LEISURE WORLD · SEAL BEACH

The Buyer's *Guide*

How buying in Leisure World works, how to qualify, and what it costs. Simply explained, step by step.

~50 days	6 steps	30+ years
first meeting to keys	we handle the paperwork	in real estate, each

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START HERE

The short version

Buying in Leisure World has a few extra steps compared with a normal home purchase. Here is what matters most. Every point is covered in more detail later in this guide.

1 **It's a 55+ community**

At least one occupant must be 55 or older. Co-occupants must be at least 45, unless they are a spouse, registered domestic partner or caregiver.

2 **Most homes are co-ops, bought with cash**

In Mutuals 1–12 and 14–16 you buy stock in a housing corporation, and mortgages aren't allowed. Mutual 17 is condominiums with a deeded title, and buyers may use a mortgage.

3 **You qualify before escrow opens**

Every buyer must show income of about 4–5 times the monthly carrying charge and $25,000–$50,000 in savings beyond the purchase price. Each Mutual sets its own numbers.

4 **Two sets of rules apply**

Your **Mutual** (one of 16) approves you and sets rules for pets, guests and improvements. The **Golden Rain Foundation (GRF)** runs the shared amenities, security and buses.

5 **Budget for the one-time GRF fee**

Each buyer pays a one-time GRF membership fee of $8,000 at closing. It gives you lifelong use of the clubhouses, pools, golf course and more.

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THE PROCESS

Your buying roadmap

A typical purchase takes about 50 days from our first meeting to getting your keys. Leisure Life Real Estate handles the Leisure World paperwork at every step.

DAY 1

1

Consultation & eligibility

Before you tour, we confirm you meet the Leisure World requirements: one buyer 55+ (co-occupants 45+), cash except in Mutual 17, and proof of funds and income. We help you gather the Mutual-specific documents so your offer is ready to go.

DAY 2

2

Search online & tour in person

Browse every available home on the Leisure Life Home Search Page, updated every 15 minutes. We tour your picks, revisit the favorites, and help you decide.

DAY 4

3

Make your offer WE HANDLE IT

We prepare the California Residential Purchase Agreement (RPA) for your signature and submit it. Once the seller signs, the 45-day clock to closing starts.

DAY 6

4

Get approved & open escrow WE HANDLE IT

We submit your financial eligibility documents to Leisure World and review the home's Pre-Listing Inspection with you. Review takes about 10 days. Once you're approved, escrow opens.

DAY 30

5

New Buyer Orientation (NBO)

About two weeks after approval you attend the New Buyer Orientation at the unit: a walkthrough with a Mutual Property Inspector and a review of community guidelines with a Mutual Board Director.

DAY 50

6

Settlement & move in

After a final walkthrough, you sign your final documents at the LW Stock Transfer Office and collect your keys and ID card. Then it's time to move in and relax.

> **Good to know:** since August 1, 2008, every buyer must be financially qualified **before** escrow opens, no matter who supplies the money. If adult children pay for their parents, the parents must still qualify. If two unmarried people buy together, each must qualify on their own.

THE RULES

How ownership & approvals work

Leisure World has two layers of governance. Each of the 16 **Mutuals** is its own housing cooperative or condominium with its own board and rules. The **Golden Rain Foundation** manages the shared amenities, security and community-wide services.

	Stock Cooperative Mutuals 1–12 and 14–16	Condominium Mutual 17
What you own	A share in a housing corporation, which gives you the right to occupy your unit	Your unit outright, with a deeded title and a share of the common areas
What you receive	A stock certificate and an Occupancy Agreement	A deeded title, recorded through escrow
Financing	**Cash only.** No mortgages or reverse mortgages.	Mortgage or reverse mortgage allowed (in approved buildings)
Property taxes	Included in the monthly fees	Billed directly to you by the county
Renting it out	Limited in some Mutuals	Generally allowed
Renovations	Mutual approval required	More flexibility, still with approval
Best for	Buyers paying cash who like one bundled monthly payment	Buyers who want to finance or prefer traditional ownership

Your Mutual

- Run by a board of volunteer residents elected by their neighbors.
- **Approves every buyer** on age, finances and, in some Mutuals, a credit report, references or a short interview.
- Sets the rules on pets, guests, co-occupants and home improvements. They can differ a lot between Mutuals.
- Sets the monthly fee, which covers building upkeep, landscaping, some utilities and reserves.

The GRF

- Runs the clubhouses, pool, fitness center, golf course and library.
- Provides 24-hour gated security, the free bus and the *LW Weekly* newspaper.
- Each new resident pays a **one-time membership fee** for lifelong access. Part of your monthly fee also goes to the GRF.
- Issues permits for home improvements and processes the stock transfer.

BEFORE YOU MAKE AN OFFER

Qualifying to buy

Each Mutual sets its own income and savings requirements. Here they are side by side, from the January 2026 qualification sheet.

MUTUAL	MONTHLY INCOME NEEDED	SAVINGS NEEDED	ALSO REQUIRED
1	5× carrying charge	$50,000	FICO 700+
2	4× carrying charge	$25,000 + purchase price	FICO 650+; accepts alternative calculations
3	4× carrying charge	$25,000	
4	4× carrying charge	$50,000 + purchase price	3 years of income verification
5	4× carrying charge	$35,000 + purchase price	Accepts alternative calculations
6	4× carrying charge	$25,000 + purchase price	
7	4× carrying charge	$25,000	
8	4.5× carrying charge	$50,000 + purchase price	
9	5× carrying charge	$50,000 + purchase price	Credit report
10	5× carrying charge	$50,000	
11	4× carrying charge	$25,000	Credit report
12	4× carrying charge	$25,000	
14	4× carrying charge	$50,000 + purchase price	FICO 620+
15	4.5× carrying charge	$50,000 + purchase price	
16	5× carrying charge	$50,000	
17 (condo)	4.5× carrying charge + mortgage	$50,000 (12 months) + sales price	FICO 620+

The carrying charge is the monthly Mutual fee. “Savings” means liquid assets such as checking, savings, IRA or securities. There is no Mutual 13.

Who must qualify

- Every buyer, before escrow opens, no matter who supplies the money.
- One occupant 55+; co-occupants 45+ unless a spouse, registered domestic partner or caregiver.
- Some Mutuals also ask for a doctor’s letter confirming independent living.

Check your numbers

Use our buyer eligibility calculator or see the full eligibility details online. We’re happy to run the numbers with you before you tour.

The documents you’ll need are listed on page 9.

THE NUMBERS

Costs & fees

Most living costs are bundled into one monthly fee. Here is what to budget for at closing and every month. Amounts are from the January 2026 per-Mutual fee sheet.

Cost	What it is	Amount
		At closing
Purchase price	Paid in full in cash for co-ops (Mutuals 1–12, 14–16). Mutual 17 condos may be financed.	**Varies**
GRF membership fee	One-time fee for lifelong use of the GRF amenities and services	**$8,000 per person $16,000 for two**
Co-occupant fees	For a co-occupant who isn't on title: membership fee plus a setup fee	**$8,000 + $120**
Escrow fee	Escrow holds and disburses funds and confirms Mutual and GRF approvals	**$950 each side**
Escrow add-ons	Document/HOA processing $150 and electronic storage $65 (each side), $30 per wire, overnight fees	**Varies**
		Every month
Mutual monthly fee	Building upkeep, landscaping, reserves, GRF share and, for co-ops, property taxes. Varies by Mutual.	**$507–$712**
Orange County user fee	Monthly county sewer/user charge (Mutuals 1–16)	**About $23**
Property tax (Mutual 17)	Condo owners are billed directly by the county	**Varies**
Insurance & utilities	Your own interior (HO-6) policy, electricity, internet and upgraded cable	**Varies**

The GRF membership fee is now $8,000 per person (the January 2026 sheet shows $7,000). Fees can change. See Buyer's Closing Costs online.

Plan ahead

- **Ask about special assessments.** A Mutual can charge one for major repairs that exceed its reserves.
- **Review the reserve fund report.** It shows the Mutual's financial health.
- **Know what your fee includes.** Utilities covered vary by Mutual.
- **Some extras cost more,** such as certain classes, clubs or private events.

LIVING HERE

Rules to know before you buy

Rules keep Leisure World quiet, safe and well kept. Some apply everywhere and some vary by Mutual, so we'll go over your Mutual's rules before you make an offer.

Who can live here

- At least one occupant must be 55 or older.
- Co-occupants must be 45+, unless they are a spouse, registered domestic partner or caregiver. Caregivers register with the Mutual.
- Guests may stay up to 60 days a year and must follow community rules, including parking, noise and pets.

Pets

- Dogs and cats are welcome. Many Mutuals limit the number, size or type of pets.
- Pets stay on a leash outside, and owners clean up after them.
- Pets are registered with the GRF each year.
- Service and emotional support animals are allowed with documentation.

Home improvements

- Bigger changes such as patios, skylights or interior remodels need a GRF permit and Mutual approval.
- Only licensed and insured contractors may work in Leisure World.
- Patios and fences must use approved materials, and work can't affect shared utilities or structure.

If rules are broken

- Residents are notified and given a chance to fix the issue.
- Repeated violations can lead to fines or loss of amenity access.
- Enforcement can vary by Mutual.

We'll walk you through it. Mark will explain your Mutual's specific rules, what the pet limits are, and how the approval process for renovations works, and can recommend licensed contractors who know Leisure World.

THE LIFESTYLE

Life in Leisure World

A gated 55+ community in sunny Seal Beach, close to shopping, dining and the beach. Exterior maintenance and landscaping are handled for you, so your time is your own.

6,600	542	150+	24/7
homes	landscaped acres	clubs & groups	gated security

Stay active

9-hole golf course, aquatic center with lap swimming and water aerobics, fitness center with group classes, pickleball courts and walking and bike paths.

Clubs & events

Over 150 clubs, from pottery, quilting and photography to book clubs, gardening and cultural groups. Dances, holiday celebrations and seminars all year.

Relax

Library, arts and crafts workshops, clubhouses and lounges, and quiet outdoor spaces to unwind.

Everyday services

On-site medical center, pharmacy, post office and credit union, so most errands never leave the gates.

Getting around

A free bus runs throughout the community and to nearby shopping such as Seal Beach Village. Many residents don’t need a car.

Stay in the loop

The *LW Weekly* community newspaper covers news, club activities and upcoming events.

After you move in

- Make it yours, but check with your Mutual before larger upgrades.
- Meet your neighbors and visit a welcome event to see what’s on offer.
- Try something new: water aerobics, yoga or a workshop.

We’re still here

We live here too. After closing we’re happy to help you set up utilities, understand Mutual rules, find trusted service providers, or point you to clubs that match your interests.

READY WHEN YOU ARE

What to gather

Leisure World asks for these to approve your purchase. Having them ready means we can submit your offer and qualification together.

- [ ] **Photo ID and proof of age** for each buyer: passport, or birth certificate plus driver's license (Mutual 1 also accepts a REAL ID).
- [ ] **Last 2 years of federal tax returns** (first two pages of the 1040). Mutual 4 asks for 3 years.
- [ ] **No tax returns?** Two years of 1099, 1099-R or 1099-SSA forms with bank statements.
- [ ] **6 months of account statements** showing the savings your Mutual requires: checking, savings, IRA, or a closing statement from a home sale.
- [ ] **Proof of the source of funds** for the purchase.
- [ ] **Signed disclosures:** the Mutual Operations Disclosure and the Active Adult Community Disclosure. We provide both.

Buyer resources

Tap any link for the latest version.

Search Leisure World homes ↗	Buyer eligibility calculator ↗
Eligibility details ↗	Buyer's closing costs ↗
Purchase agreement (RPA) ↗	Pre-Listing Inspection ↗
New Buyer Orientation (NBO) ↗	LW Buyers & Sellers handout ↗
Leisure World map ↗	Current LW listings ↗

YOUR TEAM

Why Mark & Judy

Buying in Leisure World isn't like buying anywhere else. As resident Leisure World specialists, we know the Mutuals, the rules and the people, and we handle every detail so you can focus on your new home.

Local experts

- We live here, so we can tell you what daily life is really like
- Fluent in every Mutual's rules, fees and approval requirements
- An up-to-date view of every available home, so you don't miss the right one

Every step handled

- Complete, accurate applications and help preparing for any board interview
- We coordinate inspections, negotiate repairs or price, and manage escrow
- Trusted inspectors, contractors and lenders who know Leisure World
- Judy's staging and remodeling advice for making your new home yours

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