

## AT A GLANCE:

# CONDOMINIUM COMMUNITIES: THE RULES ARE DIFFERENT HERE

Condominium owners are entitled to “exclusive possession” of their units.

Associations have the right to set “reasonable limits” on the rights of unit owners.

All parties must adhere to their condominium association’s governing documents.

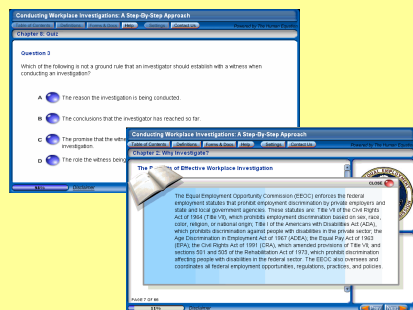
Florida law permits associations to levy fines for noncompliance with their bylaws.

Individuals who choose to live in condominium communities seek the benefits of home ownership without many of the responsibilities typically associated with it. And even though Florida’s Condominium Act gives unit owners “exclusive possession” of their units and the right to use the community’s common elements “in accordance with the purposes for which they are intended,” these rights are not absolute; owners’ rights must be balanced against the rights of their fellow residents and the rules that govern the entire community.

The bottom line is that all parties to the condominium arrangement—unit owners, association officials, and the community’s developer—must follow the bylaws and other governing documents (as long as these are consistent with Florida law). It’s helpful to think of the relationship among the parties within a condominium community as a chemical equation in need of balancing. Protecting unit owners’ rights requires associations and developers to fulfill their responsibilities. Conversely, unit owners cannot exercise their rights to the detriment of other owners or in a manner that prevents the association’s governing board members from meeting their responsibilities.

Take, for example, the issue of pet ownership. The condominium’s bylaws may allow unit owners to have pets but may set limits as to the type and size of the pets allowed, as well limit unit owners’ rights to bring pets to the community’s common areas. That’s because the association has a statutory responsibility to maintain the common elements, which may necessitate setting reasonable limits on unit owners’ access to and use of these common areas. Furthermore, Florida law allows associations to stipulate in their bylaws the right to “levy reasonable fines” against a unit for failure to adhere to association rules. In turn, all condominium unit owners must be provided with such rules and restrictions by the developer or the association before they purchase a unit because buying a home in a condominium community entails “buying into” its rules and accepting the responsibility to abide by them.

That’s why a comprehensive understanding of the rights and responsibilities of condominium owners, associations, and developers—precisely what The Human Equation’s course offers—is essential for all involved. In the condominium context, such knowledge is not only power; it’s also protection against the internal conflicts that can make a community a decidedly unpleasant place to live.



## COURSE FEATURES INCLUDE:

- ❑ Self-paced learning
- ❑ Clear, concise explanations of the rights and responsibilities of unit owners, associations, and developers
- ❑ Links to definitions, questions and answers, case law, and documents
- ❑ Appealing graphics

