



# Our First Issue!

**Your trusted companion to navigate the complexities of co-operative housing management.**

For four decades, COHO Management Services Society has been a dedicated and trusted partner and supporter to housing co-operatives, offering customized management solutions to nurture their growth and success. Our dedicated team stands ready to help co-ops overcome challenges and cultivate vibrant communities. We're excited to extend our wealth of expertise to the co-op housing community.

This bi-annual newsletter serves as a bridge between COHO and your community, keeping you informed, engaged, and connected. Inside, you'll find valuable insights on the administrative, financial, governance, and maintenance aspects important to the success of your housing co-op. We hope to empower boards, members, and staff with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions and foster thriving communities.

Each issue will showcase a mix of expert knowledge from COHO staff, management updates, sector news, and relevant events tailored to the co-operative housing community. We will also feature guest submissions from clients and contractors. Please dive in and explore the wealth of wisdom awaiting within these pages.

– COHO Connection Editorial Team

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COHO Connection is published two times a year by COHO Management Services Society. It connects COHO managers and staff with housing co-op communities to help everybody stay informed, engaged, and connected. The content in this publication does not necessarily represent COHO policy or practices.

We welcome letters and articles showcasing management related stories from the co-operative housing community. Please contact Yuri Artibise for submission details: [communications@coho.bc.ca](mailto:communications@coho.bc.ca).

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COHO Management Services Society is a non-profit property management company that prioritizes community involvement.

COHO was established by the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC (CHF BC) in 1984 to meet the specific needs of co-op housing management. The board of directors is composed of co-op members who share a commitment to providing specialized and sector-owned property management services for co-ops.

COHO understands the distinctiveness of living in a housing co-op and strive to provide tailored solutions that cater to

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## Land Acknowledgment

COHO Management Services Society offices and many housing co-ops we service are situated on the traditional and unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səl̓ilwətaɣ̓ (Tsleil-Waututh), WSÁNEĆ (Saanich), and lək'wəŋən (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples.

COHO is committed to honouring, listening and continuously learning from the diverse perspectives of these and other Indigenous Peoples.

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## Arcori Client Portal

### Unlocking a new era of convenience for our clients

COHO is thrilled to introduce the latest innovation from our dedicated property management software team: the Arcori Client Portal.

This interactive online platform bridges the gap between management operations and member engagement, providing to the behind-the-scenes access to the work of our management coordinators.

Arcori is a significant milestone and enhances convenience and connectivity. We are proud to be adding the portal to the many benefits our clients currently enjoy.



### Streamlined Management Interactions

The Arcori Client Portal includes a suite of features that streamline co-op and management interactions. Notably, the portal

committee member lists, co-op announcements, and volunteer opportunities.

This portal will also become a comprehensive database for essential governing documents like the co-op's rules and policies as well as forms and agreements. Board members will enjoy enhanced access providing centralized management reports, agendas, minutes, and financial statements. All these features are available on a single online platform.

### Transparent maintenance coordination

Of particular value is the Maintenance Work Order History. This feature allows co-op households to create new work orders directly. It also offers real-time information status updates on work orders, including scheduled work details. The result? Convenience for the member and accurate maintenance coordination.

### Coming soon!

We're thrilled to announce that our current co-op boards are now registering with the Arcori Client Portal. Full access is expected by the end of 2024. To ensure a smooth registration process, please contact [portal@coho.bc.ca](mailto:portal@coho.bc.ca) for support.

## Enhanced Relief Coverage Program

### Because co-op operations never take a day off!

COHO recognizes the constant commitment of co-op communities to thrive. We also understand that the vital work of your co-op doesn't take a vacation.

That's why we are pleased to introduce our Enhanced Relief Coverage Program to ensure uninterrupted and superior service for our valued clients. Key program features include:

- **Expert Relief Team:** Our centralized relief team of senior coordinators have experience in co-op management. They manage tasks ranging from issuing cheques to responding to member inquiries. They also provide advice on co-op maintenance and governance matters.
- **Immediate Coverage:** When a staff member is unable to attend work, a member of our relief team regularly checks co-op emails and addresses urgent tasks. This ensures smooth operations, especially in unanticipated situations.

- **No Non-Coverage Weeks:** Our client contracts now guarantee coverage for all weeks of staff vacation. Co-ops can contact a relief coordinator on any workday during their regular coordinator's vacation.



Our relief team is based on our Vancouver office. They will visit co-ops for pick-ups and drop-offs during extended absences. This provides unparalleled service to all our clients when staff members are away.

Trust COHO for consistent, dependable, and enhanced coverage—because your co-op's operations never takes a day off!

## Employee Spotlight

### Carrie McLaren's Inspiring Journey



Meet Carrie McLaren, a valued member of the COHO team since 2018. Her career at COHO has been remarkable. Since graduating from business at Capilano University, Carrie has worked in finance for small local businesses before joining the COHO team.

Carrie is driven by a passion for non-profit housing that stems from her own lived experience as a member and director of a housing co-op in the Lower Mainland. This coupled with her formal education and governance and management training at COHO, has been instrumental in Carrie's career success. As a Management Coordinator, she adeptly navigates daily co-op management challenges, contributes to larger projects, and coordinates maintenance for two co-ops.

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#### Mastering every aspect of management

Carrie recalls being assigned to an initially unoccupied building as a unique but challenging learning experience. It required a range of skills, setting up the office and conducting inter-views to income reviews and delving into construction plans, universal key systems, programing, HVAC systems, and more. She describes her approach as "hands-on" with a goal of understanding every part of co-op management.

Recognizing the diverse nature of co-op communities, Carrie provides personalized support tailored to meet the specific needs of her clients. Her understanding of the unique challenges of co-op members helps each of her co-ops succeed.

#### Strengthening the Community

Carrie's commitment to community shines both within and outside the workplace. She ran for Burnaby City Council in 2022. During her campaign, Carrie campaigned fiercely for more affordable and non-profit housing through zoning changes and city land partnerships.

Carrie enjoys her downtime with her spouse and two cats and crocheting or watching her favourite sci-fi shows is her favourite way to relax.

#### Making an Impact

As a valued member of the COHO team, Carrie exemplifies the contributions a staff member can make within the co-op housing community. High performers like Carrie are critical to the success of our clients in creating thriving communities.



## Featured Client

### Ford Road Housing Co-operative

Nestled in the lower mainland's picturesque Pitt Meadows, Ford Road Housing Co-operative boasts a tight-knit community of 160 residents spread across fifty townhouses and 110 apartments.

#### Committed to participation and engagement

Ford Road is committed to educating its members about the co-operative principles and fostering positive community engagement. They believe that a vibrant and engaged community is critical to being a successful housing co-operative.

The co-op has regular activities such as social gatherings, workshops, committees, and projects that uses the diverse skills of their membership. These efforts continue to strengthen the community so that every member feels supported and valued, regardless of age.

To improve communication and transparency between board and members, Ford Road introduced twice-yearly town hall meetings. These gatherings allow for open dialogue between members and leadership. They share valuable information and foster productive discussions. The meetings are an integral part of Ford Road's effort to build positive relationships, enhance member education, and involve members in decision-making and processes.

#### Blossoming gardens, blooming community

The members of Ford Road are very proud of their community gardens. Their landscape committee is diligent in their commitment to adorn property with vibrant flowers and lush shrubbery which makes members delighted to call the co-op their home.



#### Commitment to stability and prosperity

A commitment to sound fiscal management is central to the co-op's identity. Through thoughtful short- and long- term planning, boards and management coordinators work to ensure ongoing financial stability. Regular inspections of homes and common areas are a high priority in the maintenance schedule. This proactive work prevents issues before they arise and reduces future maintenance costs. Coupled with financial accountability, the co-op has successfully completed large-budget renovation projects.

Overall, Ford Road's commitment to sound co-op management and governance ensure the community's success and prosperity long into the future.

## Co-op Safety

### CHF Canada's NEW Risk Management Program

Help keep your co-op and its members safe, prevent risks before they cause damage, and save money.

Protecting your co-op and its members is paramount, and CHF Canada's Risk Management Program is your key to achieving just that. By taking part in this annual program, your co-op will gain access to vital information and tools essential for crafting a risk management plan that not only protects your community but also saves money.

This program isn't just about identifying risks; it's about empowering co-ops to take steps to prevent them. Whether it's addressing property damage or ensuring the safety of members, staff, and visitors, the goal is to instill good risk management practices that resonate throughout your co-op community.

The beauty of the CHF Canada Risk Management Program lies in its accessibility. Whether a co-op has been involved in earlier phases or is considering embarking on this journey for the first time, the doors are wide open.

All that co-ops need is CHF Canada membership and commercial insurance



provided by the Co-operators.

Co-ops that complete the requirements by September 15th will enjoy a discount on next year's commercial insurance renewal.

So why wait? Take charge of your co-op's safety and financial well-being by exploring the CHF Canada Risk Management Program today. It's a win-win situation!

Learn more at: [www.coho.bc.ca/RMP](http://www.coho.bc.ca/RMP)  
Have Questions?

Reach out to Owen Carnahan, CHF Canada's Co-ordinator of Insurance & Risk Management, at [ocarnahan@chfcanada.coop](mailto:ocarnahan@chfcanada.coop) or 800-465-2752 ext. 236.

## Annual Housing Charge Increases

### A sound practice for housing co-operatives

Housing co-operatives prepare an operating budget as part of their annual fiscal planning. This budget will determine the housing charges to their members. This is their most significant income source.



#### Safeguarding the future

Co-ops need a firm understanding of their operating costs to determine the revenue they need to collect from members. Some expenses—such as property taxes, utilities, and insurance—are beyond the co-op's control and typically increase year-over-year.

Other costs—like maintenance—are within the co-op's control, and therefore much more predictable. However, unexpected costs such as inflation and repairs need to be factored into the budget projections as well.

Regular annual housing charge increases ensures that funds are available to cover all these costs. They also offer a safeguard against the need for more substantial housing charge increases in the future.

#### Small increases, big impacts!

The impact of regular housing charge increases is cumulative. For instance, a co-op that incrementally raises housing charges by 2% each year for three years will accumulate more revenue than a co-op that keeps charges the same for two years and then implements a 6% increase in the third year.

#### Remember!

Regular annual housing charge increases are important to protect your co-op from:

- Escalating costs due to inflation for serving and maintaining co-op homes.
- Growing expenses associated with the aging of buildings.
- The need for even larger housing charge increases in future years to cover escalating costs.

## The Importance of Spring Roof Maintenance

Guest article submitted by 

With spring in full bloom, it's time to think about roof assessments. Acting now can lead to significant cost savings for your co-operative later.

Winter weather is harsh. Freezing and thawing cycles, gusts of wind, and heavy snowfall all take their toll on your co-op's rooftops. They seek out any vulnerabilities of your roofs and cause small amounts of damage that initially go unnoticed.

By the time that leaks start to appear, there have been a problem for some time. If left unaddressed, these leaks can spread further.

#### Roof maintenance priorities

To avoid roof repairs or replacements, it's important to conduct a springtime maintenance program. You should be on the lookout for:

**1. Vulnerabilities:** Roof penetrations—such as vents or chimneys—are prime spots for leaks. Improper sealing or damage often result in leaks. Solutions include applying a liquid membrane or installing sheet metal flashing called pitch pockets or gum pans.

**2. Drain blockages:** Drains ensure the free flow of water from the roof. When blocked, the pressure from pooled water can exploit weaknesses, leading to shingle granule loss and membrane vulnerability to UV rays.

**3. Debris:** Fallen branches and debris, especially when combined with blocked drains, create a host of problems. Debris is a breeding ground for vegetation and bird and rodent nests. Moreover, roots can puncture the roof membrane. Debris also poses a liability risk during heavy winds.

**4. Membrane damage:** Temperature fluctuations cause the roof membrane to contract and expand leading to splits and cracks. Fallen branches and debris exacerbate this issue. Timely patching can mitigate further damage to the roof, and the building.

Spring roof maintenance can catch these issues early, preventing more extensive damage and costly repairs down the line. So don't forget to give your co-op's roof the attention it deserves this spring.