

Hi-Riser



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Condo courses tackle common pet issues

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It's the condo community issue that never goes away. It's the hot topic that never goes cold. Simply put: it's pets in condos.

Education on the issue plays such a large role in avoiding unnecessary disputes, which is one reason local community association law firms offer ongoing free courses to help inform residents and board members about how the laws operate in regards to pets in condos.

"In the past couple of years, requests to pet-re-

stricted communities for a reasonable accommodation to keep an emotional support animal have increased significantly," said Michael Bender, a partner and lawyer with Kaye Bender Rembaum, which represents community associations throughout South Florida.

Bender said one of the most popular free classes his firm offers deals with the Fair Housing Act. The firm is hosting a class concerning "Navigating Fair Housing: Assistance Animal or Pet?" from

6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Feb. 24 at its Pompano Beach location, 1200 Park Central Blvd. Residents can call 954-928-0680 for information.

The free seminar is intended to help clear up common misconceptions, which Bender said are prevalent and have increased with more residents requesting an emotional-support animal in communities that prohibit pets.

"Obviously, the more educated

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board members are, the better they can address issues regarding whether an individual has the right to have an 'assistance animal' reside in the community that would otherwise violate a pet restriction in the governing documents," Bender said.

Becker & Poliakoff, P.A., a South Florida law firm that represents community associations, is also hosting a course called "Is A 'No Pet' Building a Thing of the Past?," which focuses on why fewer communities are outlawing pets.

Donna Berger, an attorney that specializes in condo law, said condo buildings outlawing pets has somewhat become a thing of the past.

"The pendulum has swung very far in favor of people who want to get emotional support animals," Berger said.

The Becker & Poliakoff class is offered from 6 to 8 p.m. Feb. 24 at its office in Fort Lauderdale, 1 East Broward Blvd., Suite

1800. Residents can call 954-985-4119 for information.

The class will focus on how to handle assistance animal requests; the differences between an emotional support animal and service animal; different applications involving the American Disabilities Act vs. the Fair Housing Act; and what is a fair accommodation for a housing provider.

"We talk about what they should do when they receive one of these requests and how far they should scratch the service to avoid a potential lawsuit," Berger said.