – LIFE/SAFETY**



Keeping the community association safe and prepared in the event of a life/safety emergency is critically important and the duty and responsibility of the board of directors. This document will discuss the most important life/safety elements of a community association and what needs to be done to maintain the elements. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) sets national standards and it is important to maintain the life/safety elements in accordance with those standards. Please note that not all items will apply to all associations.

Code Requirement	Benefit/code/description	Picture
Check all emergency backup lighting MONTHLY	NFPA101 code states that battery backup systems should be checked monthly; battery backup lighting ensures that hallways and stairwells are illuminated in the event of a power failure and are also important to keep the building in compliance with insurance standards. Batteries and light bulbs should be replaced as needed. Typically battery life is about 3 years.	
Check smoke detectors MONTHLY; replace batteries every 6 months.	NFPA101/72 code states that battery backed smoke alarms should be tested monthly; systems with batteries should be replaced every 6 (six) months proactively; smoke alarm units should be replaced every 10 years	
Check CO detectors MONTHLY; replace batteries every 6 months	NFPA101/72 code states that battery backed CO detectors should be tested monthly; systems with batteries should be replaced every 6 (six) months proactively; CO detector units should be replaced every 10 years	
Check exit/elevator/stair lighting MONTHLY	NFPA101 code states that exit signage should be checked monthly. Ideally the exit signage should be battery backed. Otherwise, the signage should be self luminous which means that if the power were to go out, the lettering would remain visible in the dark. Exit lighting ensures there is an easy way to get out in the event of an emergency; Batteries and light bulbs should be replaced as needed. Typically battery life is about 3 years.	

**BEST PRACTICES – LIFE/SAFETY STANDARDS**  
**FOR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS**  
**COMPLIMENTS OF CHICAGO PROPERTY SERVICES**

Description	Benefit/code/description	Picture
Check and adjust all doors/gates and closers	Building security is only as good as how well doors and gates are kept closed. Seasonal temperatures require door closures to be adjusted to ensure doors close and not slam shut or remain open; safety and security of building will be compromised if doors don't close properly	
Visually inspect fire extinguishers monthly; certify extinguishers annually by a licensed fire protection company	NFPA10 Code states that Fire extinguishers should be visually inspected monthly and inspected and maintained annually by a licensed fire protection company; Every 6 years, there are additional tests that must be performed in order to certify the extinguishers; Fire extinguishers are necessary in the event of a fire and are also important to keep the building in compliance with insurance standards. The standard service life of a rechargeable extinguisher is about 20 years.	
Check elevator phone	This test is to ensure phone is working in the event of an emergency. The elevator phones should be monitored by a company that is available 24x7x365 days a year. The elevator phones should be checked monthly.	
Check Fire pumps and sprinkler systems annually	NFPA25 states that fire pumps and sprinkler systems should be tested annually. Fire pumps are necessary when the local municipal water system cannot provide enough water pressure to meet the needs of a building sprinkler system. These items help suppress and/or extinguish fires in the event that they occur.	 

**BEST PRACTICES – LIFE/SAFETY STANDARDS**  
**FOR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS**  
**COMPLIMENTS OF CHICAGO PROPERTY SERVICES**

Description	Benefit/code/description	Picture
Check all lighting (interior and exterior) monthly	This is to ensure the association is kept safe at night and all common areas remain well lit; ensures lighting turns on and off at the appropriate times depending on the season. Lighting should be tested by activating the light sensors or mechanical timers; adjust mechanical timer as appropriate	
Test backflow assembly annually	In Illinois, the EPA mandates that all backflow assemblies should be tested annually. Backflow assemblies prevent the water within a building from flowing back into the city water supply. This prevents contamination of the city water supply.	

Sources of information:

1. [www.NFPA.org](http://www.NFPA.org)
2. Total Fire and Safety Inc., Brad Schultz
3. Martin Mack Fire and Safety Equipment Co., Dan Marks
4. [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)
5. [http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/bldgs/provdrs/inspect/svcs/life\\_safety\\_high-riseordinance.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/bldgs/provdrs/inspect/svcs/life_safety_high-riseordinance.html)
6. <http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/field-ops/drinking-water/cross-connection-program-summary.pdf>
7. <http://www.cityofchicago.org/dam/city/depts/bldgs/general/Lifesafety/LSRulesregs.pdf>

**DISCLAIMER**

Chicago Property Services would like to commend you for volunteering your time and energy. As a board of director, your duties and responsibilities are quite significant and your association’s success depends on the decisions you make.

Unless otherwise specifically stated, the information contained herein is made available to the public by Chicago Property Services, Inc. and may not reflect the realities of your actual association. The intent of this guide is to assist board members in maintaining certain life/safety equipment with community associations.

Neither Chicago Property Services, nor any other entity thereof, assumes any legal liability or responsibility of the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of the information disclosed in these pages. Please consult an attorney or service professional for any legal or operational advice you may need in order to run your association properly.

**BEST PRACTICES – LIFE/SAFETY STANDARDS**  
**FOR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS**  
**COMPLIMENTS OF CHICAGO PROPERTY SERVICES**

**About Chicago Property Services, Inc.**

**PREMEIR COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT:**

Chicago Property Services, Inc. is Chicago's premier provider of professional offsite management services for condo and townhome community associations. Through innovative management techniques, CPS is creating stress free living environments for thousands of homeowners throughout the Chicago area. With 50 exclusive properties under management, Chicago Property Services is setting the gold standard in offsite management.

**COST SAVINGS:**

Through their cost cutting and price negotiation abilities, CPS is saving community associations thousands of dollars annually. In addition, CPS has saved associations tens of thousands of dollars on their capital project expenditures through the project management services offered by CPS.

**TIME SAVINGS:**

Through the guidance of CPS, client board members are much more effective in decision making and planning. This allows board members to spend more time attending to their professional and personal lives. The average CPS board meeting last no more than 1 hour and our typical client holds quarterly board meetings.

Through proactive 5 year capital planning, CPS saves clients both time and money. Projects are completed sooner and cost less money. In addition, CPS clients have access to a state of the art exclusive online support tool called managemycommunity.com (MMC). MMC gives board member and homeowners real time access to critical information such as contact information, maintenance issues, and financial information. Let Chicago Property Services create a more pleasant living environment for your association. Experience **MORE LIVING** and **LESS WORRYING**. For more information, visit [www.chicagopropertyservices.com](http://www.chicagopropertyservices.com)

**About the Author, Salvatore J. Sciacca**

Salvatore J. Sciacca is a leader in community association management, with more than 20 years experience. Founder of Chicago Property Services, Inc., (CPS), the premiere community management company in metropolitan Chicago for townhouses, condominiums, co-operatives, and homeowner associations, Mr. Sciacca also serves as its chairman and president. Mr. Sciacca is also the founder of managemycommunity.com which is soon becoming the leading online support portal for community associations. Mr. Sciacca is recognized for his extensive knowledge of capital planning, preventative maintenance, and cost-saving measures. At present, Mr. Sciacca's firm manages a portfolio of 50 exclusive properties including the former Marshal Field mansion. The portfolio has a combined value of \$300 million.

Following rigorous exams, Mr. Sciacca became a Certified Manager of Community Associations (CMCA®) in 2002 by the Community Associations Institute (CAI), the top national trade association in the field. He was designated an Association Management Specialist (AMS®) in 2004 through CAI. Mr. Sciacca is a member of CAI, and the Association of Condominium Townhouse & Homeowners Association (ACTHA). Mr. Sciacca regularly attends national conferences such as the CAI CEO Retreat and the CAI National Trade Show. Locally, Mr. Sciacca regularly attends ACTHA and CAI trade show events and is a regular guest speaker at ACTHA seminars and events.

**BEST PRACTICES – LIFE/SAFETY STANDARDS**  
**FOR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS**  
**COMPLIMENTS OF CHICAGO PROPERTY SERVICES**

Through his continuous interactions with national and local trade associations and industry experts, Mr. Sciacca remains at the forefront of best practices in the industry. Mr. Sciacca has often teamed up with the legal experts at Kovitz Shifrin Nesbit to give seminars and presentations throughout the community about current issues. He has been featured in several Chicago Tribune articles, CondoLifestyles articles and on CAI's radio talk show. Mr. Sciacca holds a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign and a Masters of Business Administration in international business from DePaul University.

Mr. Sciacca can be reached via phone at **312.455.0107 x102** or via email at **ssciacca@chicagopropertyservices.com** or you can follow him on **Facebook on his Condoboss** page at **facebook.com/pages/Condoboss/420215411400058**. You may also follow him on his **Linked In group** titled **“Condoboss”** at: **linkedin.com/groups/Condoboss-4923593**. His Condoboss page and group is full of free information and valuable tips on how to best run community associations.