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Reduce Consumption through Sub-metering

With energy costs at the forefront of property managers' thoughts, finding and introducing new energy efficient and green initiatives is becoming imperative. The practice of energy management through a sub-metering system is rapidly growing throughout management sectors of the multi-residential industry, and the results that come from implementing the fair and cost-effective, user-pay system are vast.

What is Sub-metering?

The concept is simple; in a multi-residential building, units are equipped with a meter that allows each resident's utility consumption to be individually tracked and recorded (as opposed to a bulk meter for the entire building),

ensuring that residents only pay for what they use. Sub-metering can be implemented in both new developments and existing buildings for a multitude of utilities including electricity, gas, water and steam. The system gives property managers the ability to track consumption and to invoice residents for their utility usage. It gives residents the opportunity to see and review their consumption through a web-based interface.

A Green Initiative

Saving money through sub-metering is all about reducing consumption, which makes it an excellent green initiative and cost-saving solution. It can provide condominium managers a detailed overview of utility usage for full transparency,

all the while encouraging residents to become more aware and mindful of their consumption. Typically, a change in usage is seen within three months of implementing a sub-metering system. According to a recent study, a multi-residential building that sub-meters for electricity will see overall unit costs reduced by up to 30 per cent. By installing a sub-metering system for water, fees can be reduced by up to 39 per cent. With the cost of water increasing by 10 per cent per year, a savings of 39 per cent can be significant to both a resident and property manager.

A considerable part of these savings become achieved through simple no-cost behavioural changes such as switching off unnecessary appliances and adjusting the thermostat. Sub-

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metering is responsible for highlighting the fact that systems are running at times when they don't need to be. Most sub-metering companies will go the extra mile by engaging with residents and providing tips and solutions to help them reduce their utility consumption, conserve energy, and minimize their environmental impact. The more that property managers and residents continue to educate themselves on the matter, the greater their ability is to save.

How does Everyone Benefit?

By introducing a fair system and giving people the opportunity to pay for what they use, utility consumption awareness becomes elevated, savings start becoming apparent and residents begin positively impacting the environment. With a sub-metering system in place, condominium managers can run buildings as efficiently as possible while keeping the common goal of green living at the forefront. Utility costs can be one of the highest expenditures for a building. Through sub-metering, management can have more control and an improved understanding of opera-

tional expenses. The long-term savings from implementing a sub-metering system gives property managers the opportunity to re-allocate costs to other areas that may require attention. For the province as a whole, the long-term benefits of sub-metering could potentially reduce the costs associated with infrastructure considerably, due to increased energy conservation.

Property managers who are looking to move towards a greener environment and take their energy management plan to the next level need to evaluate sub-metering as part of their strategy. The industry is beginning to have a ripple effect on buildings, property managers, residents and the environment, and as more and more companies are discovering energy savings through sub-metering facilities, the possibilities are continuing to grow. ■

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