

A Guide to New Home  
Maintenance Requirements

# New Home Care



  
**BRIGHT**  

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**HOMES**

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## Introduction

This guide to homeowner's maintenance is being provided to you, our customer, for the following two very important reasons:

1. Experience has shown that competent and regularly scheduled homeowner maintenance is very important in preserving the quality, value, and enjoyment of a home. We want you to have as much information as possible to allow you to do this.
2. Under California law (Civil Code Section 907), a homeowner is required to maintain his or her home according to reasonable maintenance standards and schedules provided to the homebuyer by Our Service Department. Failure to follow these standards and schedules may lead to the inability of a homeowner to recover against a builder or trade contractor. This booklet is provided to you in accordance with this law and is intended to give you information on the mandatory maintenance schedule and obligations.

This guide provides you with a schedule of required maintenance requirements that must be followed. Included in the guide is a reference to the remainder of the materials to help you understand your obligations.

We strongly recommend that you maintain records of your maintenance, either through notes or receipts if you use a third party to help you. This will assist you later in case there are any problems with your home.

Our customer service department is here to help you understand your new home and your obligations. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you.

## BUILDER CONTACT INFORMATION

**COMPANY NAME:** Bright Homes  
**ADDRESS:** 1620 N. Carpenter Road  
Building B  
Modesto, CA 95351-1153  
**PHONE:** (209) 571-9400  
**FAX:** (209) 571-9409  
**E-MAIL ADDRESS:** customerservice@bright-homes.com

### WARRANTY SERVICE REQUEST

It is critical for homeowners to be satisfied with their warranty service. Experience has shown that a warranty service department can serve homeowners more efficiently when homeowners follow these simple procedures:

- ⇒ Use the Warranty Service Request Form provided in this manual to describe the item needing warranty service.
- ⇒ Send the Warranty Service Request form to the appropriate contact address, FAX or e-mail.
- ⇒ You will be contacted within one business day, of our receipt, for any non-emergency requests to schedule an inspection appointment. Service Department hours are Monday – Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
- ⇒ Call Customer Service at (209) 571-9400 if you need help with this request form.
- ⇒ In the case of an emergency, please call Bright Homes at **(209) 526-8242**.

# REQUIRED MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

## Spring

### Exterior

1. Inspect roof materials and roof flashings. (Pages 17-19)
2. Inspect, clean and make repairs to siding. (Pages 19-23)
3. Inspect exterior caulking; re-caulk as necessary. (Page 22)
4. Inspect drainage system to ensure it directs water away from the foundation. (Pages 22-23)
5. Check garage door, tighten bolts as needed, and lubricate spring with motor oil. Other repairs should be done by professionals. (Page 23)
6. Inspect driveways, walks, and steps; fill cracks with concrete caulk. (Page 23)
7. Inspect wood decks, steps and rails; clean and make necessary repairs. (Page 24)
8. Apply coat of water repellent and wood preservative to wooden decking and fencing (Page 24)
9. Tighten the rail post bolts if your deck has wooden railings. (Page 24)
10. Wash windows and screens, clean weep holes, and lubricate tracks. (Pages 24-26)
11. Trim trees and shrubs away from home. (Pages 26 & 27)
12. Inspect grade around your home to ensure water is draining away from your foundation as quickly as possible. (Pages 26 & 27)
13. Inspect and clean debris away from drains in your yard. (Pages 27)
14. Start and adjust sprinkler system. Make sure sprinkler heads are not broken or spraying on the house. Check for clogged or broken pipes. (Page 26)
15. Inspect wood fences, paint and re-nail loose boards as necessary. (Page 27)

### Interior

1. Vacuum in and around smoke detectors. (Page 32)
2. Replace smoke detector batteries. (Page 32)

### Heating and Cooling

1. Have heat pump or air-conditioning system serviced before cooling season begins. (Page 35)
2. Adjust registers and confirm that cold air returns are clear of furniture and draperies. (Page 36)

### Plumbing

1. Remove the small amounts of scale and dirty water from water heater. (Page 37)
2. Inspect and clean sink, tub and shower drain traps. (Page 37)

### General Maintenance

1. Perform the monthly general maintenance tasks listed at the end of this section. (Page 9)

# REQUIRED MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

## **SUMMER**

### Exterior

1. Clean and lubricate garage door hinges, rollers, and tracks. Tighten bolts. (Page 23)
2. Check windowsills for caulking cracks or separations, and re-caulk. (Page 20)
3. Inspect windows, and French and sliding doors to ensure they are properly caulked and weep holes are not plugged. (Page 22)
4. Check weather stripping around windows, and repair or replace as necessary. (Page 24)
5. Inspect and clean debris from all patio door weep holes, and caulk all inside corners of the sill. (Pages 25-26)
6. Inspect paint on window frames and paint as necessary. (Page 24)
7. Check exterior paint and stain surfaces, and refinish as needed. (Page 20)
8. Inspect drains in your yard, and clean leaves and debris. (Pages 26 & 27)
9. Adjust sprinkler system as needed so the house is not being sprayed. Ensure sprinkler heads are not broken. Check for clogged or broken pipes. (Pages 26 & 27)
10. Clean siding. (Pages 19-21)

### Interior

1. Inspect walls and ceilings for cracks and nail pops; repair as needed. (Page 28)
2. Vacuum in and around smoke detectors. (Page 32)
3. Inspect ventilation system fans to ensure proper operation. (Page 33)
4. Inspect grout around tub, shower, bathroom and kitchen countertops, and tile floors; repair as needed. (Page 34)
5. Lubricate metal drawer guides. (Page 31)

### Plumbing

1. Check the water heater's temperature and pressure-relief valves to ensure proper operation. (Page 37)
2. Inspect and clean sink, tub and shower drain traps. (Page 37)
3. Inspect toilets for stability, and inspect for leaks. (Page 37)

### Electrical

1. "Exercise" circuit breakers. (Page 38)
2. Check for frayed appliance cords. (Page 38)

### General Maintenance

1. Perform the monthly general maintenance tasks at the end of this section. (Page 9)

# REQUIRED MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

## FALL

### Exterior

1. Inspect roof materials and roof flashings. (Pages 17 - 19)
2. Retain a roofing professional to clean roof annually and perform inspection and roof maintenance, sheet metal flashings, vents, and pipe penetrations. (Pages 17 - 19)
3. Inspect roof eaves and paint; caulk or remove any debris. (Pages 17 & 18)
4. Inspect and clean roof drains, gutters, and downspouts; confirm that downspouts or splash block drain away from foundation. (Page 19)
5. Inspect any masonry siding; repair as necessary. (Pages 20 & 21)
6. Inspect exterior caulking and make repairs. (Page 22)
7. Inspect drainage system; ensure it directs water away from foundation. (Pages 22 & 23)
8. Lubricate hinge points on wood garage doors with 30W oil. (Page 23)
9. Lubricate garage door openers with light grease. (Page 23)
10. Tighten any loose bolts holding the garage door's operating system. (Page 23)
11. Inspect garage door mechanism; contact an authorized dealer, or refer to manufacturer's recommendations. (Page 23)
12. Tighten rail post bolts if deck has wooden railings. (Page 24)
13. Flush deck drains with a hose. (Page 24)
14. Clean yard drains of leaves and debris. (Page 27)
15. Adjust sprinkler system as needed so the house is not being sprayed. Make sure sprinkler heads are not broken. Check for clogged or broken pipes. (Pages 26 & 27)

### Interior

1. Have your carpeting cleaned. (Page 29)
2. Vacuum in and around smoke detectors, and replace batteries. (Page 32)

### Heating and Cooling

1. Examine exposed heating and air supply ducts for gaps or leaks. (Page 36)
2. Inspect condensate lines at the end of the cooling season. (Page 35)
3. Clean the humidifier per manufacturer's instructions. (Page 35)

### Heating and Cooling

1. Inspect water heater's temperature and pressure-relief valves. (Page 31)
2. Inspect and clean sink, tub, and shower drain traps. (Page 37)

### General Maintenance

1. Perform the monthly general maintenance tasks at the end of this section. (Page 9)

# REQUIRED MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

## WINTER

### Exterior

1. Inspect roof after heavy winds or snowstorms. (Pages 17 - 19)
2. Inspect gutters and downspouts during a rainstorm for leaks. (Page 19)
3. Keep gutters clean of ice and debris. (Page 19)
4. Inspect overflow drains on deck; ensure they aren't clogged with leaves or debris. (Page 24)
5. Inspect drains in the yard, and clean of leaves and debris. (Page 27)
6. Adjust sprinkler system as needed so the house is not being sprayed. Make sure sprinkler heads are not broken. Check for clogged or broken pipes. (Pages 26 & 27)

### Interior

1. Seal grout on countertops to prevent staining from spills. (Page 30)
2. Inspect grout around tub, shower, bathroom and kitchen countertops. If grout is loose or gaps appear, repair as necessary. (Pages 30 & 34)
3. Lubricate kitchen cabinet hinges with oil and tighten screws. (Page 31)
4. Lubricate all door latch mechanisms with a dry lubricant. (Page 31)
5. Inspect door hinges and retighten as necessary. (Page 31)
6. Vacuum in and around smoke detectors. (Page 32)

### Plumbing

1. Check water heater's temperature and pressure relief valves to ensure proper operation. (Page 37)
2. Inspect and clean sink, tub, and shower drain traps. (Page 37)

### Appliances

1. Check manufacturer instructions for maintenance of all appliances and perform tasks per instructions. (Page 36)

### Electrical

1. "Exercise" circuit breakers. (Page 38)
2. Check for frayed appliance cords. (Page 38)

### General Maintenance

1. Perform the monthly general maintenance tasks at the end of this section. (Page 9)

# REQUIRED MONTHLY GENERAL MAINTENANCE

## Safety

1. Inspect fire extinguishers to ensure they are fully charged. (Page 12)
2. Check smoke detectors to ensure they are functioning properly. (Page 32)
3. Test and clean smoke detectors. (Page 32)
4. Test breakers on Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters. (Page 38)

## Exterior

1. Vacuum the tracks of your windows to remove any dirt and debris. (Page 25)
2. Clean exterior hardware with clean, soft cloth. (Page 26)
3. Monitor the grade around your home on a monthly basis during the first year to ensure any settling doesn't affect the grade. (Page 22)

## Interior

1. Seal grout on ceramic tile flooring within 30 days of occupancy and thereafter according to the sealant manufacturer's recommendations. (Page 29)
2. Inspect heating and air filters when system is in use; replace as necessary. (Page 36)
3. Vacuum heat registers and cold air returns. (Page 36)

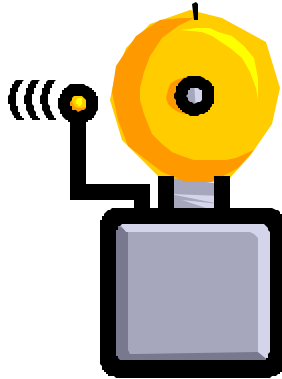
## Electrical

1. Test Ground Fault Circuit Breaker. (Page 38)

## Plumbing

1. Pour water down unused drains. (Page 37)

# HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCIES



## Overview

Emergencies can strike, despite the best precautions. Prevent an emergency from becoming a catastrophe by learning what to do. Discuss this section with all members of your household so that everyone is prepared for an emergency. Make copies of these pages for your baby-sitters; so, they will be prepared if an emergency strikes while you are away. Then, review this section with your household once a year so you are continually prepared for an emergency.

- ⇒ In the case of an electrical problem, water leak or gas leak, shut off the flow of electricity, water or gas to your home.
- ⇒ Every member of your household should know the location of shutoff valves and switches.
- ⇒ Keep basic emergency supplies, such as a portable radio, a flashlight, extra batteries, a first-aid kit and a first-aid manual on hand at all times.

## **Emergency Shutoff Valve and Switch Locations**

- ⇒ Main **water shutoff valves** are frequently located near water meters or just below the front yard hose bib. Look for a large valve in the middle of a pipe. Many of our homes now have the indoor manifold water control valves also located typically in a closet.
- ⇒ The main **electrical disconnect** should be located in or near the circuit panel box, which is usually located along the outside of the exterior wall of the garage.
- ⇒ If you have natural gas service, the **gas shutoff valve** will likely be located on the gas inlet pipe next to the gas meter.

# Emergency Numbers

Make a copy of this page and record your emergency telephone numbers. Post a copy by each telephone so you have the numbers handy if you need them.

Police: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire: \_\_\_\_\_

Ambulance: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Emergency Police: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Emergency Fire: \_\_\_\_\_

Gas Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Electrical Utility: \_\_\_\_\_

Electric Outages (evenings, weekends & holidays): \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Poison Control Center: \_\_\_\_\_

Security System Monitoring: \_\_\_\_\_

Plumber: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Poison Control Center: \_\_\_\_\_

Security System Monitoring: \_\_\_\_\_

Plumber: \_\_\_\_\_

Bright Homes Emergency Phone Number: **(209) 526-8242**

## **FIRE PRECAUTIONS**

Precautions and plans made today can prevent a fire-related tragedy tomorrow. Make sure to take the following steps.

- ⇒ Devise an Escape Plan--The first step during a fire is to get everyone out of the house. Planning your escape routes now can prevent needless loss of life during a fire.
- ⇒ Map out escape routes from each room in your home with your family. Pay particular attention to escape routes from bedrooms.
- ⇒ Agree on a central area outside your house to meet after evacuation so that everyone can be accounted for (this may be a neighbor's front door or a neighborhood landmark). The meeting place should be a place that children or injured people can reach without undue difficulty and yet still be safe from danger.
- ⇒ Have safety ladders near windows, if necessary.
- ⇒ Smoke detectors are an excellent early-warning device. Test your detectors on the first day of each month. Replace the batteries in the spring and fall when you change your clocks.
- ⇒ Keep stairs, doorways and hallways free from obstructions; in dense smoke, it may be difficult to see items blocking an escape route.

### **Fire Extinguishers**

- ⇒ Every kitchen should have a multipurpose fire extinguisher, as cooking is a leading cause of fire. If there is a fire in another part of the home, you will know that an extinguisher can be found in the kitchen.
- ⇒ Read the operating instructions on the side of the extinguisher now so that you will know how to use it if needed.
- ⇒ Make sure the extinguisher is serviced according to the manufacturer's recommendations, which are printed on the side of your fire extinguisher.

### **Avoiding Fire Risks**

- ⇒ Do not leave frying pans unattended, and keep the stove area clear of clutter. Cooking oil can ignite when it reaches the right temperature; it can also splatter and ignite items near the stove. Potholders, paper napkins, paper towels, curtains, loose clothes and long hair can catch fire in this manner.
- ⇒ Never smoke in bed.
- ⇒ Do not rest ashtrays on chair arms.
- ⇒ Use caution when emptying ashtrays in the trash.
- ⇒ Inspect electrical appliances for frayed wiring; replace all defective cords.
- ⇒ Keep your garage clear of rubbish and wood shavings.
- ⇒ Dispose of rags that can ignite by spontaneous combustion.
- ⇒ Store flammable fuels, chemicals and paints outside.

## **In Event of Fire**

If a fire breaks out, immediately:

- ⇒ Get everyone out of the house.
- ⇒ Meet at the designated area to count heads.
- ⇒ Call the fire department from a neighbor's home.

If you discover a small fire that is still contained to its source, you can do the following:

- ⇒ Cooking pan fire: Smother the flames with a lid, then turn off heat to the pan. Do not use water on an oil or grease fire because it will spread the flames. Turn off the kitchen exhaust fan—it can suck fire through the fan and ignite the outside of your home.
- ⇒ Oven fire: Turn off the oven and allow the fire to burn it out. Do not open the oven door— fresh air will feed the fire and cause it to continue to burn.
- ⇒ Electrical fires: Do not use water on an electrical fire. Water and electricity can be fatal. If you discover an electrical fire early, use a multipurpose fire extinguisher, otherwise, evacuate everyone from the house, meet at the designated area and call the fire department.

## **PLUMBING EMERGENCIES**

- ⇒ During plumbing emergencies, first stop the flow of water by turning off the main water shutoff valve or the shutoff valve for the particular fixture or appliance. You and each member of your family should know the location of these shutoff valves. They can usually be found underneath sinks and toilets and behind clothes washers, water heaters and other appliances.
- ⇒ If the emergency is limited to a specific appliance or fixture, look for its shutoff valve and close the valve by turning clockwise. Or if your home has a water manifold you may shut the fixture or appliance off at this location as well.
- ⇒ Turn off the main shutoff valve if the problem is a leaking pipe or if there is not a shutoff valve for the particular fixture or appliance.

## **Leaks**

- ⇒ If a pipe leaks or breaks, turn off the main shutoff valve to prevent water damage.
- ⇒ If you turn off the main water supply, turn off your hot water heater by turning off the circuit breakers and the gas supply to the hot water heater. Failure to do so can cause the hot water heater to overheat, damage the heating elements, and injure anyone who unknowingly turns on a hot water faucet.
- ⇒ Call Our Service Department immediately or make temporary repairs yourself to stop the leak.
- ⇒ Have the pipe replaced or the joint re-soldered when it is convenient for Our Service Department or a professional plumber to do so.
- ⇒ If your washing machine, dishwasher or other water-using appliance is leaking, make sure that the trap through which the appliance drains is completely open. Sometimes a partially clogged drain can cause an overflow within the appliance. If the drain is clear, consult the appropriate appliance manufacturer or repairperson.

## **Frozen Pipes**

Pipe insulation and freeze-resistant outside faucets are available to reduce the risk of freezing. Even with these products, problems can still occur.

- ⇒ If a pipe freezes, thaw it slowly with a hair dryer or towels soaked in hot water to prevent it from breaking.
- ⇒ Do not heat the pipe with a torch; this has caused many fires.
- ⇒ To prevent frozen pipes, drain water from outdoor faucets and pipes, remove and store outdoor hoses, and never leave your home unheated during cold weather.

## **Clogged Drains**

- ⇒ When the drainpipe from a tub, sink, shower, or water-using appliance becomes clogged, turn off the faucet or appliance that flows into the drain.
- ⇒ Try to remove the obstruction with a rubber plunger. The rubber cup of the plunger should cover the drain opening and the water should come up over the edge of the cup. Work the plunger up and down rhythmically 10 to 20 times in succession to build up pressure in the pipe.
- ⇒ If the plunger does not work, call a plumber.
- ⇒ Do not attempt using a snake or other tools because they can damage expensive fixtures.
- ⇒ Never use drain cleaner to open a totally clogged drain; it will mix with the water to form a caustic solution.

## **Clogged Toilet**

- ⇒ If a toilet overflows, stop the water flow by reaching inside the toilet tank and pushing the tank stopper down into its valve seat. Hold until the tank fills and the water stops.
- ⇒ Turn off the shutoff valve underneath the toilet or turn off the main water shutoff valve.
- ⇒ Try to unclog the toilet with a plunger; if that does not work, call a plumber.

## **Faucet Malfunction**

- ⇒ If a faucet won't shut off, immediately turn off the water at the shutoff valve underneath the sink. If there is no valve; turn off the valve at the water manifold location or the house main water supply shutoff valve.
- ⇒ Contact the manufacturer or call a plumber.
- ⇒ You can repair the faucet yourself (there are a number of plumbing repair books on the market for do-it-yourselfers), but not if it is a cartridge faucet as they are exceptionally advanced and quite expensive.
- ⇒ If steaming water flows from a hot water faucet, do not touch the hot water faucet. Leave the faucet running, until cold water flows from it, and turn off the electricity or gas supply to the hot water heater (the water in the hot water heater is no longer overheated). Call a plumbing professional to repair the faucet or the hot water heater's thermostat.

# ELECTRICAL EMERGENCIES

Electrical emergencies such as an appliance malfunction, a power failure in your home or a neighborhood power outage can occur at any time. Review the following information so you will know what to do if an electrical emergency strikes.

## **Main Disconnect**

- ⇒ Educate yourself on how to turn off the electrical power to your home and turn off and reset individual circuit breakers. Please refer to the Emergency Shutoff Switch Locations section of this manual.
- ⇒ Contact Our Service Department (if still within our warranty period) or a professional electrician immediately to make electrical repairs.
- ⇒ Turn off the electrical power to your house by shutting off the main disconnect, which is one or more main fuses or circuit breakers located on the circuit panel.
- ⇒ Use rubber gloves when shutting off the main disconnect if the circuit panel is located in a laundry room or some other location where there may be water on the floor. Keep a pair of rubber gloves near the circuit panel at all times for this purpose.
- ⇒ Be sure everyone in your household knows where the circuit breaker panel is located and how to shut off the power.

## **Power Outage**

- ⇒ If the outage affects your entire neighborhood, notify your electrical utility company.
- ⇒ If the electrical outage affects your home only, check for and reset any tripped circuit breakers. If a breaker immediately trips again, call Our Service Department (if still within the warranty time) or a professional electrician to test your electrical system.
- ⇒ Turn off or disconnect all motor-driven and electronic appliances to avoid possible damage from either inadequate power or a sudden electrical surge when power is restored.
- ⇒ Turning off the circuit breaker for the furnace can turn off the furnace blower motor.
- ⇒ Turning off or unplugging appliances such as dishwashers, clothes washers, clothes dryers, and garbage disposals, range fans, sump pumps, refrigerators can disconnect motors.
- ⇒ Turn off computers, televisions, video recorders, stereos and other electronic equipment.
- ⇒ After power has been restored, it should be safe to turn on all appliances.
- ⇒ You can slow food spoilage by not opening refrigerators or freezers during the outage unless absolutely necessary. Food in a tightly packed freezer will stay frozen for up to 48 hours if the door has been kept closed. Food in a partially filled freezer may keep for 24 hours.
- ⇒ If you are in doubt about the safety of frozen food after a power outage, throw it out.
- ⇒ Always have flashlights, extra batteries, candles, matches and a battery-powered transistor radio handy in case of power failures. Store these items in an accessible place known to all family members. If any of these items are used for any other purpose, make sure they are promptly returned.
- ⇒ Keep lit candles away from drafts, flammable objects and children.

## **Sparking Appliance**

- ⇒ Do not touch a smoking or sparking appliance.
- ⇒ Cut off power to the appliance by unplugging it, turning off the wall switch controlling the appliance, or turning off the circuit breaker for the appliance.
- ⇒ Allow the appliance to cool. Then, take it to repair shop or call a professional service representative.
- ⇒ If an appliance catches fire, evacuate everyone from the house, meet at your designated area and call the fire department from a neighbor's home.
- ⇒ Do not use water on an electrical fire, as it can be fatal. If you discover an electrical fire early, use a multipurpose fire extinguisher on the flames.
- ⇒ If an appliance's electrical plug smokes or sparks, unplug the appliance by pulling its cord. Do not touch the plug itself. After the plug cools, inspect it and the cord for damage. If they are damaged, replace the plug and cord or have them replaced by a professional service representative. Reset any tripped circuit breakers.
- ⇒ If the plug and cord appear fine, and there are no tripped circuit breakers, the electrical outlet may be at fault. Test the outlet by plugging another appliance you know works properly into the receptacle. If that plug sparks, too, have it replaced by a professional electrician. If the new appliance does not cause sparks, then the original appliance is probably faulty and should be repaired or replaced.

## **Gas Leaks**

Your home may be serviced with natural gas. Gas is a safe, clean, economical energy for appliances such as furnaces, boilers, water heaters, dryers, cook tops, fireplaces, and barbecues. Although gas appliances are wonderful conveniences, gas must be treated with respect.

If you smell gas inside or outside your home, hear gas escaping from a broken line or see a broken gas line, you should:

- ⇒ Get everyone out of and away from your home immediately.
- ⇒ Call your local gas company or your fire department from a neighbor's house.
- ⇒ Do not light a match, turn a light on or off, use a telephone (portable, cellular or regular), or operate any electrical switch or electronic device, as flames or electric sparks can ignite the leaking gas.
- ⇒ Leave as many windows and doors open as possible—the gas will rise and dissipate harmlessly outside.
- ⇒ If the gas leak is inside your home, you can turn off your gas supply at the gas shutoff valve after everyone is out of the house. If you prefer, you can have your utility company turn off the gas. The gas shutoff valve should be located on the pipe leading into the gas meter. Turn the valve a quarter-turn in either direction with an adjustable-end or "crescent" wrench. The gas is off when the valve is perpendicular to the pipe.
- ⇒ If the gas leak is outside your home, keep away from the leak area and away from your house. Do not attempt to shut off the gas supply; your utility company will do it.
- ⇒ Once your gas is off, wait for your local gas company to restore your service.

# EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE

Your home's exterior shelters you and your home from the elements, which can be quite destructive. Your roof, gutters, siding, windows and doors are your home's first line of defense. Protect your home by inspecting and maintaining its exterior regularly.

If you discover and repair exterior problems early, you can avoid much larger problems in the future. This homeowner's manual focuses on inspection and preventative maintenance.

## Roof Maintenance

It's easy to ignore your roof until it begins to leak. If you inspect your roof periodically, you can correct minor problems before they cause major damage. If you discover signs of a leak, call Our Service Department immediately before the problem and any related damage becomes worse.

The roofs of most houses built today are made of concrete or clay tile or composition shingles. The shingles on your roof do not require any treatment or sealer.

- ⇒ Inspect your roof each fall before the winter weather moves in, and after heavy wind or snowstorms.
- ⇒ Inspect your roof in the spring in order to discover any winter damage. Contact a roofing professional if you find any problems.
- ⇒ You should inspect your roof from the ground by using field glasses or binoculars. If more detailed inspections are necessary, hire a qualified, licensed, and properly insured roof inspection contractor.
- ⇒ Clean all roof drains, gutters and downspouts annually so that they are free of leaves and other foreign debris and can quickly drain precipitation from the roof. This should always be done before the rainy season.
- ⇒ Growth of moss or fungi on roof may lead to premature degradation of the wood. Periodic cleaning with a stiff bristle or low-pressure water spray can resolve most occurrences. **Do not use a power washer.**
- ⇒ **Retain a qualified roofing professional to perform periodic (annual) cleaning of the roof, removing accumulation of growth or organic materials. Any materials that need securing or found to be loose or displaced should be replaced.**
- ⇒ Check all areas that have a caulking or sealant-type material, such as vents, pipe penetrations, and sheet metal flashing for cracked sealant, etc. Sheet metal flashing or counter flashing protects your roof from leaks around protrusions and roof joints; these are vulnerable points. Flashing is the sheet metal or other durable material that protects these joints from water penetration. You will find flashing sealing roof valleys, roof and plumbing vents, around chimneys, along eaves and anywhere water can seep through open joints into the roof sheathing. The flashing's edges are sometimes sealed with caulk or roof cement. Flashing is a key to keeping your roof watertight.
- ⇒ Inspect your roof flashing twice a year. Look for any flashing that has buckled or pulled away from the joints it is supposed to protect, and holes and rust spots along the flashing surface. Small holes and rust patches can be patched or sealed. You should have the flashing replaced if you find large holes or extensive corrosion. Also, look for loose nails and exposed nail heads. They should be re-nailed and covered with caulk or roofing cement. Examine the flashing seams for dried or cracked roofing cement, and have them re-sealed as necessary.
- ⇒ **Never walk on your roof.** Not only can this cause personal injury, but also untrained/unprofessional personnel walking upon and breaking the roof material cause the most common roofing failures (leaks). The broken tiles or shingles allow water on the felt that may cause a leak.

- ⇒ Severe storm conditions may exceed the design parameters of the roofing system (as well as other systems, such as windows or doors). After severe storms, visually inspect the roof for damage.
- ⇒ Damage caused by wind, falling trees, etc., during severe storms is not covered under the warranty. Consequential damages due to leaks are not covered by the warranty. Notify your homeowner's insurance company should you experience damage of this type.
- ⇒ **Never store household goods in the garage or attic trusses, as they are designed only to support the weight of the roof.** Storing household goods in these areas can cause the roof to sag or, perhaps, collapse. Contact a structural engineer to determine what type of additional reinforcement is necessary for using trusses as storage areas.
- ⇒ **Do not install and/or fasten any products and/or materials on the roof.** The installation of materials and/or products by the homeowner may void any warranty work by Our Service Department.
- ⇒ Contact and/or consult with Our Service Department prior to the installation of any "add-on" materials and/or products. This includes but is not limited to, solar heating panels and TV antenna dishes.
- ⇒ Concrete and clay tile roofs are susceptible to breakage and only licensed persons who are qualified to walk on roofs should perform an installation of "add-on" products.
- ⇒ Our Service Department will not assume any responsibility for the roof systems when the homeowner installs anything on the roof or makes any modifications whatsoever without prior written approval by Our Service Department.
- ⇒ Painting and caulking of flashings by a qualified roofing contractor is a routine maintenance item.
- ⇒ Keep all vents and louvers free from any obstructions. Do not allow birds to nest in vents.
- ⇒ The homeowner should maintain the roof eaves by providing adequate maintenance, i.e. painting, caulking and removal of any debris that might constrict the flow of water.

### **Built-Up Roofing and Other Low-Slope Roofs**

Built-up roofs is a system of layers of asphalt that serve as the waterproofing medium, sandwiched between various types of roofing membranes known as felts. BUR systems are not as common as other roofing materials.

The single-ply roof is another type of low-slope roof system. This system consists of a single membrane layer that is applied over the underlayment. The seams are sealed with a special sealant provided by the manufacturer.

- ⇒ Bi-annual inspections are required.
- ⇒ Clean any debris that may damage the membrane.
- ⇒ Seal any cracks, tears or rips.
- ⇒ Inspect roof where it turns up to a wall or skylight. The felt material is susceptible to deterioration and may produce leaks if not properly maintained.
- ⇒ If your roof has a parapet wall, then an overflow scrapper or primary and secondary drains must be kept free of leaves, gravel and debris.
- ⇒ Pay special attention to where different types of materials come into contact with each other such as where the roof ties into wood or comes into contact with steel, or stucco comes into contact with wood. These are prime locations for water intrusion over time. If any separations are found they must be repaired immediately.
- ⇒ Do not walk on your roof. Hire professional, licensed and insured roofing contractor to perform annual inspections and repairs.

## **Gutters and Downspouts**

Gutters and downspouts collect water from the roof and carry it away from the house. This prevents topsoil erosion around concrete footings, basement flooding, siding and woodwork decay, paint failure, wall damage and other problems. Uneven soil moisture caused by water runoff can even cause serious foundation problems. Leaking gutters and downspouts or that are clogged with debris cannot perform their vital task. Further, the acid produced by decaying leaves will, over time, eat through a metal gutter. Therefore, it is important that you inspect, clean and maintain your gutters and downspouts regularly.

If you have low gutters and know how to safely use extension ladders, you may want to perform this task yourself. If you have a multi-story home and don't like working from heights or don't feel safe handling extension ladders, you may want to hire a contractor to clean your gutters.

During the gutter cleaning, the wood boards behind the gutters should be inspected for dry rot. Probe the boards with a knife or thin screwdriver for soft spots. Any decay should be repaired.

Plastic or metal screens can be installed over your gutters to keep them free from debris. These screens can be effective but the screens themselves must be cleaned. You must also continue to inspect your gutters and downspouts and clean as necessary.

- ⇒ Keep gutters and downspouts clear of leaves, tree limbs, debris, or anything that may cause overflowing or standing water.
- ⇒ Inspect your gutters and downspouts annually, before the rainy season, and after each heavy rainstorm or windstorm. Remove debris promptly.
- ⇒ Make sure downspouts direct water away from your foundation.
- ⇒ Vinyl-coated gutters don't need to be painted. Painting is optional for aluminum gutters. Apply a coat of rust-retardant paint every three to five years to gutters made of other metals.
- ⇒ Check your gutters for any loose spikes or support straps and have repaired as necessary. Gutters should slope gently towards the downspouts. Reset gutters that sag or slope improperly. Inspect seams, corner joints and downspout joints for proper fit. These joints should be repaired or sealed with caulk if they allow water to leak.

## **Siding**

Your home is protected from the elements by an exterior "skin" made of wooden, masonry or manufactured siding. This siding should last the lifetime of your home. However, even the most durable sidings can fail if the homeowner does not follow through with a regular maintenance program.

- ⇒ **Never nail any part of a fence to a house wall.** This can trap rainwater between the fence post and the house wall, and can result in the invasion of termites through the fence into the structure of the house. Instead, place a fence post in the ground beside the foundation; it should not come into contact with the house.

## **Wood Siding**

Wood siding is found on many homes. Wood shingles, shake boards, and panels come in a variety of shapes, styles, sizes, and patterns. All are susceptible to water and insect damage. The first line of defense is paint or stain. The second line of defense is regular inspection and maintenance, and periodic cleaning.

## **Paint**

- ⇒ Inspect the painted surface of your home's exterior annually.
- ⇒ Paint may first show signs of wear and degradation in areas where it is most exposed. Touch up the paint before the deterioration proceeds further in order to prevent aging and extend the life of the overall paint job.

- ⇒ **Make sure there is no irrigation that may spray onto the home or pond and pool next to the foundation.** This may cause mildew or mold to grow on the painted surfaces.
- ⇒ Immediately eradicate any mold or mildew.
- ⇒ Monitor areas with stained wooden surfaces, and keep them clean and ventilated.
- ⇒ Reapply stains according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- ⇒ Repaint your home every three to five years, depending on weather conditions and exposure. This will protect your home from the elements.
- ⇒ Check for visible evidence of termites. Look for their translucent one-half-inch-long wings or the mud tubes they sometimes build. If you find evidence of dry rot or termites, consult a licensed termite inspector or pest control professional.
- ⇒ Siding nails should be inspected annually. Any stains from the nails can be sealed with a clear aerosol sealer to prevent them from traveling further. Painting should follow to ensure proper maintenance.
- ⇒ Simple surface problems, such as holes in the wood, split or cracked boards, warped or buckled boards, and loose siding, should be repaired as soon as they appear because water will work its way through into the interior wall where rotting can take place undetected.
- ⇒ Replace severely damaged board siding. Determine the cause of any serious damage before replacing siding. If moisture is causing the problem, find the source by checking for deteriorating roofing, leaking gutters or downspouts, and poor drainage. Consult a professional contractor.

### **Stucco Siding**

Stucco is a masonry siding made from sand, cement, and water. It is applied over wire lath fastened to wood sheathing. Color is added to the final coat or the stucco is painted after it dries.

When new houses are built, the wood framing materials contain up to 19 percent moisture. As the lumber dries, the wood shrinks, causing stress to the stucco system. As the house ages, components expand and contract at different rates, causing stress on the weaker materials. Expansion and contraction is an inherent characteristic of a wood structure. The first year in the life of the home is commonly called a "drying out" period, and a gradual drying-out process takes place after the house is completed.

Shrinkage may occur in the framing of your home, which may cause minor cracking or nail pops in the studs, pushing the drywall joint compound up, thus producing a bump in the drywall.

**Hairline cracks and nail pops are normal, and do not reduce the function of the stucco or the strength of the structure.**

- ⇒ Fill any cracks with spackling compound, and touch up the paint.
- ⇒ Repair a nail pop by resetting or replacing the existing protruding nail, covering the area with spackling compound, and texturing and/or painting over it.
- ⇒ Fill any drywall indentations with two or three applications of joint compound used for dry wall taping.
- ⇒ Avoid contact with the stucco by automobiles, children's toys and bicycles, and any other objects that may cause damage.
- ⇒ Inspect the exterior stucco surface annually to ensure the stucco is in good repair.
- ⇒ Ensure that your irrigation system does not spray water on the stucco and your landscaping does not contact the stucco.
- ⇒ Ensure the grade around your new home is maintained so the distance between the bottom of your stucco and any grade is not decreased.

- ⇒ Inspect any decorative wood trim around windows annually for gaps, and caulk where needed. Use a strong, 25-year caulk, and ensure all old caulking is removed completely before re-caulking.
- ⇒ Never fasten anything onto your house through the stucco.
- ⇒ If you want to add to your home's exterior, consult a qualified, licensed professional who will ensure all penetrations are properly flashed, counter-flashed, and sealed.
- ⇒ If a security alarm is being installed, make sure any window and wall penetrations are properly sealed. Such penetrations can cause water damage to your home's interior if not properly sealed.
- ⇒ Do not alter the finish grades around the perimeter of the house. Undrained wet soil can cause foundation movement, which could result in stucco cracking.
- ⇒ Expect some normal cracking in stucco. If cracks exceed 1/16 of an inch, you should notify Our Service Department.

### **Weep Screed**

- ⇒ Weep screeds should not become rusted to the point of deterioration.
- ⇒ Keep irrigation water from spraying against the stucco.
- ⇒ Do not allow vegetation to overgrow in the screed area.
- ⇒ To ensure proper drainage, any dirt should be a minimum of four inches from the stucco screed, the horizontal piece at the bottom of the stucco wall.
- ⇒ Concrete or other cement-type material should be a minimum of two inches from the stucco screed.
- ⇒ **Never pour concrete over the stucco screed, or cover it in any way; ensure your grade slopes away from your home when installing concrete.**

### **Brick, Block and Stone Siding**

Brick, concrete block, and stone are used as sidings on veneer walls, and are also built into masonry walls. Veneer walls are standard wood frame walls with a brick, block or stone facing for weather protection. The wood frame provides the structural support. Masonry walls, on the other hand, use the brick, block, or stone as both the structural support and the weather protection.

- ⇒ Inspect your masonry and any brick, block or stonewalls twice a year. Look for chipped, cracked, loose, deteriorating, and missing material.
- ⇒ Repair any problems to keep water out of masonry material and to prevent future damage.
- ⇒ Examine the mortar joints for weak or crumbling mortar. Use an old screwdriver to test the mortar by scratching along the mortar joints. The mortar should be firm. If it crumbles easily, is cracked, or has fallen out, have the mortar joints repaired; otherwise water will enter the joints and cause additional damage.
- ⇒ A white powdery substance that can form on the surface of masonry work is known as efflorescence; it is caused by moisture bringing salts to the surface. Efflorescence is common in new masonry work and can be washed off.

### **Cleaning**

Cleaning your home's exterior surfaces regularly will improve your home's appearance and will help preserve your paint, stain, or siding finish. Cleaning once or twice a year will remove light soil as well as grime and pollutants that can damage your siding.

- ⇒ Wash from the bottom up with a solution of soap and warm water; this prevents streaking. Pay particular attention to the areas around door handles and window catches where dirt and grease will be heaviest. Rinse with fresh water from top to bottom to prevent runs of dirty liquid on a newly cleaned surface.

- ⇒ Use a pressure washer or a garden hose and scrub brush.
- ⇒ If you find mildew on your siding, apply household bleach directly to any affected areas and rinse with a hose.

## **Exterior Caulking**

Caulking is used to seal joints, gaps, and seams in exterior walls. Without caulking, cool air, water, and insects could enter your home through these openings. All caulking compounds dry out over time.

- ⇒ Check for cracked, loose, or missing caulking as part of your spring and fall maintenance inspections.
- ⇒ Your home should be re-caulked every five years or less; caulking around some areas may deteriorate sooner.
- ⇒ Repair deteriorated caulking as soon as it appears.

### **Where To Inspect**

You will find caulking where different surfaces meet. These surfaces include the roof where one flashing meets another flashing, where flashing and a roof or dormer surface meet, and where a chimney, flue, plumbing or electrical pipe, attic fan, or skylight protrudes through the roof surface.

Caulking is found on exterior walls where siding and trim meet at corners, around window and door frames, between badly fitting pieces of siding, where pipes, framing members and other protrusions pass through siding, and where siding meets the foundation, patio, deck, or any other different part of your home.

### **Applying Caulking**

Caulking is one of the simplest jobs a homeowner can perform. No special skills or expensive tools are required, and it is not time consuming. However, you must properly prepare the area to be caulked. Begin by removing the old caulk, and cleaning the area before applying the new material. Different caulks have different uses, and are to be applied in different ways. Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully before applying the new caulk.

## **Foundations and Slabs**

Your new home rests on a foundation, which consists of the footing—concrete poured into a trench—and the foundation “walls,” the lumber that rests on top of the footing. Essentially, a foundation includes anything that holds up the house. If your home is slab on grade, the concrete is poured directly onto the ground. The slab may be reinforced with wire mesh or steel rods that are tightened after the concrete is poured; this is referred to as a post tension slab.

Because the base of the foundation wall is in the ground, it maintains a fairly constant temperature. However, since the top portion of your foundation extends out of the ground, the concrete is subject to seasonal temperature changes, which can cause concrete to expand and contract, resulting in cracking.

Concrete cracking cannot be avoided no matter how carefully the foundation has been constructed, but there are steps you can take to minimize foundation problems.

- ⇒ Because concrete is porous and absorbs water, the finished grade along the foundation must slope away from the structure.
- ⇒ Your lot has been graded to keep water away from your foundation; this grade must be maintained. **Failure to maintain the grade can result in damage to your home, your lot, and to your neighbor's property. Any alteration of the drainage plan for your lot may void your warranty.**
- ⇒ If your home is not equipped with gutters and down spouts, you should install them to ensure that water is directed away from the foundation.
- ⇒ **Do not connect any wood or metal, such as a fence, to your foundation. Wood material may cause infestation, decay, and deterioration of the foundation.**

- ⇒ Do not use fertilizers high in sulfates because they may damage your foundation.
- ⇒ **Watering around the foundation must be kept to a minimum; make sure there is no “over-spray” from sprinklers onto the foundation.**
- ⇒ Planter beds should have their own drainage systems that direct water away from the foundation. If a drip system is installed, be sure that it does not allow water to saturate the soil around the foundation.
- ⇒ **Inspect your home’s drainage system every six months to make sure it continues to direct water away from your foundation.**

For further guidance, please refer to the landscaping and drainage sections of this manual.

## **Garage Doors**

### **Steel Doors**

Your steel door is pre-finished by the manufacturer, and does not need to be painted. The door is made of lightweight steel and is subject to denting and scratching. Avoid leaning objects such as bicycles, ladders, or gardening equipment against the door. Refer to specific manufacturer’s warranties.

### **Wood Doors**

- ⇒ Lubricate the hinge points every six months with 30W oil.
- ⇒ Ensure the stripping, or “keepers,” along the top and bottom of the doors are kept tight.
- ⇒ If the door has track rollers, lubricate them annually with 30W oil.
- ⇒ Lubricate automatic openers with light grease once a year.
- ⇒ Keep wood garage doors closed during rain; if they are left open, water will collect on the horizontal surface and cause severe warping. This will damage both the door and the door hardware and operating system.
- ⇒ Repaint the doors when the house is repainted, or every four to six years. Refer to your manufacturer’s specifications for further instructions.
- ⇒ Inspect the bolts holding the operating system after the first six months of home ownership and annually thereafter. Tighten any loose bolts.
- ⇒ If the garage door mechanism needs adjustment, contact an authorized dealer or other garage door service provider, or refer to your manufacturer’s recommendations.
- ⇒ Keep the metal rods that span the top and bottom of the door in a tight condition and in proper alignment.

## **Driveways, Walkways and Steps**

Concrete driveways, walks and steps usually have expansion joints to minimize cracking. The purpose of these expansion joints is to control and contain the cracking to specific areas, i.e., the thinner sections of concrete. Cracking is a natural characteristic of concrete that cannot be eliminated. Normal cracks should not create serious problems.

- ⇒ Contact Our Service Department if a crack exceeds one-quarter inch in width or one-quarter inch in vertical displacement. Normal cracks that occur at the expansion joints are to be maintained by the homeowner.
- ⇒ Fill cracks with a suitable concrete caulk.
- ⇒ Maintain the area around the driveway in a way that will not allow soils to be washed away from beneath the driveway.
- ⇒ Tree roots are a primary cause for concrete to heave and/or crack in landscaped areas. When placing trees in the vicinity of any concrete product, the most important consideration should be the potential for growth of the root system.
- ⇒ Do not spill acidic products or create excessive landscape moisture that may cause

damage to concrete surface. If you use rock salt as an ice-removing agent, you are assuming the risk of damage to the concrete.

## Decks

Decks are usually made of Douglas Fir lumber or Trex, but because they are exposed to the elements, they require maintenance to protect them, and the interior of your home, from moisture.

- ⇒ The flashing leading from your deck to your home must be secure so that water doesn't enter; staining the carpet and causing mold and mildew.
- ⇒ Keep the deck clean and free of debris.
- ⇒ Keep all drainage courses free of leaves and dirt to avoid water from ponding on the deck surface.
- ⇒ Perform an annual deck inspection, and re-nail any loose boards or raised nails.
- ⇒ Apply a coat of water repellent and wood preservative according to product instructions every one to two years, depending upon exposure and weather conditions.
- ⇒ Do not plant next to the deck posts as moisture may cause dry rot of the posts.
- ⇒ If the deck has wooden railings, the post bolts should be tightened every six months during the first two years of occupancy.
- ⇒ Flush the deck drains with a hose before the rainy season, and check them during rainstorms or windstorms.
- ⇒ Overflow drains should be inspected to ensure that they are not clogged with leaves or other debris.
- ⇒ Do not place potted plants directly on the deck; use stands or saucers that allow air circulation underneath. Avoid using metal plant stands in order to protect the deck surface from penetration by the metal legs.
- ⇒ Do not place heavy objects on your deck; they might damage the surface and stress the deck's structural integrity.
- ⇒ **Never place rugs or non-breathable coverings over wood and synthetic decks. All decks need to breathe, including decks with synthetic coatings. By placing non-breathable coverings on your deck, such as indoor/outdoor carpeting, moisture will be trapped between the bottom of the covering and the top of the deck. This can result in rot and premature failure of the deck.**

## Windows

Most windows and patio doors installed in new or remodeled houses are made of dual-pane glass, consisting of two panes of glass made into a "sandwich" with a dead air space in the middle. The sandwich is sealed so that the air cannot enter or leave the space. This dead air space provides an insulating quality that windows with single-pane glass do not have. When the seal is broken, moisture enters between the panes, and the window becomes foggy.

- ⇒ **Never tint the inside pane of dual-pane windows, as it can cause the window seal to fail. This can lead to excessive heat build up between the panes of glass and may cause the seals to rupture.**
- ⇒ Your windows may be framed with a variety of materials, including aluminum, steel, wood, vinyl or vinyl-clad wood, each with its own maintenance requirements.

## Paint

- ⇒ Paint wood frames every three to five years (along with the home's exterior).
- ⇒ Aluminum, vinyl and vinyl-clad windows do not need to be painted.
- ⇒ Paint steel frames with a rust-inhibiting paint every three to five years.

- ⇒ Aluminum frames may be left to age or gray, which is caused by oxidation and will protect them from the elements. For a brighter, new look, apply a coat of wax to the aluminum frames every four months.

### **Cleaning**

- ⇒ Use crumpled newspaper and equal parts water and vinegar (or a household glass cleaner) to wash the glass.
- ⇒ Never use a powdered cleaner because it may damage the surface finish of vinyl windows and doors.
- ⇒ Make sure the cleaner is non-toxic and is approved for use with your window frame material.

### **Tracks and Frames**

- ⇒ Vacuum the tracks of your windows at least once a month to remove any dirt and debris. Use a soft brush to ensure all particles are removed.
- ⇒ Do not allow the weep holes in the window frames to become blocked because these holes allow any water that accumulated in the frame to escape.
- ⇒ If your wooden windows do not slide easily, rub the frame with a piece of paraffin; for metal windows, use a silicone lubricant.
- ⇒ Inspect your windows and sliding doors annually to ensure they are properly caulked and cleaned and that the weep holes are not plugged.
- ⇒ Perform the same maintenance on French doors.
- ⇒ If condensation is present on interior surfaces of bathroom windows and frames, run the ventilating fan.
- ⇒ **Never drill into the bottom track of a window or door to install an alarm contact.**

### **Sills**

- ⇒ Routinely check your windowsills for caulking cracks or separations, and re-caulk annually or as necessary.
- ⇒ Make sure the caulk seal remains intact to prevent water and air from entering your home.
- ⇒ Check the weather stripping around your windows and repair or replace it when you notice gaps or cracks.

### **Screens**

- ⇒ Ensure your window screens fit tightly.
- ⇒ Use caution when removing and reinstalling screens, as they bend easily (they are easily removed from the inside of your home).
- ⇒ Clean screens with a mild liquid detergent and water, using a soft brush.
- ⇒ Reinstall screens when they are completely dry.

### **Leaks**

- ⇒ If you notice a window leak, immediately contact Our Service Department or a licensed general contractor to inspect the area. Window leaks that go un-repaired may lead to more serious damage, and can affect the structural integrity of your home.
- ⇒ If condensation forms in dual-paned windows, the seal is broken and moisture has entered. Refer to the window manufacturer's warranty.
- ⇒ Do not tint dual-paned windows because it may lead to excess heat between the panes, causing the seals to fail.

## **Patio Doors**

- ⇒ Annually inspect and clean debris from all patio door weep holes and caulk all inside corners of the sill.
- ⇒ Before installing patio additions or other permanent improvements (i.e., pools, spas, patios), you must consult a soils engineer regarding the design and engineering of your addition.

## **French Doors**

- ⇒ Do not place any load on door eaves as they are not designed for this purpose and may sag over time.
- ⇒ Keep doors in good condition by caulking and repainting them on a periodic basis. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

## **Exterior Hardware**

If you are given the manufacturer's maintenance recommendations at the time of sale, please read and follow recommendations for care.

- ⇒ Keep hardware clean and bright by polishing it on a regular basis with a clean, soft cloth. Do not allow dust and other materials to accumulate.
- ⇒ Avoid using any abrasive products, such as cleaners or polishing pads.
- ⇒ If dark spots appear after time, the hardware should be removed from the door, and the remaining lacquer coating completely removed according to the manufacturer's instructions.

## **Grading, Drainage and Landscape**

The final grade around your home has been inspected and approved for proper drainage of your lot. The grading should not be altered in any way that would affect the drainage around your home.

### **Grading**

- ⇒ Maintain the slope around your home to permit water to drain away from the home as quickly as possible.
- ⇒ Keep water away from foundations. Failure to do so may result in major damage to your new home. Expect some settling to occur around the foundation of your home after you move in. This is due to soil settling after excavation and the use of irrigation water by the homeowner.
- ⇒ Monitor the grade around your home on a monthly basis for the first year to ensure any settling does not affect the grade.
- ⇒ Promptly correct any settling that affects the grade; fill in where needed.
- ⇒ Inspect the grade around your home after every heavy rainfall for the first year of occupancy.
- ⇒ Ensure proper clearance is maintained between your home's exterior surface and the grade or concrete.

### **Landscape**

- ⇒ When installing landscape, ensure the proper grade is maintained. The grade should slope away from your home one-quarter-inch fall per foot, for a minimum of five feet.
- ⇒ Landscaping should never come into contact with the exterior of your home. Trim trees and shrubs away from your home.
- ⇒ Irrigation should never spray on the exterior of your home.
- ⇒ Gutters and down spouts are effective in keeping roof water from ponding and pooling

around your home.

- ⇒ Maintain your landscape with periodic nutrients, fertilizer, mulch, etc.
- ⇒ Do not over-water your landscaping. Any water left standing after 30 minutes of watering is a sign of too much water.
- ⇒ The bottom of the fences around your property should not come into contact with the grade to prevent premature deterioration of the fencing materials.
- ⇒ Make sure any changes to your grade do not impact the distance between the bottom of the fence and the grade.

## **Drainage**

- ⇒ Do not make any changes to your home's drainage swales without consulting a licensed landscape architect. Changing the swales will alter the drainage patterns of your lot and could affect your neighbors.
- ⇒ Ensure all swales are free of silt and debris.
- ⇒ Standing or ponding water should not remain for more than 24 hours. If you notice standing water for longer than that, inspect and restore the grade to ensure water drains properly. If your property has swales, these are designed to hold water longer, approximately 48 hours. Standing water after an unusually heavy rainfall should be anticipated.
- ⇒ If you add concrete walkways, stoops, or pads, ensure the drainage pattern has not been altered.
- ⇒ Keep any drains in your yard clean of leaves and debris.
- ⇒ Inspect drains every three months.
- ⇒ Inspect an automatic sprinkler system at least once every three months to ensure there are no broken sprinkler heads, leaking valves, misdirected sprinkler heads, and clogged or cracked pipes.
- ⇒ Adjust your watering schedule according to the temperature, wind conditions, and rainfall. Watering during rainy periods could potentially damage your home and landscaping.

## **Wood Fencing**

- ⇒ Do not change the finished grade in any way that will affect the fencing's bottom rails and pickets or sideboards.
- ⇒ There should be a minimum clearance of two inches to finished grade. If natural conditions (i.e., rains) cause this clearance to be compromised, it is the homeowner's responsibility to make the appropriate corrections.
- ⇒ Beware that planting shrubs with foliage that is in constant contact with the fence may also potentially reduce the life of the fence boards.
- ⇒ Do not allow irrigation sprinklers to spray directly onto the fence.
- ⇒ Paint or seal a wood fence every three years.
- ⇒ Periodically re-nail loose boards.

## **Pot Shelves and Plant Ledges**

Plant ledges and pot shelves are architectural design features that should be used strictly to hold plants and other decorative objects. They are not constructed to support the weight of an adult or child.

# INTERIOR MAINTENANCE

## Structural Components

### Walls

Your home has two types of walls—bearing and non-bearing. All exterior walls are bearing. Because any alteration to bearing walls may cause structural damage, you should consult with a professional before making any changes.

Wood may contract or expand as the weather and humidity changes. The first year in the life of the home is commonly called a “drying out” period, as most construction materials contain moisture, and a gradual drying-out process takes place after the house is completed. Shrinkage may occur in the framing of your home, which may cause minor cracking or nail pops in the drywall as the lumber dries. Nail pops are nails that come loose from the studs, pushing the drywall joint compound up, thus producing a bump in the drywall. **Hairline cracks and nail pops are normal, and do not reduce the function of the stucco, the wall, or the strength of the structure.**

- ⇒ Fill any cracks with spackling compound, and touch up the paint.
- ⇒ Repair a nail pop by resetting or replacing the existing protruding nail, covering the area with spackling compound, and texturing and/or painting over it.
- ⇒ Fill any drywall indentations with two or three applications of joint compound used for drywall taping.
- ⇒ Consult with Our Service Department to make sure you clean the drywall in accordance with the paint manufacturer’s recommendations.
- ⇒ Prior to repainting walls, inspect them for cracking, staining, or mildew, and remedy any problems before applying paint.
- ⇒ Never use plastic deflectors on warm-air-supply grills. This will create a space of stagnant air with high humidity in the wintertime, causing moisture to condense on the windows, rotting the sills and structural members beneath.
- ⇒ **If a security alarm is being installed, make sure any window and wall penetrations are properly sealed. Such penetrations can cause water damage to your home’s interior if not properly sealed.** This needs to be done in order to avoid dry rot. Never drill into the bottom track of a window or door to install an alarm contact.

### Ceilings

All ceilings are essentially the same structurally, but are made from a variety of materials.

- ⇒ Never hang a ceiling fan from a light fixture box, as it is not designed to carry the weight of the fan. Instead, use a mounting box that is designed with specific electrical connection requirements, and that will withstand the vibration of the fan.

### Flooring

The flooring in your new home requires routine maintenance and care. In some instances, the floors, particularly on the second floor, will squeak. Squeaky floors are usually caused by changes in the weather, but shrinkage of the wood material as your home ages and settles may also be to blame. Contact Our Service Department if your floors squeak; the problem can be remedied promptly. Keep in mind that household items such as waterbeds, pool tables and weightlifting equipment can cause deflection even though the house was built in accordance with building codes. It is best to keep such items on the first floor (the concrete slab will act as a stabilizer). If that is not possible, place them next to a bearing (outside) wall.

### Carpeting

Although most new carpeting has built-in stain-resistance that prevents spills and dirt from settling

into the fibers, it does not eliminate the need for keeping carpets clean.

- ⇒ Promptly clean up all spills.
- ⇒ Regularly vacuum your carpet to eliminate dirt and grime, which may damage your carpet fibers.
- ⇒ Eliminate shedding fibers from new carpet as they appear. This is also referred to as fluffing, and is a normal process.
- ⇒ Clean your carpet once a year to remove tough stains or dirt build-up in high traffic areas. Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully before using any carpet cleaner, and apply a small amount in an out-of-the-way area first to test for color fading.
- ⇒ Place rests on the legs of furniture, which allow for even distribution of weight, thus protecting the carpet.

Visible carpet seams are not a defect in the installation of your carpet; they are to be expected. As your carpet wears, the fibers will meld together, and regular vacuuming will mix the fibers, making the seams less noticeable.

### **Ceramic Tile Flooring**

This type of flooring also requires routine maintenance. Remember that ceramic tiles are brittle and may be cracked if hard objects fall on them.

- ⇒ Do not allow dirt or grime to build up on the tile, as it may cause scratches or dulling.
- ⇒ Wash your tiles with warm water and vinegar to eliminate spotting and hard-water build-up, or use a commercially prepared product.
- ⇒ Seal grout to resist stains and eliminate water penetration. Sealing should be completed within 30 days of occupancy and thereafter according to the recommendations of the sealant manufacturer.

### **Hardwood Floors**

- ⇒ Regularly vacuum or dry mop the floor to remove surface dust and dirt.
- ⇒ Vacuum floors with polyurethane finish, and wipe them occasionally with a damp mop or cloth.
- ⇒ Do not use water on hardwood floors without a polyurethane finish.
  
- ⇒ Hardwood floors with other finishes need to be waxed periodically. The frequency of cleaning and waxing depends on the amount of traffic they receive.
- ⇒ Attach rests to the bottom of your furniture to protect wood flooring from wear and scratches.
- ⇒ Do not allow spills or liquids to remain on the floor.
- ⇒ Ensure proper ventilation in the rooms where your hardwood floors are installed to prevent warping.
- ⇒ Avoid direct sunlight from hitting the floors, as it may cause the wood to darken.
- ⇒ **Do not store excessively heavy objects on a wood floor** (i.e., waterbeds, pool tables, and weight lifting equipment). This can cause significant floor deflection. If your home has a concrete slab first floor and a wooden second floor, it is best to keep heavy items on the first floor.

### **Vinyl Flooring**

Vinyl is relatively soft and can be damaged by heavy appliances, dropped tools, and rough use. The damage is permanent. High-heeled shoes can be particularly damaging to vinyl.

- ⇒ Do not use abrasive cleansers or full-strength bleach on vinyl floors. Abrasives will dull the finish and cause permanent damage.

- ⇒ Clean the vinyl with a solution of warm water and commercial vinyl-flooring cleaner; use a sponge or soft cloth to dry the floor thoroughly.
- ⇒ Remove spills immediately to avoid staining.

## **Countertops**

### **Ceramic Tile**

Glazed ceramic tile comes in a vast array of colors and designs, but care must be taken in using and maintaining your tile. Keep in mind that because ceramic tiles are purchased in lots that have the same texture and color, procuring an exact replacement can be very difficult.

- ⇒ Avoid breaking or cracking tile by always using cutting boards and insulated hot pads when preparing food.
- ⇒ Seal grout every year to prevent staining from spills. This may darken the grout. Refer to the directions on the sealant before applying it.
- ⇒ Clean the tile with soapy, warm water, detergent, or a commercial tile cleaner.
- ⇒ Conduct a thorough, routine cleaning of soap scum build-up and hard-water stains in high-use areas, such as your bathroom tub, shower, vanity tops, and countertops. Use a damp cloth or sponge with an all-purpose cleaner; allow the cleaner to stand for about five minutes before rinsing and drying. You may also use a solution of equal parts water and white vinegar.

Minor separation and looseness of the grout where it intersects other materials, such as at the tub, shower, countertop, and flooring, is normal. Given that these different materials expand and contract at different rates based upon the temperature and humidity, separation is unavoidable. The homeowner is responsible for maintaining these junctures.

- ⇒ Special care must be taken with those areas exposed to water, such as around bathtubs, showers, and kitchen and bathroom countertops.
- ⇒ If any grout becomes loose or if gaps appear, apply a waterproof caulking material to prevent the water from migrating behind the tile. If water is allowed to accumulate, damage to the interior walls and structure of your home may occur.

Although your home is carefully climate controlled, mildew and mold can appear in areas that collect water and water vapor.

- ⇒ Always use the exhaust fan during baths and showers and when doing laundry to help remove water vapor.
- ⇒ Immediately eliminate any mildew or mold; follow with a disinfectant to retard future growth.

## **Cabinets**

Preventing scratches and scuffs is the key to keeping your cabinetry looking new for the life of your home. Be mindful of jewelry, belt buckles, mops, children's toys, pots, pans and any other items that can nick or chip your cabinets.

### **Cleaning and Upkeep**

- ⇒ Never use harsh abrasives on cabinets made of finished hardwoods or laminated vinyl materials.
- ⇒ Wood cabinets should be cleaned similarly to a piece of furniture, but not more than once a month to protect against excess polish build-up. Do not use paraffin-based spray waxes or wash cabinets with water, as both will dull the luster of the finish. Do not use detergents, strong soap, abrasives or self-polishing waxes or cloths.
- ⇒ Clean cabinets made of plastic-coated veneer or metal with a mild soap-and-water solution; dry them immediately with a soft, dry cloth.
- ⇒ Periodically inspect your cabinets for excessive wear and or deterioration of the finish.

- ⇒ Make sure dishes are completely dry and cool before putting them in your kitchen cabinets.
- ⇒ Ensure your bathroom is properly ventilated after showers or baths to allow the condensation, which rests on your cabinetry, to dissipate. Bathroom and laundry fans should always be operating when these rooms are in use.
- ⇒ Utilize blinds and draperies during peak sunlight hours to avoid direct sunlight that could fade or yellow the cabinets.
- ⇒ Wood cabinets may dry and warp, which can cause drawers to stick and prevent doors from closing properly.

### **Cabinet Hardware**

- ⇒ Keep cabinet doors and drawers closed when not in use. Occasionally, check the cabinet hinges and tighten the screws to ensure proper function of your cabinets and hardware.
- ⇒ If necessary, lubricate the hinges on your cabinet doors with an oil-based lubricant. Apply a very small drop of oil to the top of the hinge, work the door back and forth several times so the oil penetrates the hinges, and remove any excess oil with a soft cloth.
- ⇒ **Do not overload your upper cabinets; they have been installed into the framing members of your home.** Heavy china and cookware should always be placed in the lower cabinets. If the cabinets are overloaded it can result in the cabinet being detached from the wall.
- ⇒ Do not overload cabinet drawers or pull them out too far. This action can result in the plastic guide being snapped off at the back of the cabinet drawer.
- ⇒ Do not overload your cabinet drawers because it may over-stress the glides and cause them to fail.
- ⇒ Lubricate metal drawer guides with a light lubricating oil every two years.

### **Interior Doors**

- ⇒ Do not hang anything heavy on doors or doorknobs.
- ⇒ Never negligently slam the doors back and forth.
- ⇒ Lubricate door latch mechanisms annually with a dry lubricant made for door latch mechanisms.
- ⇒ Periodically inspect hinges and retighten as necessary.

### **Water Heater**

- ⇒ Set the temperature of your water heater no higher than 120 degrees F, and keep it in an insulated jacket.
- ⇒ Check the temperature and pressure-relief valves every three or four months to ensure proper operation.
- ⇒ Avoid storing anything near the water heater that might obstruct the flow of air or create a fire hazard.
- ⇒ Remove the small amounts of scale and dirty water that water heaters normally collect. To do so, first shut off the water intake valve and turn off the power source for the heater. Open the valve at the bottom of the heater and completely drain the tank. Open the water intake valve, and allow some water to flow through to flush out the remaining sediment. Shut the valve at the bottom of the tank. When the tank is full, follow manufacturer's instructions for restoring heat.
- ⇒ Do not remove the seismic straps that secure your water heater in case of an earthquake.

## **Fireplaces**

We no longer offer wood burning fireplaces for ecological reasons. We continue to print this section as you may have one in another home and may find this information helpful. Wood burning fireplaces require regular maintenance to ensure proper operation and safety. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions before initially using the fireplace.

### **Wood-Burning Fireplaces**

- ⇒ **To avoid cracking the fireplace lining, “cure” your new fireplace by burning a series of small, low-heat fires before fully using it.**
- ⇒ Make sure to keep the glass door (a building code requirement) closed during operation. If doors are left open, the fireplace's ventilation system will draw more heat from the room than the fire provides.
- ⇒ Always ensure that the damper is open before lighting a fire, and that it draws properly.
- ⇒ Keep the damper closed when the fireplace is not in use to prevent loss of warm air and to keep rainwater from coming into your home.
- ⇒ Only burn firewood or fire logs in your fireplace.
- ⇒ Never burn trash or use any fire-starting agents, such as gasoline or kerosene, in your fireplace.
- ⇒ Always ensure a fire is fully extinguished before going to bed or leaving the house, or before closing the damper.
- ⇒ Store firewood outside and away from your house as it may harbor insects, termites, and rodents.
- ⇒ Always use a fire grate or andirons in your fireplace to allow air to circulate around the fire.
- ⇒ Never place the fire directly on the floor of the firebox.
- ⇒ Clean the flue according to manufacturer's specifications and depending on usage. Hire a chimney sweep once a year to perform this maintenance task. Failure to keep the chimney clean may result in dangerous flue fires high up in the chimney.
- ⇒ Spray any rust on the damper with a non-flammable removing lubricant. Make sure hot coals are not present. The spray may be flammable.

### **Gas-Burning Fireplaces**

Gas-burning fireplaces require less maintenance than wood-burning fireplaces and are often more efficient. Gas fireplaces may have a chimney or may vent exhaust gases directly outside without a chimney.

- ⇒ Use safety precautions when operating a gas fireplace; refer to the manufacturer's instructions.
- ⇒ The flue or vent on vented fireplaces must be kept open at all times, even when the fireplace is not in use.
- ⇒ Do not smoke or burn candles while cleaning or lighting the fireplace.
- ⇒ When a gas leak is suspected, evacuate the home and call the gas company immediately.

## **Smoke Detectors**

Smoke detectors are connected to the home's electrical system, and have a back-up battery.

- ⇒ Check your smoke detectors monthly to ensure they are functioning properly. Vacuum in and around the unit every three months.
- ⇒ Refer to the manufacturer's recommendations for detailed information and maintenance requirements.

## **Mirrors**

- ⇒ Clean mirrors with a commercial glass cleaner or polisher.
- ⇒ Avoid acidic cleaners and splashing water under the mirror, as both can cause the silvering to deteriorate.
- ⇒ Avoid getting glass cleaners on plumbing fixtures because some formulas can cause the finish to deteriorate.
- ⇒ You should not use ammonia or vinegar to clean your mirrors as they can be extremely damaging to the metallic backing of the mirror.

## **Ranges, Ovens and Broilers**

Your new oven and broiler are self-cleaning; review your oven warranty before selecting a non-abrasive oven cleaner to apply. The outside of your stove or oven may be cleaned with a non-abrasive household cleanser or baking soda sprinkled on a damp cloth.

### **Electric Stoves**

- ⇒ These stoves generally have a separate circuit. If your range does not start, check the circuit breakers.

### **Gas Stoves**

- ⇒ Gas stoves may have an electric ignition, which clicks when the burners light.
- ⇒ Keep pilot lights on gas stoves lit continuously.
- ⇒ Clean burners to remove a clog if the electric ignition or pilot light appears to work but the burners still fail to light.
- ⇒ If you suspect that gas is leaking, turn off the main valve, and call the gas company immediately.
- ⇒ Do not light matches, burn candles, or smoke cigarettes if you suspect a gas leak.

## **Cleaning**

- ⇒ Soak removable burners in a non-abrasive liquid detergent; a wire brush may be used.
- ⇒ Your range hood filters air and odors while you cook. The hood may need to be cleaned periodically; refer to your manufacturer's instructions.

## **Ventilation and Condensation**

### **Ventilation**

Ventilation systems are designed to protect your home against moisture damage. Check the system annually to ensure the fan is operating properly. Fan adjustments may be necessary if the sound changes.

Bathrooms and laundries are areas of high humidity. Bathroom and laundry fans should never be disconnected. The fan should always be turned on during use. Failure to use the vent fans can result in water vapor getting into the drywall, the electrical outlets and even the framing members. Over time, mold, mildew and fungi may grow in these areas. Water vapor that condenses on walls and windows can eventually find its way into the structure of the house and weaken the structure through dry rot. Rooms where humidifiers are used should also be well ventilated.

### **Condensation**

Condensed moisture on windows and mirrors indicates excessive humidity in your home, which may cause mold and mildew. Run the ventilation fan more frequently if you notice excess moisture.

## **Bathtubs, Sinks and Showers**

### **Caulking**

The perimeter of your bathtub, sinks and shower is caulked—a material that protects against water intrusion.

- ⇒ Thoroughly check the caulking around your bathtubs, sinks, and showers at least twice a year.
- ⇒ Remove (with an X-Acto knife or razor blade) and replace any cracked or dry caulking as soon as possible to prevent water from causing damage.
- ⇒ Perform regular inspections and maintenance of those areas where caulking is installed.
- ⇒ Caulking is also affected by weather conditions. It will expand and contract depending upon the humidity. If caulk dries or shrinks, it will no longer be an effective barrier to water intrusion.

### **Grout**

The materials in your bathroom may be installed using grout, such as at the intersection of the bathtub, sink and ceramic tile. This water-resistant material will absorb water to some degree. If water is allowed to penetrate the grout, the material behind it may absorb the water, leading to the inability of the materials to hold the tile.

- ⇒ Remove excess water from the ceramic tile, even in the shower, by using a squeegee or towel after each use. By drying down the shower, it will also reduce the amount of deposits and soap build-up caused by allowing remaining water to evaporate.
- ⇒ Seal the grout using a silicone-based sealer when you move into your new home.
- ⇒ Reseal your grout as recommended by the sealant manufacturer, or every three years.
- ⇒ Inspect your grout thoroughly at least once a year.
- ⇒ Never let water or waste stand in the sink. If you have a garbage disposal, use it promptly to remove food waste.

### **Porcelain and Fiberglass Bathtubs**

Your bathtub may be porcelain or fiberglass. Extra care must be taken when using or cleaning a porcelain tub as it may chip or scratch. A non-abrasive cleaner is recommended for porcelain and fiberglass bathtubs.

### **Showers**

Your new home may be an enclosed shower and door. Ensure your showerhead is not directed at the shower door.

# HEATING AND COOLING

Preventative maintenance of your home's heating and cooling system will lower your energy costs, prevent costly repairs and prolong the life of your system. Regular maintenance will ensure that your system is ready to heat and cool your home when needed.

There are a variety of systems for heating, ventilating, and cooling your home. This chapter discusses the most common systems and their individual components. Review all sections that pertain to your home. For specific information on how to maintain the system in your home, refer to the manufacturer's manuals.

## **Professional Maintenance**

- ⇒ Most heating and cooling systems should be serviced once a year by a professional heating or cooling contractor. The professional contractor has the tools, instruments, and training necessary to maintain your system for dependable, trouble-free operation.
- ⇒ The contractor should inspect your system, complete necessary maintenance tasks, and adjust the entire system for optional performance.
- ⇒ The contractor who installed your system or your local oil or gas distributor should be qualified to maintain your system, or you can try the Yellow Pages.
- ⇒ Consider purchasing a service contract for your system.
- ⇒ Contact your heating contractor and air contractor early before the start of the heating and cooling seasons to schedule a service call.
- ⇒ The contractor should clean and adjust all thermostats, clean the furnace's blower blades, and check fan belt tensions and adjust as necessary (worn or faulty fan belts should be replaced).
- ⇒ Permanently lubricated motors should not be oiled.
- ⇒ The humidifier should be examined for water leaks, and mineral deposits should be flushed from the unit.
- ⇒ The contractor should also oil the blower motor and any other motors, inspect and service the heat source, and examine supply ducts for gaps or leaks and repair as necessary.
- ⇒ Condensate lines should be inspected twice a year—at the beginning of the air-condition season and at the end.

## **Thermostats**

Depending on the style of the home, temperatures normally vary from room to room and even more so from floor to floor, particularly during extremely cold or hot weather. The furnace blower will typically cycle on and off more frequently during extreme cold weather. The thermostat installed in your home is used to set the desired temperature for the home. The heating system is designed to reach that maximum temperature and maintain it throughout the time the furnace is activated. Once the temperature drops below the desired setting, the furnace will once again cycle on until the preset temperature is attained. This cycling will continue as long as the "heat" function is turned on at the thermostat and temperature changes occur in the home.

- ⇒ Thermostats should be cleaned and, if necessary, adjusted once a year. Dust between contact points and improper alignment can affect a thermostat's operation.
- ⇒ Your heating and cooling contractor should inspect all thermostats during the annual service call.

## **Forced-Air Heat**

A furnace or electric heat pump heats cool air. A blower then forces the heated air throughout your home. The heated air travels through ducts and registers into your home's living areas. Next cool air returns to the furnace by a separate register and duct known as the cold air return.

Finally, the furnace heats the returning cool air and the cycle begins again.

Thermostats signal a demand for heat at present minimum temperatures. It is this signal that controls the rest of the heating system. When the air reaches the desired temperature, the thermostat turns off the heating system. Thermostats control cooling systems in the same manner at preset maximum temperatures.

- ⇒ Clock thermostats and multiple-setback thermostats can be adjusted to maintain different temperatures at different times of the day to conserve energy. You can set the units for lower temperatures during the workday if the house is empty and at night when you sleep.
- ⇒ Dirty air filters restrict airflow and reduce the heating system's efficiency. Inspect your air filters once a month when the system is in use for heating or cooling.
- ⇒ Clean or replace dirty air filters as necessary. Locate and remove the metal panel covering the filter(s), which should be located near the heating system's blower. Slide out the filters, clean or replace them, and reposition them according to the airflow directions on the filter. Replace the cover panel.
- ⇒ Regular inspection, cleaning, and replacement of your furnace filters will reduce your heating bills and prolong the life of your heating unit.

### **Homeowner Maintenance**

Between each maintenance call, you should do the following once each month when your forced-air system is in use for heating or cooling:

- ⇒ **Inspect air filters and clean or replace monthly or as necessary.**
- ⇒ Reduce dust in your home by vacuuming heat registers and the cold air return as part of your regular cleaning.
- ⇒ Remove any objects or debris that may have fallen through the registers.
- ⇒ Remove any drapes, furniture or other objects blocking registers, interrupting airflow and lowering your system's efficiency.
- ⇒ Listen to your furnace and the rest of your system. If you hear unusual noises, follow the appliance manual's directions or consult with your professional heating contractor.
- ⇒ Examine exposed supply ducts for gaps or leaks allowing heated air to escape.
- ⇒ Look for gaps, and run your hand along exposed supply ducts with the blower running to feel for escaping air. Seal any leaks with duct tape.
- ⇒ Experiment with the adjustable vents in your home to establish the best heat flow for your lifestyle. Generally you can reduce the heat in seldom-used or interior rooms. This is an individual matter and you will need to balance the system for your own family's needs. In two-story homes, seasonal adjustment of vents may be necessary, to compensate for the natural tendency of heat to rise.

## **APPLIANCES**

Manuals for all of the appliances in your new home are included with this booklet. Read all usage and maintenance instructions before using your new appliances.

Your appliances are covered by the specific warranties provided from the manufacturers. Complete and mail any warranty cards directly to the manufacturer. If a problem arises with an appliance, call the customer-service number listed in the manufacturer's warranty. When reporting warranty items to the appliance manufacturer, be prepared to supply the following:

- ⇒ Date of purchase (closing date of escrow)
- ⇒ Serial and model numbers (found on a metal plate on the side or bottom of each appliance)
- ⇒ Description of the problem

**For easy future reference, create a list of the customer-service telephone numbers and the serial numbers of your new appliances upon moving into your new home.**

## **PLUMBING SYSTEMS**

Most new homes have copper piping. Every plumbing fixture in your new house has a drain trap. This trap is shaped like a "U" and is designed to provide a water barrier that prevents airborne bacteria and sewer odor from entering your house.

- ⇒ Infrequently used fixtures should be turned on regularly to replace evaporated water and ensure that the barrier system remains intact.
- ⇒ Traps are also the source of most clogging problems. Sink, tub, and shower traps should be kept free and clear as routine maintenance items four times per year. Material such as shampoo, toothpaste, soap scum and hair may accumulate in the traps and could eventually cause a back up.
- ⇒ Use a drain cleaner every three to four months to keep the traps clear and free from build-up.
- ⇒ If you notice odors coming from the sink, pour a large glass of water in the drain, which should fill the trap sufficiently.
- ⇒ **You are responsible for notifying Our Service Department upon noticing any water leak in piping, no matter how small. Failure to give timely notice can result in severe damage to your home.**
- ⇒ When the drain from a bathtub, sink, or shower becomes clogged, try unclogging it with a plunger first. If the plunger does not work, inspect the trap for any debris. If the trap is clear and the clog persists, consult a licensed plumber to investigate the problem.
- ⇒ A clogged toilet should be cleared using a plunger, as well. Consult a plumber if the clog is not cleared with the plunger. Toilet tanks have parts inside them, which wear out over time. If you notice your toilet running continuously, it is time for maintenance. Depending upon the amount of use, flappers, floats and valves may wear out as often as every year. Replace them when you notice the toilet is not functioning properly. These parts may be purchased at any home improvement store.
- ⇒ **If you notice the toilet leaking, immediately notify Our Service Department or consult with a licensed plumber.** Toilets that leak may cause structural damage to the home's floor. Further, termites may be attracted to the area. Ensure your toilet is properly secured to the floor. A toilet that rocks back and forth or side to side may be indicative of a leak even though none is visible.
- ⇒ To avoid clogging drains, never pour grease into them. These materials tend to accumulate in the pipes, reducing their efficiency.
- ⇒ Washers and cartridges should be replaced when any drip is noticed on any fixture.

# ELECTRICAL

Ordinarily, small appliances may be plugged into any electrical receptacle without fear of overloading a circuit. The use of a large appliance, however, or many small appliances on the same circuit, may cause an overload. If a circuit breaker trips frequently, contact a licensed electrical contractor to determine whether additional wiring is needed.

## **Circuit Breakers**

Circuit breakers protect the electrical wiring and equipment in your home. They are heavy-duty switches that serve the same purpose as fuses. When a circuit is carrying more current than is safe, the breaker switches to RESET. On most breakers, the switch has to be pushed to OFF and then to ON after the circuit trips.

- ⇒ “Exercise” your circuit breakers at least once a year by switching the breakers OFF and then back ON again by hand. If a breaker is frozen in the ON position, it will not trip when needed. By exercising your circuit breakers, you can verify their mechanical parts move freely.
- ⇒ Have a professional electrician replace any circuit breaker that does not switch OFF and ON properly.

## **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters**

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) are designed to prevent electrocution. They are commonly used on bathroom, kitchen, basement, garage, and outdoor circuits. Electricity is cut off instantly if there is a “ground fault” or leakage of electrical current to ground (possibly passing through a human body).

A GFCI can be built into wall outlets and circuit breakers. GFCI circuit breakers are located on your circuit panel. They have an extra button marked “TEST” or “T.” An outlet GFCI looks like an ordinary wall outlet with two small buttons marked “TEST” and “RESET” or “T” and “R.”

- ⇒ Reset a tripped GFCI as you would reset a regular circuit breaker. On an outlet GFCI, push the RESET button.
- ⇒ Test each GFCI once a month by pushing the TEST button. The GFCI should trip when tested. Reset the GFCI. If it does not trip or does not reset, a professional electrician should replace the GFCI.
- ⇒ Periodically inspect electrical appliance cords for signs of damage. Replace and do not repair any electrical cord with broken wires or worn insulation.
- ⇒ Never overload circuits with multiple appliances and add-on outlets.
- ⇒ If the wires feel warm to the touch, they should be unplugged and reinserted into a separate circuit.



Buyer Acknowledgement and Receipt for  
“A Guide to New Home  
Maintenance Requirements”

New Home Care

The Buyer hereby acknowledges receipt of the foregoing “A Guide to New Home Maintenance Requirements - New Home Care” document.

The Buyer is hereby expressly informed, and the Buyer hereby expressly acknowledges, that Buyer has received said document and been given ample opportunity read, review and inquire or otherwise deliver written notice to the Seller of the Buyer's disapproval of any matter disclosed therein.

Buyer acknowledges this Disclosure on or before the date of Buyer’s first entering into a Purchase and Sale Agreement for any real property from Seller.

Buyer further acknowledges this Disclosure and the relevance of these established homeowner maintenance schedules in conjunction with the California Civil Code Section 907 the copy of said bill has also been provided to the Buyer.

The Buyer's signature below shall be deemed conclusively to evidence that the Buyer (i) has read and understands the contents of this Disclosure and its relevance to the Buyer's purchase of the Property and (ii) the Buyer approves this Disclosure.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Buyer Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Buyer Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sales Associate

Date: \_\_\_\_\_