

## Restore Vs. Replace

### Can Your Association Afford Not to Look at the Options?

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Ongoing Problems Doesn't it seem like everyone wants something for nothing? People try to get as much as they can without paying for it. While there may be extremes of penny pinching for fear of being overcharged for a product or service, it is wise to seek the best value for our hard-earned dollars. This is especially true for condominium associations and its members when dealing with projects that must be taken care of.

As a former association board member myself, I have seen and felt first hand the frustration and outrage when discussing our condo fees and what services we were actually getting for our dollars. While I am optimistic that most property management companies do have an association's best interest in mind, it often felt to us board members that we could have gotten a lot more done with our money by bidding out the jobs and services ourselves.

#### Issues with Pressure-Treated Lumber

With that in mind I am writing today to offer an option for a growing safety and liability concern both for condo owners and homeowners across the country: wood structures made from chromated copper arsenate (CCA)-treated or pressure-treated (P-T) lumber. Perhaps you've heard or read some of the reports on CNN, in USA Today, and many other sources. Perhaps you've seen a P-T playset get torn down in your town or a local town. You may even be aware that P-T is no longer being made available for residential use at your local lumber dealers until a "safer" alternative can be found. As of March 2004, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has still not approved of an acceptable replacement.

Why all the buzz about P-T? What is causing such a stir? Around the home and out in public P-T has been used for the last 70 years and now comprises virtually 90% of all outdoor wooden structures in the United States such as decks, docks, pool surrounds, playset equipment, walkways/boardwalks, handicapped access ramps, fences, picnic tables, gazebos, and more.

Many of these structures around the home, public, and business show signs of wear, fading, cracking, checking, and splintering. These problems result in part from the wood's reaction to nature and her hot/cold, wet/dry, weather cycles. Exposed surface areas expand when wetted by rainfall, ice, or snow and contract when dried by the sun's rays. On unprotected deck boards, this continual process creates stresses that cause cracks and grain separation.

#### Liability Concerns

If not maintained, there are several issues that must be faced. In today's litigious society there have been some serious (and expensive) liability concerns for condo associations and property managers alike. There is always a concern with the slip-fall hazard around decks that become slippery from rain, sleet, ice, and snow. Especially as people get older, there are more and more injuries associated with slipping and falling, even just on a slightly wet surface caused by seemingly harmless morning dew.

In addition, there has been a rash of successful lawsuits over the past few years regarding arsenic poisoning as a result of some type of contact with P-T. These lawsuits have historically been directed against the wood manufacturers themselves, since they "were aware of the dangers associated with CCA." However, it is no longer out of the realm of possibility for an association or property management company to be held liable for negligence (or worse) for not acting on widely publicized reports.

## The Price of Deck Maintenance

This now requires condo associations to deal with ongoing maintenance of the wood structures, costing time, labor, and money. One condo complex near Springfield, Massachusetts budgets \$1.50 per square foot per year for deck upkeep, which covers power washing and staining.

Let's assume that a property has 20 decks, each 10' x 8' (80 square feet). Therefore, each deck costs \$120 per year to maintain; the entire project rings up at \$2,400.

## The Cost of Deck Replacement

On the low end the association can expect to pay anywhere from \$15 to \$25 per square foot for new P-T decks. Composites and the like will range from \$25 to \$40 per square foot. There may also be an additional charge for the disposal of the old wood. Rhode Island, for instance, charges \$4 per square foot to dump old P-T.

If 20 decks were replaced with new P-T wood at \$20 per square foot, each 80 square foot deck would cost \$1,600. The entire project totals \$32,000. Remember, by the way, that the maintenance plan will need to start again in one to three years.

## The Savings of Deck Restoration

There is now a revolutionary, cost effective, fast and safe alternative to maintenance and replacement of old wood structures. It is called ProTexDex, The Original Deck Restoration System. This system coats the existing wood with an attractive, splinter-free, environmentally friendly, non-slip surface that, in essence, gives the old structure a makeover.

This virtually maintenance-free, long-term solution will last 10 to 15 years, at which point a new coating could be sprayed directly over the existing surface for another 10 to 15 years. The cost is generally between \$7 and \$12 per square foot.

## A "New" Deck for Less

### than Half the Cost

Let's now restore our 20 decks. Assuming a cost of \$9 per square foot, the restoration will cost \$720 per deck for a project total of \$14,400. At less than half the cost of replacing the deck with new P-T, the cost is the same as just maintaining the old deck for 6 years.

However, since the ProTexDex Restoration System has been approved as a *capital improvement* by several lending institutions the condo association can have all of its decks restored and still pay the **same \$1.50 per square foot cost** already in the budget. However, ProTexDex offers several major advantages:

- New-looking decks that are now  
virtually maintenance-free
- No more cracks, splinters, or slip-  
fall concerns
- No additional assessments

or expense

· An extra \$2,400 per year in

the budget starting in year

7 through year 10 to 15.

This extra money will make the property manager a hero while letting the association tackle additional problems using the same budget!

### **Find Out More**

All the details of ProTexDex, The Original Deck Restoration System, can be found on our website at [www.protexdex.com](http://www.protexdex.com) or by calling toll-free at 1-877-DEK-COTE. Find out how you can now finally restore rather than replace your wood structures and save your association time, labor, and money. Call Today!

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HELP WANTED! If you know of someone who may be interested in joining our rapidly expanding network of certified contractors, please contact us.

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