

Co-op Coalition Survey: Hallway Decorations

Thanks to the very few of you who responded (8). Although this was a very disappointing response, the few of you who took the few minutes needed to respond to this call for help were helpful. Remember: These informal surveys are only as helpful as those who take the time to respond. You never know when YOUR co-op may need assistance. There should be no need for each of us to constantly “reinvent the wheel” or to pay unnecessary legal expenses to search for an answer when we have a wealth of knowledge and experiences across the membership.

Mike O'Dell, Director
 DC Cooperative Housing Coalition
www.CoopsDC.org
CooperativesDC@aol.com

In a message dated Tue, Jan 9, 2018 2:39 pm, CooperativesDC@aol.com writes:

A Coalition member needs help as their co-op rewrites the guidance/rule for hallway decorations. As we all know, beauty is in the eye of the beholder and many (all?!) of us have experienced the trauma of redecoration committees. Given that, please help the requesting member by answering the question, below. Please respond by 5pm, Friday, January 26. I will share the results with everyone a few days later. Thanks for helping!

Mike O'Dell, Director
 DC Cooperative Housing Coalition
www.CoopsDC.org

This email is being sent to co-op representatives to the Coalition and co-op managers. You are getting this blind-copied to protect your privacy.

Our co-op is trying to draft language governing hallway decorations and maintenance. Would Coalition members be willing to help us by sharing their guidance with us?

Co-op Management Company	Most of the properties we manage allow no hallway decorations other than for a brief period around the holiday season.
<50 units	Our coop does not have any specific rules on what decorations can be used on the apartment doors or immediate contiguous walls. However we do have a written rules on a prohibition of items in the common hallways. "Hallways, stairwells, access passages to meters, pipes and other equipment areas on each floor and in basement house locker areas must be kept clear and unobstructed: no bicycles, lawn furniture, umbrellas, boxes or shoes are permitted."
<50 units	Hallways and common spaces. Keep hallways, walks, stairwells, and other public spaces free of obstructions. To maintain the character, safety, and proper maintenance of the building, do not use garages, public hallways, and stairwells for storage or exhibition of pictures, furniture, or other personal objects. You may, however, use your front door or its frame, to display seasonal or other decorations; in front of the door, you may place one welcome mat and an umbrella stand.
<50 units	Our official house rules specify that nothing should be left outside the unit door except a door mat (of the unit owner's choice). However, this rule has never been followed. People have all kinds of decorations in front of their doors--mirrors on the wall, framed paintings/posters on the wall, small plant stands or bench, book shelves, silk flowers, etc. People also leave their shoes on the door mat. We have only sent "gentle reminders" to keep the hallway clear when people leave their recycling or trash out in front of their

	doors for more than a few hours. I don't think we ever want to really enforce the "door mat only" rule because it's clearly not realistic to expect this rule to be followed, but we have hesitated to revise the rule and officially allow things to be left out, so I'm really interested in what other coops say and do.
<50 units	Our House Rule states: No personal articles shall be kept in common areas, including but not limited to, the lobby, hallways, stairwells and basement (other than the designated storage areas), without the approval of the Board of Directors. That said, we generally allow seasonal door decorations and have no problems if wet umbrellas or snow boots are left to dry on the tile hallway floors.
<50 units	From our House Rules: <u>Hallway Use</u> Members and residents should not litter, damage, or use the common hallways for long-term storage of personal property or large trash objects. Items left in the hall for more than five days may be subject to removal by the Co-op. A member or resident wishing to use the public hall of his or her floor for exhibition of artwork or special displays may do so only with the majority approval of the other residents on that floor.
<50 units	We have a Beautification Committee that reports to the Board and is responsible for decoration of the common elements, including hallways. That said, individual owners will often put pictures and furniture in the hallways. If we receive complaints, or if it is something that is obviously tasteless, or if it creates a fire or egress issue, the Board will get involved. If not, the Board has taken a relatively laissez faire approach.
50+ units	Our House Rules for Hallways 1. Hallways, including walls, ceilings, and unit doors, are maintained by the Corporation. 2. Pictures, flowers, plants, wallpaper, doormats, or other decorative items should not be placed in these areas without prior Management Office approval under guidelines approved by the Board of Directors. 3. Placing furniture in hallways is prohibited without prior Management Office approval under guidelines approved by the Board of Directors. 4. Residential door hangings are permitted provided that: a) They are attached with an over-the-door hanger that does not involve nails, screws, adhesives, or any other method that would damage the door or its finish. b) They do not extend beyond the plane of the door frame. c) They do not in any way obscure, hide, or block access to the unit number, name plate (whether in use or not), or the doorbell button. d) They do not "shed" or cause additional cleaning for our maintenance staff. 5. The Management may immediately remove unauthorized items posing a threat to the safety of residents. NOTE: It has also been an unwritten rule that door mats in hallway are forbidden because they could be a trip hazard, especially in an emergency (hence rule #2, above).