

# ORCA TALES

June 2007

"We can tell you more about them than their mother"

Volume 14 Issue 06



## Important New Washington Employment Legislation

**WASHINGTON FOLLOWS CALIFORNIA'S LEAD: STATE LEGISLATURE PASSES PAID FAMILY LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM**

On the last day of the session on April 20, 2007, the Washington Legislature passed a bill that requires a family leave insurance program be established with benefits payable beginning October 1, 2009. Washington joins California as one of the few states in the country to mandate paid family leave. The bill will become law unless Governor Christine Gregoire unexpectedly vetoes it.

The final version of the bill eliminates any requirement for employers to fund the program. However, it does set up a task force to determine how to fund the program. The State will administer the program. An employee may apply for paid leave if he or she is unable to perform regular or customary work while on family leave for a newborn or newly adopted child. The paid leave benefit is not available for other reasons covered under the state and federal FMLA, such as serious health conditions. If eligible, an employee may receive up to five weeks of benefits per application year.

The program prohibits employers from discharging or otherwise discriminating against employees who file claims for paid leave. In addition, employers should be aware that the legislation requires an employee returning from paid family leave to be restored to the same position, consistent with the Washington FMLA, with some exceptions for small businesses and short-term employees.

## What People are Saying About ORCA...

"Thank you so much for participating in our 2007 Ed. Conf. We appreciate your time and energy! Thank you, also, for helping with the real estate hours paperwork!

Greatly Appreciated!"

*Dale White, AE and Glen Gonzales 2007 Washington Multi-Family Housing Assoc., President*

## A Word of Sincere Thanks...

Thanks to YOU the word is spreading! Thanks to all of our wonderful clients and friends who graciously referred their friends, neighbors, and family members to Orca! Orca runs on the positive comments and referrals from people just like you. We couldn't survive without you!!!

## News from Grace Hill Your Online Training Partner

Grace Hill has occasional free, live education in the Grace Hill Chat Room. Be sure to keep checking the website, [www.gracehill.com](http://www.gracehill.com)!

Grace Hill trained over 500 multifamily professionals every single day in 2006, including weekends and holidays. Overall, Grace Hill clients took more than 200,000 online courses last year. Grace Hill's course catalog grew by more than 40% in 2006. In addition to the exciting new Leadership course, new titles also include Fair Housing II, Curb Appeal, Traffic Generation, Risk Management II: Risk, Liability & Crime Awareness and more. On average, Grace Hill students achieve a 51% gain in knowledge from their course pre-test to final Knowledge Challenge!

Is your name on this "brilliant" list??? Visit [www.gracehill.com](http://www.gracehill.com) and click on "Student Super Stars" to see the names of our training clients who scored a perfect 100% on one or more Knowledge Challenge (final exam) in an online course taken last month.

*\*Source: January 2007 and February 2007 Grace Hill Gazette*

## Increase Your Collections Steps That Help Your Collection Agency

Are you tired of getting little or no return on your collection accounts?

The following steps will help your collection agency collect from your previous tenants. Any of the following could be the difference between getting an account paid or closing a file due to faulty documentation.

1. Make sure the tenant completes ALL the information on the rental application. Personal references are a gold mine
2. Do not stay in contact with the debtor after the account is listed with the collection agency. Refer all calls to the agency
3. Make sure you get security deposits paid up front.
4. See proof of employment. A pay stub works great. Photocopy the check stub for your files.
5. Update any changes to your files. Make note if the resident gets a new job, car, etc.



*\*\*Reprinted from Onsite by Julie Hansen*

## How to Take the "Cus" Out of Customer

Anne Sadovsky, Certified Speaking Professional, CAM, RAM

Does this scenario sound familiar? The resident in your face, venom spewing. He is so angry that his face is red, his eyes are bulging, and the veins in his neck are pulsating. Before you can gather your thoughts or say a word, the four letter words and name calling begins

How would you react?

Human beings typically respond in one of three ways; some behave in kind; they cuss, you cuss, they threaten you, you threaten them, they whine, you whine. Some of us might simply give in, "Whatever you want, we will do, we do not want you to be mad at us." And some of us simply want to escape, "Please step out of my office, lose my phone number, I have to leave now, excuse me while I go hide." Your choice of behavior typically comes from conditioning (both from childhood and adulthood), and lack of thinking before speaking and behaving. Our reaction comes naturally, but that doesn't mean it's effective.

So how do we change and get others to change in order to keep happy, satisfied residents? The practice of these few rules will make a huge difference:

1 DO NOT react. Take a deep breath and ask yourself, "Is what I am about to say going to make this better or worse?" If the answer is worse, do not say it! Weigh and measure your words before speaking. If you do not, you will find yourself saying, "I wish I had not said that."

2. Never speak when you are feeling a physical reaction to what the customer is doing or saying. If your hands are shaking, you feel your face flushing, your guts are grinding, and your heart is racing, slowly and silently count to ten. Call a mental time out, take some notes, and stay focused on your goal.

3. Disarm them by doing the opposite of what they are trying to provoke and are expecting. Listen, nod, and acknowledge their feelings by saying, "I see that you are really upset about this and I would be also. Let's see what we can do about it right now."

4. Do not take it personally. They really are not mad at you, but at the situation, at life in general. You do not always know the whole story of what is going on in their lives that makes them get so easily upset. Make it another goal to try and give them a better day, a more positive feeling about you, the property, and your company.

5. Use words that are proven to soothe. I call them 'magic' words.

"You are very important to us."

"I would be upset if it happened to me."

"Let me write this down so we can get right on it."

"Let's put our heads together and come up with a solution."

6. And remember, never try to out shout, use foul language or correct them for theirs, make them feel small, or demean them.

This does not mean that you should ever take physical abuse or that verbal abuse should continue after you have made every effort to calm the resident and have kept your cool. Sometimes

*\*Continued on next column*

it becomes necessary to say, "I have offered everything possible that I know of to help you. Perhaps we should both think on this for a while. I will make some calls and let's get back together by phone in half an hour." Choose your words based on the degree of the problem's severity, the urgency of the situation, and level of the customer's hostility.

Bottom line: Challenge yourself to be a peacemaker; make every effort possible to calm and soothe. Remember, in order for one of you to win, one of you has to lose. Make every resident contact a win/win.

\*Contact Anne for more information via email [anne@annesadovsky.com](mailto:anne@annesadovsky.com) or by phone 1-866-905-9300

## FIRE EXTINGUISHERS



A portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire and containing it until the fire department arrives; but portable extinguishers have limitations. Because fire grows and spreads so rapidly, the number one priority for residents is to get out safely.

Safety Tips:

\* Use a portable fire extinguisher when the fire is confined to a small area, such as a wastebasket, and is not growing; everyone has exited the building; the fire department has been called; and the room is not filled with smoke.

\* To operate a fire extinguisher, remember the word PASS:

**P**ull the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you, and release the locking mechanism.

**A**im low. Point the extinguisher at the base of the fire.

**S**queeze the lever slowly and evenly.

**S**weep the nozzle from side-to-side.

\* For the home, select a multi-purpose extinguisher (can be used on all types of home fires) that is large enough to put out a small fire, but not so heavy as to be difficult to handle.

\* Choose a fire extinguisher that carries the label of an independent testing laboratory.

\* Read the instructions that come with the fire extinguisher and become familiar with its parts and operation before a fire breaks out. Local fire departments or fire equipment distributors often offer hands-on fire extinguisher training.

\* Install fire extinguishers close to an exit and keep your back to a clear exit when you use the device so you can make an easy escape if the fire cannot be controlled. If the room fills with smoke, leave immediately.

\* Know when to go. Fire extinguishers are one element of a fire response plan, but the primary element is safe escape. Every household should have a home fire escape plan and working smoke alarms.

## ORCA \*WISDOM\*

The sweetness of a low price never equals  
the bitter taste of poor quality.

\*Dick Johnson of Prudential Contact Corporation\*

[www.nwhomes4you.com](http://www.nwhomes4you.com)