

Building Owners and Managers

TALK
ABOUT

GNY PROPERTY CLAIMS HANDLING

"I've been with Barrington Management about 18 years. The company manages about 80 properties. I had been managing about 750 condos, and in early 2015, I became the Director of Property Management, overseeing the other managers. I still manage three properties and Watermill Place, a 130-unit condominium in Arlington, Massachusetts, is one of them.

"I have worked with GNY on many claims throughout the years. Fortunately, nothing too significant—usually a broken pipe or failed water heater. GNY was always good, but in retrospect, these were fairly ordinary claims that didn't really test their mettle.



Elaine Alexis

Director of Property
Management
Barrington
Management Company
Arlington, MA

"Any company can write a policy, but you don't really know what they're made of until you have a significant claim. If anyone asks, I say 'go with Greater New York,' because they go out of their way to help clients. As far as I'm concerned, GNY can write anything for me."

"That changed dramatically in 2015. The winter was horrible, with 110 inches of snow and below zero temperatures for days at a time. The roof drains at Watermill Place froze for the first time ever. Then one day it got warmer and the flat roof turned into a swimming pool. Water got out under the flashing over the edges and came into the top floor unit, and then down into four units below. It resulted in a large property claim.

"We had been hearing from colleagues that insurance companies were backed up and overwhelmed with claims. They had been told it would be four or five months before payments were released, so we didn't have high expectations. But GNY amazed us. They brought in out of town adjusters and about six weeks later, payments started coming in.

"But, still the big test was yet to come.

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BUILDING OWNERS AND MANAGERS TALK ABOUT GNY PROPERTY CLAIMS HANDLING

“On May 31, I got an early morning call from a Board member at Watermill Place telling me there had been a loud sound in the fourth floor electrical room and the hallway was filled with smoke. We were in the midst of a huge rain storm and they found water pouring in from a hole in the roof that flooded and blew out a 100 amp breaker. There was a risk that water may have traveled to the main breaker, so they shut the building’s electricity off for safety reasons. And, because there was no power, the building could not be occupied. Within a few hours, we began evacuating 130 families.

“I wish I could explain the chaos in the building that day. There were a lot of elderly residents who were confused and scared. We hired people to help residents move their personal belongings, and of course we had to find temporary housing for everyone. The logistics were like nothing I have ever experienced.

“In the midst of all the chaos at about 2:00 p.m., GNY’s inspector comes in and introduces himself to me. To be honest, I didn’t think he would be there for about a week, but here he was a few hours after I called my broker! He immediately began the inspection to get the claim rolling. And he’s soon followed by a team of independent electrical engineers hired by GNY, all working to expedite things for us.

“Massive pieces of equipment were impacted—10 feet high and 15 feet wide on each floor and the basement. We had to call in the original manufacturer. Bottom line – all of the equipment needed to be dismantled and removed and new equipment needed to be brought in, assembled, connected and tested. The cost would be more than half a million dollars and keep people out of their homes for upwards of four months. Or, the manufacturer said, they could fast track everything, working 24/7 onsite and at the factory. Of course, that would come with a huge price tag—another \$200,000.

“We didn’t know how GNY would react. That’s a lot of money. But they stepped up and approved the more costly fast track plan. Not only that, they started giving us a general allowance, not tied to any specific repair, just to help with all the immediate expenses.

“With everyone pulling together and GNY keeping everything moving, we had the residents back in their homes in only 35 days. 35 days! Anyone involved with the situation and its magnitude—town officials, firefighters, contractors—just said ‘wow.’ No one could believe it. GNY was really phenomenal.”



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