



Case Study: The Montage Reno

High-Rise Luxury Residence in Nevada Secures Several Saves with Wireless Water Leak Detection System

As HOA president of The Montage, Dr. William Craig knows the stress water leak damage places on an operating budget, as well as the relief water leak detection delivers.

Water always flows down

Soon after its remodel, The Montage suffered a massive water leak. While the damage resulted from a construction accident, the building's property insurance was canceled over the loss. "We were very concerned," Craig recalled. "Not a lot of companies insure high-rise residential buildings."

The Montage offers modern living in downtown Reno, Nevada. Luxury condos reach 22 floors. While the building's single largest water incident occurred during a period of vacancy, additional losses occurred once more residents moved in.

Water problems emerged from the usual culprits, such as refrigerators and air conditioning units. The outcome could be disastrous: "Water always flows down," Craig said. "It became a significant issue ... there would be property damage in the unit that is leaking and in multiple units below." Often, water had time to accumulate since the property serves as a second residence for many owners and other owners are often away on vacation. As much as 40 percent of the building may be unoccupied at any given time.

In addition to tiresome reconstruction after a flood, remediation costs ranged from \$30,000 to \$60,000 per incident—expenses that stretched the operating budget since Nevada laws for common-interest communities place responsibility on the HOA for walls and fixtures within the units. In all, Craig and the HOA board recognized the need for a total building solution.

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Over the course of a few HOA meetings with residents, the board shared leak sensing data, displayed sensors, and outlined required contributions. Then, they put it to a vote. Ballots were mailed to hundreds of home owners. Within weeks, the results were in: “an overwhelmingly positive response,” Craig relates.

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Several potential disasters avoided

All condos at The Montage—372 in total—are now protected by The Detection Group. Unobtrusive leak detection sensors monitor every source of water, according to Craig—under sinks, dishwashers, refrigerators, HVAC appliances and more. “Now, in almost all cases, we detect leaks immediately,” he reported. Upon detecting water, a sensor sounds an audible alarm and delivers a wireless alert to a web portal. The building manager then initiates the protocol for responding to a leak.

Within its first year of installation, the water leak detection system caught multiple potential problems. “We’ve had eight or nine ‘saves’ since we put in the system,” Craig said. “Incidents before the sensors were very costly, so cost avoidance adds to its value.” Home owners also avoid restoration frustration.

Craig experienced a save soon after installation of detectors in his own home. Before implementing the system building-wide, HOA board members tested units in their own condos. As Craig and his wife were packing for a two-week vacation, they heard an alarm coming from the sensor attached to a ceiling-mounted air conditioner. “The catchment pan was almost overflowing,” Craig said. “We were able to take care of the problem before it could cause any damage. It would have been a disaster if it had been left unattended for two weeks.”

Given the opportunity, Craig now recommends The Detection Group to other HOA representatives and apartment owners. The technology offers peace of mind, he noted, adding: “And peace related to the operating budget!”

~Dr. William Craig, HOA President, The Montage

Easy, affordable water leak sensing

After a costly water incident, an insurance broker for The Montage recommended water leak sensing technology from The Detection Group. Craig and the HOA board compared the wireless sensors with other options designed to catch leaks. “We looked at a variety of systems, but they were inconvenient and came with a lot of installation costs,” Craig said. “The Detection Group offered smooth installation that fit into our building design.” He added: “Also, the system came at a reasonable cost. In the end, it wasn’t a contested bid.”

A visit to another high-rise property solidified the board’s decision to use The Detection Group. “We visited, talked with the manager, and saw the results,” Craig noted. Most impressive: a white board on the wall with a sizable list of saves, leaks detected at the property.

