



Your new home has been built with modern materials and craftsmanship – designed with your family’s comfort in mind. It will require regular preventive maintenance on your part to preserve its beauty and value – and to prevent costly repairs and replacements later. **This preventive maintenance should begin the day you move into your new home.**

**Homes by Towne®** has prepared this helpful New Home Care and Maintenance Guide to help you maintain your home. It is possible that all the features and items discussed in this maintenance guide are not present in your home. Also, your home could have features and items that are not covered in this guide. In addition to valuable product information, you’ll find listed below helpful hints that will guide you in doing preventive maintenance on your new home.

If additional information is desired for the care and maintenance of your new home, you may wish to obtain the following published by NAHB:

*Your New Home and how to take care of it.* Home Builder Press. NAHB, original publication 1975, most recent edition 2006

For further information on purchasing this book, please contact:

Builder Books™ - National Association of Home Builders  
1201 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005-2800  
(800)223-2665  
<http://www.builderbooks.com>

## HELPFUL TOOLS

You will need a few basic tools and supplies to keep your home “like new”. At the minimum, we suggest you have the following:

- ❖ Medium-sized, adjustable wrench
- ❖ Screwdrivers (various types/sizes)
- ❖ Hand saw
- ❖ Duct and electrical tape
- ❖ Quality interior and exterior caulk
- ❖ Sandpaper (medium and fine Grit)
- ❖ Standard pliers
- ❖ Claw hammer
- ❖ Assorted brads, nails and screws
- ❖ Sturdy penknife
- ❖ Matching interior and exterior paint
- ❖ Various sized paint brushes

**Special Note:** Should a problem occur during your warranty period (see First Year Customer Care Program) that cannot be solved by the maintenance information contained in this guide, contact our Customer Care Service Department. Other courses of action may affect your coverage under the Limited Warranty.



Care & Maintenance Index

Walls

Drywall (walls/ceilings)..... 6-3
Painting..... 6-4
Wall Tile..... 6-5
Caulk..... 6-6
Wood Trim..... 6-7

Floors

Vinyl Floors..... 6-8
Floor Tile..... 6-8
Grout..... 6-9
Hardwood Floors..... 6-12
Carpet..... 6-15

Doors

Doors..... 6-16
Garage Doors..... 6-17
Keys & Locks..... 6-18

Bathrooms

Fiberglass Tub & Shower Bases..... 6-19
Shower Enclosure..... 6-19
Cabinets ..... 6-20
Countertop Care..... 6-21
Countertops (Cultured Marble)..... 6-21
Countertops (Granite)..... 6-22
Countertops (Laminate)..... 6-23
Countertops (Quartz)..... 6-24
Countertops (Solid Surface)..... 6-25
Toilets..... 6-26

Kitchen

Sink..... 6-27
Appliances..... 6-28
Garbage Disposal..... 6-29
Cabinets ..... 6-20
Countertop Care..... 6-21
Countertops (Cultured Marble)..... 6-21

Kitchen, Cont.

Countertops (Granite)..... 6-22
Countertops (Laminate)..... 6-23
Countertops (Quartz)..... 6-24
Countertops (Solid Surface)..... 6-25

Mechanical

Electrical Systems..... 6-31
Plumbing Fixtures..... 6-36
Water Heater..... 6-37
Air Conditioning..... 6-38
Air Conditioning Filter..... 6-39
Dryer Vent. .... 6-40
Microwave Hood..... 6-40
Fireplace..... 6-41
Garage Door Openers..... 6-43

Exterior

Windows ..... 6-45
Landscaping..... 6-47
Sprinkler/Irrigation..... 6-49
Siding – Cement..... 6-52
Stucco..... 6-53
Concrete Foundations & Areas..... 6-54
Roof..... 6-55
Gutters..... 6-56
Hurricane Shutters..... 6-55

Safety

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter.... 6-57
Smoke/CO Detectors..... 6-59

Maintenance

Schedule Overview..... 6-60

### DRYWALL:

The interior walls of your home have been constructed of gypsum wallboard (drywall). Slight imperfections such as shrinkage, settlement cracks, a slight lifting of baseboards, nail pops and/or seam lines do appear during the drying and settling process of your home. This is a normal condition of drywall construction.

Also, please note: “Critical lighting”, which is the artificial or natural lighting that strikes the glossy drywall surface at an oblique angle, will also accentuate even the slightest surface variations. Typically, additional patching, painting or other applications cannot improve this condition.

No attempt should be made to repair these occurrences in the drywall until your home has gone through the drying and settling period. This is usually around twelve (12) months.



#### *Helpful Hints:*

- ❖ After you have passed your one (1) year period, and the house is sufficiently dried, use a product call “spackle” to fill in any slight imperfections. Spackle can be obtained in any hardware or home care store, in either powder or paste form. Follow the instructions on the container and follow up with the use of touch-up paint, which was provided to you.
- ❖ Putting a piece of cardboard, such as a matchbook cover, over the nail and then gently tapping with a hammer, can reset a nail pop. When redecorating, knock the loose paint and plaster off of the top of the nail pop and fill and repaint that area.
- ❖ Hairline cracks should be left until redecorating, at which time they may be repainted or filled with patching material and repainted.
- ❖ Baseboards can be easily reset, but this shouldn’t be done until you are ready to redecorate because resetting may damage the finish.



## PAINTING:

### *Interior:*

Your walls and ceilings have been painted with a quality, interior latex paint. Touch-up paint for your interior walls and ceilings was provided to you at the time of your final walk-thru/home orientation. This paint should be used on only those surfaces. Do not use on woodwork or doors unless otherwise noted.

If you elect to wallpaper after your first year, you must prepare all painted surfaces for wallpapering with an appropriate sizing material. This product can be purchased at any wallpaper, paint or hardware store. Follow instructions on the container.

***Special Note:*** Failure to prepare your walls could result in the wallpaper not adhering to the surface or the paper pulling the paint or the drywall surface material off the wall.

### *Exterior:*

High quality paint has been used on the exterior surfaces and doors of your home. Depending on climate exposure, some paints, particularly dark colors, will fade more than others.

***Helpful Hints:*** Cleaning painted areas routinely will preserve the appearance of your home.



❖ ***Oil-based paint:*** Should you ever choose an oil-based paint for your home, please be aware that all oil-based paints are subject to yellowing. The action of the sun usually minimizes yellowing on exterior surfaces. However, yellowing can be noticeable on interior surfaces. The natural drying and aging of the paint can cause yellowing by exposure to certain chemicals, such as ammonia fumes and others that are found in some household cleaners. White painted surfaces and light colors are more subject to yellowing than the darker colors are. Yellowing of oil-based paints is unavoidable in some areas. Because yellowing tends to take place over time and relatively evenly on given surfaces, it may not be noticeable until you use touch-up paint. Your paint store can assist you in selecting a touch-up paint that will be a close match for yellowed paint.

### GLAZED TILE:

Contaminants and spills on a glazed ceramic tile are, generally, easier to clean than other, more impervious surfaces.

- ❖ Glazed tile products should be cleaned routinely with an all-purpose, non oil-based household or commercial cleaner. The product chosen should also be grout joint cleaning compatible.
- ❖ The entire area should be cleaned and scrubbed with cleaner solution through the use of a cotton mop, cloth, sponge, or non-metallic brush. The entire area should be rinsed with clean water to remove any cleaning solution residue.
- ❖ Routine cleaners should never contain acids or ammonia. Acids can damage the grout and the glazed surface of the tile, and ammonia can discolor the grout.

### CERAMIC TILE:

- ❖ Do not use cleaning products containing **acid or bleach** for routine maintenance as these can permanently etch tile and discolor grout.
- ❖ Do not use **wax-based cleaners, oil-based detergents or sealants** on your tile as they create a build-up that is difficult to remove.



- ❖ One of the best tile cleaners is equal parts **white vinegar** and clear water. White vinegar is acidic but it is gentle when diluted with water.
- ❖ **Rinse entire area** with clear water after cleaning to remove any cleaning solution residue.
- ❖ **Use a sealer** on grout joints to make cleaning grout easier and to maintain grout color. Be sure that floor is free from any soap residue prior to applying sealer. Only apply to grout, not tile.

- ❖ Heavily soiled tile and grout may be scrubbed with a **paste made of 1-part water to 1-part baking soda** using a stiff bristled brush. Mop and rinse with clear water afterward.



- ❖ When cleaning **glass tile**, use a glass cleaner and a soft lint-free cloth. To remove soap scum or water deposits, a minimally abrasive cleaner and soft bristle brush may be used.
- ❖ When cleaning **metal decorative accents**, use clear water and/or a neutral (soapless) cleaner, wipe dry with a soft cloth. Do not use sandpaper, steel wool, scouring pads or any abrasive materials or cleaning products.

### CAULK:

Caulk has been applied around tubs, sinks, countertops, thresholds, etc. Even properly installed caulking will shrink and show surface cracks due to settlement, expansion, and contraction. You should check the caulking around your home twice a year and re-caulk as necessary.



*Wet areas in bathrooms*



*Wet areas in Kitchen*

Select a high quality brand. Generally, the silicone caulks are superior and last longer. Some caulks can be painted while others cannot be painted. Exterior caulking may be the Association's responsibility based on its location.

## WOOD TRIM:

Like other organic materials, wood is affected by heat, cold, and extreme humidity. Therefore, it may contract or expand with weather changes. As a result, minor shrinkage and swelling is unavoidable. The primary areas that may be affected include doors, baseboards, wood floors, handrails, fireplace mantles, paneling, and shelving. Slight cracks around doorways, arches, windows, joints in door casings, and nail pops around baseboards may appear. When cleaning any wood trim, make sure to use only a clean dry dust cloth. Use of water or chemical cleaners may affect some finishes.



*You should re-caulk trim as needed to preserve a favorable esthetic appeal.*

### VINYL FLOORING:

To keep the lasting shine and fresh feel of your investment for as long as possible, follow these general upkeep tips:

- ❖ Wipe up spills as soon as possible.
- ❖ Wash your floor occasionally with a no-rinse floor cleaner.
- ❖ Use floor stripper and cleaner made for vinyl, for heavy duty cleaning.
- ❖ Avoid using detergents, abrasive cleaners or "mop and shine" products as they may leave a dull film on your floor. Don't use highly abrasive scrubbing tools.
- ❖ Don't use paste wax or solvent-based polishes.
- ❖ Avoid using a beater bar with vacuuming because it can visibly damage the floor surface.

### FLOOR TILE:

- ❖ **Sweep or vacuum** floor areas prior to mopping to remove any dust and debris.
- ❖ Do not use cleaning products containing **acid or bleach** for routine maintenance as these can permanently etch tile and discolor grout.
- ❖ Do not use **wax-based cleaners, oil-based detergents or sealants** on your tile as they create a build-up that is difficult to remove.



- ❖ One of the best tile cleaners is equal parts **white vinegar** and clear water. White vinegar is acidic but it is gentle when diluted with water.
- ❖ **Rinse entire area** with clear water after cleaning to remove any cleaning solution residue.
- ❖ **Use a sealer** on grout joints to make cleaning grout easier and to maintain grout color. Be sure that floor is free from any soap residue prior to applying sealer. Only apply to grout, not tile.



- ❖ Place **floor mats** at entrances to reduce tile wear. They collect and trap corrosive substances that can be tracked in from outdoors. Also use mats/rugs in areas of constant pressure such as in front of vanities, kitchen sinks and dining tables.
- ❖ Attach felt or similar **protective pads** to all furniture legs, including outdoor metal furniture that rests on tile floors or patios as it may rust and cause staining.
- ❖ Heavily soiled tile and grout may be scrubbed with a **paste made of 1-part water to 1-part baking soda** using a stiff bristled brush. Mop and rinse with clear water afterward.



- ❖ When cleaning **glass tile**, use a glass cleaner and a soft lint-free cloth. To remove soap scum or water deposits, a minimally abrasive cleaner and soft bristle brush may be used.
- ❖ When cleaning **metal decorative accents**, use clear water and/or a neutral (soapless) cleaner, wipe dry with a soft cloth. Do not use sandpaper, steel wool, scouring pads or any abrasive materials or cleaning products.

### GROUT:

Grout is the porous material you will find between your ceramic floor tiles and ceramic countertops in your home. The grout should be inspected periodically for cracks and holes. If either is present, the area should be re-grouted. If it is not re-grouted, water could cause the tiles to loosen.

Minor separation and looseness of ceramic tile grout, where it is joined with other materials, is inevitable. This is caused by the normal expansion and contraction of materials.



Repairs are a function of normal home maintenance. Routine scrubbing of the grout with warm soapy water will keep it clean and fresh. Strong cleaners, such as Lysol, can stain the grout. You may want to consider sealing the grout once a year. This will help prevent stubborn stains from penetrating the grout and becoming unsightly. However, do not seal the grout until it has completely cured, which is about six (6) months after installation. Sealers can be purchased at your home care or hardware store. However, be aware that some sealing products can darken grout.

### *Stain Removal Agents (not for Colored Grout):*

- ❖ **Blood:** Rub with hydrogen peroxide or household bleach, rinse, and dry.
- ❖ **Nail Polish:** Dissolve with polish remover. If necessary, apply liquid household bleach. Rinse and dry.
- ❖ **Grease and Fats:** Use salt, soda water, Spic & Span, or Oaklite with warm water. If stain is stubborn, apply thick paste of household cleaner and hot water, let stand overnight, and scrub vigorously. Rinse and dry, or place an electric iron on several paper towels directly over stain on tiles. Turn iron to hottest setting that **will not char paper towels**. Let stand five (5) minutes on paper towels and blot.
- ❖ **Inks and Dyes:** Apply household bleach and let stand until bleach disappears, keeping surface wet continuously. Rinse and dry.
- ❖ **Iodine:** Scrub with ammonia, rinse, and dry.
- ❖ **Mercurochrome:** Scrub with household bleach, rinse, and dry.
- ❖ **Mildew:** Use a mildew stain remover for tile and grout or scrub tile with ammonia and scrub grout with scouring powder. Wash with bleach, rinse, and dry.

*Recommended Cleaners:*

❖ *Soapless Detergents:*

- Oaklite

❖ *All Purpose Cleaners:*

- Soft Scrub
- Mr. Clean
- Top Job
- Fantastic
- Ajax Liquid
- Lestoil

❖ *Mildew Cleaners:*

- Tilex
- X-14 – Instant Mildew Stain Remover

❖ *Soap Sum, Rust Stain or Water Deposits:*

- Lime Away

❖ *Scouring Powders:*

- Ajax
- Comet



### HARDWOOD FLOORS:

You may have selected a prefinished parquet, strip or plank hardwood floor. Some characteristics of these products are:

- ❖ Streaks, spots, and color variations.
- ❖ An occasional unfilled pinworm hole not over 1/16" in diameter.
- ❖ Knots less than 1/8" in diameter.



If you selected unfinished or job-finished strip oak or parquet, there may be shade variations from piece to piece, as each piece will accept stain differently. The graining of wood will differ from piece to piece, and filled knot or wormholes may appear. These are characteristics that are prevalent in natural wood.

#### ***What You Can't Expect from your Hardwood Floors:***

- ❖ **A tabletop finish:** Each piece of wood flooring sands differently depending on its grain type, plain or quartered, making it virtually impossible for a completely flat surface.
- ❖ **Dust free finish:** Since your floor is being finished in your home, it is not practical to achieve a "clean room" environment. Some dust will fall onto the freshly applied top finish. It will wear off as you use the floor.
- ❖ **A monotone floor:** Wood, as a natural product, varies from piece to piece. Remember, it is not fabricated. It is milled from a tree and will have grain and color variances consistent with the grade and species of flooring selected.
- ❖ **A floor that will not indent:** In spite of the term "hardwood", oak flooring will indent under high heel traffic, especially heels in disrepair.
- ✓ Measured in pounds-per-square-inch (psi), a car has a load of 28 to 30 psi, and an elephant has 50 to 100 psi. A 125-pound woman, with a pair of ¼" high-heel shoes on, has 2,000 psi. That's a problem for any floor – metal, wood, ceramic, carpet, terrazzo, and resilient.

- ✓ Now that stiletto or high heels are back in vogue, you should be aware that the extremely high forces involved might damage hardwood floors.
  - ✓ Damage will usually occur, not from the heels themselves, but from protruding nail heads. An exposed nail head can exert a force of 8,000 psi. That's high enough to crush hardened concrete. It's difficult for any flooring material to resist that high a force.
  - ✓ The extremely high forces exerted by stiletto, or high-heeled traffic (dynamic loads of 1,000 psi or more), may visibly damage wood floors, resilient flooring, and other floor coverings. We will not accept claims for damage caused by stiletto or high-heeled traffic.
- ❖ **A floor without cracks between the boards:** Although your new floor will start tight together, as a natural product, it will continue to absorb and expel moisture. This natural process will cause the flooring to expand and contract from season to season, resulting in cracks between some of the boards in your floor. Some stain colors, such as white, will show this process more than others. Home humidifier systems will help to maintain a constant humidity level in your home and help alleviate the “breathing” or expansion and contraction of all the wood in your home.

### *Helpful Hints:*

- ❖ Clean your hardwood floors frequently. Sweep the floors and mop with a soft, dry mop or cloth. Do not use water or water-based cleaners.
- ❖ When your floor becomes soiled, damp-wipe with a mixture of one (1) cup vinegar to one (1) gallon of warm water. When damp wiping, be sure to remove all excess water from the mop. Never wash or wet-mop wood floors. Excess moisture can penetrate the finish causing discoloration and warping.
- ❖ Do not flood hardwood floors with water. This will cause stains, warping, and the destruction of the flooring. Do not permit water or other liquids to stand on hardwood flooring. Wipe up spills immediately. Do not use water-based detergents, bleach or one-step floor cleaners on hardwood floors.





Don't drag appliances!



- ❖ Do not drag heavy appliances or furniture across hardwood flooring. Permanent scratches in the finish can result.
- ❖ Polyurethane and water-based urethane finishes do not require waxing. You may screen and coat the floor when the finish is worn. This process could be necessary frequently if the floor is in a high-traffic area.

***Preventive maintenance for all finishes is as follows:***

- ✓ Place throw rugs in entries, in front of the kitchen sink, and in other high-traffic areas to avoid the accumulation of dirt.
- ✓ Do not use rubber backed mats as they cause discoloration.
- ✓ Vacuum or dust mop on a daily basis as loose dirt will scratch your floor and dull the appearance.
- ✓ Protection, such as protector pads, placed under furniture legs will help prevent scratches.
- ✓ Wipe up all spills from the floor as soon as possible to prevent spotting and staining.
- ✓ We recommend only using cleaning products approved by the manufacturer of your specific flooring.



### CARPETS:

The best way to ensure long-lasting beauty, comfort and durability in your carpet is to **vacuum it regularly** as it prevents soil from becoming embedded in the carpet fibers. Select a vacuum that is designed for your type of carpet: for cut pile, use a vacuum with a beater bar (rotating brush); for looped carpets, use a vacuum with suction only.

- ❖ **Use scissors** to trim any snags. Do not pull them or you may damage the carpet.
- ❖ **Occasionally rearrange your furniture.** This allows furniture “dents” to recover and also redistributes the traffic flow to avoid excessive pile crushing in the walking paths. (*Hint: Do not drag your furniture. Either lift it or use furniture slides.*)



- ❖ Place **walk-off mats** outside all entrances to absorb soil and moisture that might otherwise be tracked into your home. Clean or replace the mats regularly so they don't become sources of soil themselves.
- ❖ Consider **professional steam cleaning** every 12-18 months depending on the amount of traffic and the frequency of vacuuming. Keep records of your professional cleaning for warranty purposes.
- ❖ Reduce exposure to **direct sunlight**. Protect your carpet from prolonged periods of direct sunlight with blinds, shades or awnings.



- ❖ **Use caution** when treating spots and spills. Visit the manufacturer's website for specific spot treatment instructions. Many common spots can be cleaned by using club soda. “Grocery store” spot cleaners can sometimes contain brightening agents that actually strip the dye from the carpet. Always purchase your spot cleaner from a flooring specialty retailer.

The World Floor Covering Association is a useful, non-biased source of flooring information. Their care suggestions are on the following website: [www.wfca.org](http://www.wfca.org)

❖ **Consult** with your carpet manufacturer if you intend to shampoo your own carpets. Some manufacturers will advise against this procedure. For further advice on stain removal, you may contact the fiber manufacturers directly. Following are their telephone numbers:

- Mohawk Industries (800) 621-6245
- Shaw Industries (800) 441-7429
- Stainmaster® (800) 438-7668
- BASF (800) 526-1072
- Allied (201) 368-8836
- Scotchguard (800) 433-3296

❖ **Helpful Hint:** If you are uncertain of your carpet manufacturer or fiber type, Towne Realty of Hawaii, Inc. can supply you with this information.

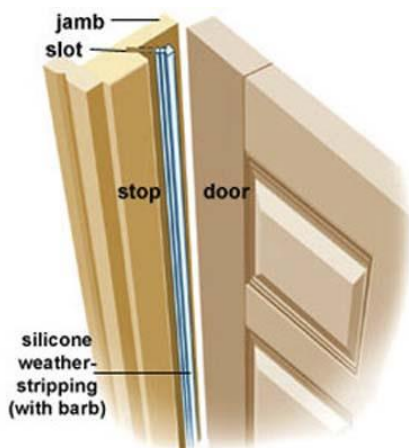
### DOORS:

The most common problem with doors is sticking caused by shrinkage and swelling, especially during summer humidity. It is also a common characteristic in new homes.

Interior doors often stick or warp due to various weather conditions. Interior panel doors may show raw wood if panels shrink more than the frame. Exterior doors will warp, to some degree, due to a temperature differential between inside and outside surfaces. Winter conditions may change the moisture content of wood doors, causing temporary warping. These conditions are normal.

#### *Helpful Hints:*

❖ **Sticking** – If swelling in damp weather causes sticking, fold sandpaper around a wood block and sand the edge that binds. Reseal any sanded edges.



❖ **Uneven alignment** – If uneven alignment is occurring, check to see that hinge screws are tight and holding properly. If the door is still out of alignment, sand or plane the edge that binds. Always paint or varnish areas you have sanded or planed to protect the wood from moisture and prevent further problems.



- ❖ **Weatherstripping** – To maintain a good seal, you will periodically need to adjust the weatherstripping on your exterior doors. Over time, weatherstripping may need replacement due to wear.
- ❖ **Adjustable thresholds** – Many exterior doors are equipped with adjustable thresholds. These are easily adjusted with a large screwdriver as the seasons and humidity change. A well-sealed door should be somewhat hard to open and close. A slight air crack is normal. Sometimes, a hard wind may cause howling. Adjusting as mentioned above will solve the problem, unless the winds are very strong.
- ❖ **Bi-fold doors that stick** - Keep tracks free of dirt and grit. Occasional application of silicone spray will enable doors to slide easily and prolong their life. Be sure to protect surrounding floor surfaces.
- ❖ **Overhead Garage Doors** - The overhead garage door on your new home is mounted with rollers and tension springs for easy operation. Garage doors do not seal against the elements in the same manner as your other exterior doors, and may show some light at the edges. It is not uncommon for water to enter at the edges. This is not considered a defective installation. The door hardware does require periodic maintenance. You should oil the locking mechanism, pulley, and rollers at least twice per year with a light oil or silicone spray. Due to the constant use of garage doors, it is not uncommon for hardware to loosen over time. It is our recommendation that a periodic check and tightening of garage door hardware will greatly lengthen the life of your garage door.



*Lubricate at least twice per year*

### KEYS & LOCKS:

No key used during the construction of your home will operate the locks after you have taken possession.

Passage door hardware in any home can work loose through use. Keep a careful watch to avoid excessive play in the doorknob escutcheon plate. In the event a doorknob or privacy lock should become inoperative, it is usually because looseness has allowed the interior mechanism to slip out of place. Removal and reinstallation of the fixture, a simple process, will usually correct the problem. Doors with key type hardware are more complicated and usually require the services of a locksmith.

#### *Helpful Hint:*

Periodic application of powdered graphite or silicone spray to keyholes and lock mechanisms can help to keep them operating smoothly.



*Powdered Graphite Lubricant*

### FIBERGLASS TUBS & SHOWER BASES:

If fiberglass tubs and shower bases are installed in your home, here are some helpful hints that will keep them looking like new:

- ❖ Avoid using abrasive cleaners that will scratch the surface.
- ❖ For normal cleaning, use warm water and liquid detergent, such as Dow, Lysol or Mr. Clean bathroom cleaners, with sponge, nylon, polyethylene or saran cleaning pads. Do not use abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, steel wool or scrapers.
- ❖ For an extra sparkle against mild grime, smear entire surface area with a water paste using baking soda, such as Arm & Hammer. Allow effervescing a few hours, rinse with warm water.
- ❖ For stubborn stains, use a nonabrasive cleaner, such as Spic & Span. Sponge the area with the cleaner, allow standing an hour, and rinse with warm water.
- ❖ Avoid dropping objects on fiberglass surfaces, or striking the surfaces with sharp objects; chipping or cracking could result.
- ❖ For scratches and dull areas, rub vigorously with automotive rubbing compound, such as DuPont, and a white cotton rag. Then buff vigorously with a carnauba-based wax. If done twice a year, this will maintain a lustrous finish after cleaning as above.



### SHOWER ENCLOSURES:

For cleaning shower enclosures, liquid Comet will do a good job. It is also recommended that a squeegee be used on the glass after every shower. For deposits of hard water minerals, use a commercial glass cleaner containing ammonia or one (1) tablespoon of household ammonia in a quart of water.

**Caution:** Be sure to read the caution note on the label before using ammonia. Never use steel wool or scouring pads on the metal portion of shower enclosures. It will remove the protective finish applied by the manufacturer and will cause unsightly scratches.

### CABINETS:

For day to day cabinet maintenance, regular dusting with a soft dry cloth is recommended. When wiping your cabinetry, either dusting or cleaning, wiping with the grain of the wood is recommended.



Cleaning requires only wiping with a damp cloth and then drying. To remove general soil, the coated surface may be cleaned with a fresh solution of mild soap and water. The cloth should be soft and dampened with the soap solution. The surface should then be wiped down with a dry cloth to remove excess moisture. In all cases, it is important to ensure that any “puddled” water be soaked up and the surface then dried.

Other cleaning compounds exist but may contain alkaline reagents or other ingredients which may damage the coated surface. Over time these materials can soften the finish potentially leading to film failure. The softening may also lead to incidental damage from environmental influences such as water or moisture damage, increased susceptibility to scratching or abrasion, and staining.

Household polishes can be used on an infrequent basis, however these products generally contain wax which will cause wax build-up and leave a residue that is difficult to remove.

### **POINTS TO REMEMBER**

Routine cleaning will help to prevent long term damage from smoke, dirt and grease which will form a film over time, dulling and discoloring the finish. Where possible, keep finish away from exposure to direct sun. Over time, sunlight may mellow or change the color of the finish, or it may lighten or darken the color. Avoid extremes in temperature or moisture as they cause wood to expand or contract leading to potential coating damage.

❖ *Helpful Hint:* Cabinet hardware will loosen with repeated use. Periodically tighten the hardware as needed.

### COUNTERTOP CARE

Regardless of the type of material used, there are some basic use guidelines that are universal for any countertop to maximize performance:

- ❖ **Never** sit or stand on your countertops. It is the number one reason for countertop damage.
- ❖ **Always** use trivets or hot pads when placing hot items on countertops. Even if the counter material won't scorch, the thermal shock of the extreme temperature change can cause stone or quartz to crack.
- ❖ Use coasters under glasses, especially if they contain alcohol or citrus juices.
- ❖ Use placemats under china, ceramics, silver or other objects that may scratch the stone surface.
- ❖ Blot up spills immediately to minimize permanent damage to the stone
- ❖ Clean surfaces by wiping with clean water and mild soap, then wipe dry with a clean soft cloth.
- ❖ **Don't** use vinegar, bleach, ammonia or other harsh chemicals to clean the countertops.
- ❖ **Don't** use abrasive cleaners or sponges to clean the countertops.

### CULTURED MARBLE:

To clean your cultured marble surfaces, use any commercial liquid, spray, or foaming cleanser. Do not use abrasive cleaners or powdered cleaners that may scratch or mar the finish. Similarly, use a soft sponge or towel to clean, not an abrasive scrubbing pad.

- ❖ Cultured Marble can be scorched by setting hot objects directly on it, such as curling irons, candles, etc.
- ❖ **Avoid** using fingernail polish remover around cultured marble
- ❖ **Stains and scratches** can be removed by using a fine wet/dry sandpaper and water. Follow by polishing using a fine rubbing compound. If in doubt, consult a professional.

### GRANITE:

Granite (and all natural stone) is acid sensitive. Some cleaning products contain lemon, vinegar or acids that may dull or etch stone countertops. Also scouring powders often contain abrasives that may scratch certain stones. Many rust and stain removers contain hydrofluoric acid which attacks silicates and other minerals found in natural stone.



### HELPFUL HINTS

- ❖ Clean granite with natural stone cleaner, neutral soap or mild liquid dishwashing detergent and warm water.
- ❖ **Always use coasters** under all drinks, especially those containing soda, alcohol or citrus juices. Drink spills containing red pigments (such as wine and Kool-Aid) should be cleaned up immediately as they can cause permanent staining.
- ❖ **Blot** spills with a paper towel or soft cloth immediately. Don't wipe the area; it will spread the spill. Flush the area with water and mild soap and rinse several times. Dry the area thoroughly with a soft towel. Repeat as necessary.

Your granite countertops have been sealed. However, **countertop sealants are not impermeable** and will not prevent against acid etching. Please follow the preceding care recommendations.

### LAMINATE:



To clean the surface, use a damp cloth or sponge and a mild soap or detergent. Difficult stains such as coffee or tea can be removed using a mild household cleaner and a soft brush, repeating as necessary. If a stain persists, use a paste of baking soda and water and apply with a bristled brush. Light scrubbing for 10 to 20 strokes should remove most stains.

- ❖ Although baking soda is a low abrasive, **excessive scrubbing** or exerting too much pressure could damage the decorative surface, especially if it has a glossy finish.
- ❖ Do not use **steel wool pads** to clean your countertop and do not allow wet wool pads to sit on your countertop; the metal can rust and leave stains.
- ❖ Never allow liquids to sit in a “puddle” on your laminate seams. Too much moisture can eventually cause the seams to swell and open up.

### QUARTZ (ie, Silestone®):

Quartz is one of the toughest countertop surfaces on the market. It resists scratching, staining and scorching better than any other product.

For daily cleaning, use a mild household cleaner such as 409®, Fantastic® or Windex®. In case of stubborn spills or stains, soak the area for up to 10 minutes with one of the above cleaners and vigorously wipe away with a sponge.



#### *Helpful Hints:*

- ❖ Avoid **excessive force or pressure** that may mar or chip the surface.
- ❖ Avoid harsh chemicals including: nail polish remover, permanent marker, inks, oil soaps, furniture cleaner or paint strippers that contain **trichlorethane or methylene chloride**.
- ❖ Avoid exposure to **high alkaline/PH** levels such as found in oven cleaners.



**SOLID SURFACE (ie, Corian®):**

Solid surface counter tops should be cleaned with a mild detergent and warm water. Do not use any type of abrasive cleaner or scouring pad as these will dull the glossy finish. If any dullness or small scratches appear, they can easily be removed, and the original finish restored, with a rubbing or polishing compound and paste wax. Apply the compound to a soft cloth and hand rub the surface with straight and overlapping motions until all traces of dullness or scratches have been removed. Wipe the surface clean of all rubbing compound and follow with a coat of paste wax.



**NOTE:**

**DO NOT PLACE HOT POTS, PANS, ETC., DIRECTLY ON THE COUNTERTOP SURFACE.**

Always use **heat** trivets or hot pads when placing hot objects on any surface. Always use a trivet under portable **heat** generating appliances such as a toaster oven. Allow cookware to cool before placing it into a **Corian®** sink.

**HELPFUL HINTS**

- ❖ Avoid exposing solid surface countertops to strong chemicals, such as paint removers, oven cleaners, etc. If contact occurs, quickly flush the surface with water.
- ❖ Do not cut directly on countertops.
- ❖ Run cold water when pouring boiling water into sinks.

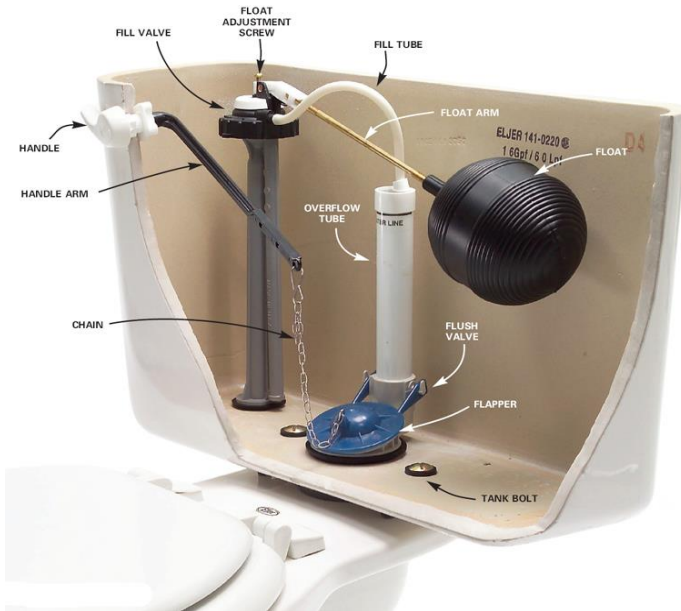
## TOILETS:

Water-saver toilets are required by local and national plumbing codes. Water-saver toilets do not have the same flushing capacity that you may be accustomed to, due to their design to use less water. Never flush hair, grease, lint, diapers, rubbish, etc., down the toilet drain. These wastes will clog drains and sewer lines.

### *Helpful Hints:*

❖ **Toilet cleaning:** Many commercial products are available for toilet cleaning. Use them as directed, but do not mix them or use them with household bleach or other cleaning products. Never use toilet-cleaning products to clean anything but your toilets.

❖ **Toilet leaks:** If the water chamber seems to be leaking, the dripping may be coming from condensation on the outside of the toilet tank. If this is a problem, you may want to use a cloth tank cover. If water leaks into the bowl through the overflow pipe, try bending the rod that holds the float so that the float is closer to the bottom of the tank. Flush the toilet, and if it still leaks, you will probably need to have the inlet valve washer replaced.



*Your tank hardware may differ from depiction*

If the water trickles into the bowl, but is not coming through the overflow pipe, it is coming through the flush-ball valve. The rods between the ball valve and the flushing handle may need aligning so that the ball drops straight down after the handle has been pushed. Water will leak through into the bowl if the ball valve is worn or if there is dirt or rust on the ball or ball seat. If the latter, remove dirt and rust. If the ball is worn, turn off the water, unscrew the ball, and replace it with a new one.

### SINKS:

#### STAINLESS STEEL

Stainless steel sinks are relatively easy to maintain. It is recommended that no harsh abrasives (powder cleaners or scouring pads) should be used on the sink. Non-toxic liquid cleaner or mild grease cleaner will keep the sink looking new. Water spots can be cleaned with an ammonia and water solution or with a Windex type cleaner. A metal polish can be applied to keep the luster of the sink and prevent water spots or minor stains.



---

#### PORCELAIN ENAMEL



Porcelain enamel coated sink surfaces are smooth and glossy like a mirror and are not indestructible. Carelessness can cause chipping, scratches and stains. A blow from a heavy or sharp object will chip the surface, and scraping or banging metal utensils in a sink will gradually scratch and dull the surface. Cutting food on sink drain boards leave scratches and nicks. The finish is then susceptible to stains, which become increasingly difficult to remove. Stains from various foods and scuff marks can be removed from your porcelain enamel kitchen sink by using a non-abrasive, light bleach cleanser such as Barkeeper's Friend or Soft Scrub.

### APPLIANCES:

Instruction manuals and other papers that were given to you during your new home demonstration accompany your new electrical or gas kitchen appliances. Look through them carefully, fill them out, and mail any return postcards necessary to record warranties.



Should you require service on any of your new appliances, please contact the following company directly to arrange for an appointment:

GE Appliances

(800) GE CARES or (800)432-2737

If you're not sure who should resolve an appliance problem, the appliance company or the installer, contact our Customer Care Service Department to help determine responsibility.

- ❖ **Helpful Hint:** Before calling for service, always check the troubleshooting section of the appliance manual as well as electrical breakers and GFI switches. For gas appliances, be sure the gas is turned on at the valve.

### GARBAGE DISPOSAL:

Your garbage disposal will require only a small amount of attention to give you years of trouble free service. It is permanently lubricated and self-cleaning.

Use a steady flow of **cold** water and allow the unit to run long enough to do a thorough job of pulverizing the waste and flushing it through.

In case your disposal stops functioning, a simple adjustment may be all that's needed. Usually you can do it yourself.

**WARNING: DO NOT PUT YOUR HAND DOWN INTO DISPOSAL UNLESS YOU ARE CERTAIN THE UNIT IS UNPLUGGED.**

If your unit jams:

- ❖ Turn off the disposal and unplug it.
- ❖ Insert one end of self-service wrenchette into center hole on bottom of disposer. Work wrenchette back and forth until it turns one full revolution. Remove wrenchette.
- ❖ Reach into disposer with tongs and remove object(s). Allow disposer motor to cool for 3 - 5 minutes, then lightly push red reset button on disposer bottom (If motor remains inoperative, check service panel for tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses.)

If you have followed the above steps, and are still having problems, please refer to manufacturer's manual and contact an authorized serviceman.

### HELPFUL HINTS

- ❖ Replace the cover in the drain while the disposal is not being used to prevent silverware and other objects from accidentally getting into the disposal. For water drainage, you may have to tip the cover slightly.
- ❖ Flush the disposal for self-cleaning. Allow the disposal and cold water to run after grinding or draining the sink of dishwater. Some detergents are caustic; flushing will pass such material into the drain line without disposal damage.
- ❖ Do not turn off water until grinding is completed and only water and motor sounds are heard

### DO'S

- ❖ First turn on cold water and then turn on the disposer. Continue running cold water for several seconds after grinding is completed to flush the drain line.
- ❖ Grind hard materials such as small bones, fruit pits, and ice. A scouring action is created by the particles inside the grind chamber.
- ❖ Grind peelings from citrus fruits to freshen up drain smells.
- ❖ Use a disposer cleaner, degreaser, or deodorizer as necessary to relieve objectionable odors caused by grease build-up.



### DON'TS

- ❖ Don't pour grease or fat down your disposer or any drain. It can build up in pipes and cause drain blockages. Put grease in a jar or can and dispose in the trash.
- ❖ Don't use hot water when grinding food waste. It is OK to drain hot water into the disposer between grinding periods.
- ❖ Don't fill disposer with a lot of vegetable peels all at once. Instead, turn the water and disposer on first and then feed the peels in gradually.
- ❖ Don't grind large amounts of egg shells or fibrous materials like corn husks, artichokes, etc., to avoid possible drain blockage.
- ❖ Don't turn off disposer until grinding is completed and only sound of motor and water is heard.

### ELECTRICAL:

Your electrical system was created from Underwriter's Laboratory Approved (ULA) components, installed to rigid specifications and inspected by the local building department.

The wiring of your new home meets the code requirements and safety standards for the normal use of electrical appliances. Ordinarily, small appliances, which require your personal attendance for their operations, may be plugged into any electrical receptacle without fear of overloading a circuit. However, the use of larger appliances or the use of too many appliances on the same circuit may cause an overload of the circuit and trip a breaker.



The wiring and equipment in your home are protected by circuit breakers. They are the safety valves of your home's electrical system. The circuit breaker panel may be located on an outside wall of your home near the electric meter, in a closet, or in the garage.

---

**MASTER CIRCUIT BREAKER:** There is a master circuit breaker in the electrical panel of your home. When the master circuit breaker is tripped, the electricity to the entire house is shut off.

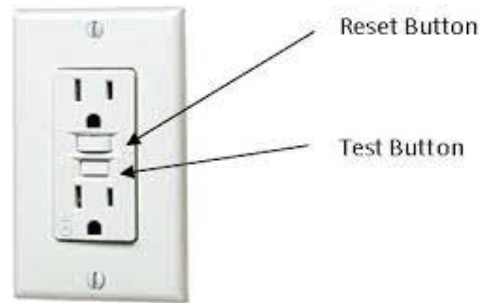
**ELECTRICAL OUTLETS:** Three holed grounded safety receptacles are standard in your home and will also accept older two pronged plugs. Please note that some outlets are controlled by wall switches.

**ARC FAULT INTERRUPTER (AFCI) OUTLETS:** AFCI outlets are designed to recognize many types of potentially hazardous arc faults and respond by interrupting power, reducing the likelihood of the home's electrical being an ignition source of fire. An AFCI is different from a GFCI.

**AFCI TROUBLESHOOTING:** Once the source of an arc-fault condition is identified, (this may be wire degradation or physical wire damage), and corrected, you may be able to reset the breaker.

### GROUND FAULT INTERRUPTER (GFCI) ELECTRICAL OUTLETS:

These are special outlets that are designed to break the flow of electricity in the event of a short circuit, and prevent dangerous electrical shock. These electrical safety devices are installed in bathrooms and other wet areas. They may be tripped by an electrical short, as well as moisture, and should be checked during an electrical failure. Do not plug refrigerators and/or freezers into GFCI outlets.



**GFCI TROUBLESHOOTING:** If any receptacle on a GFI circuit collects any moisture, as it may after a rain or during a period of high humidity, the receptacle may “trip” and automatically shut off all power. If this happens, the power will remain off until the receptacle dries and is reset by you. The receptacle cannot be reset until it dries. Opening any outside covers may reduce the drying time by letting the air and sun dry the receptacle.

---

### HELPFUL HINTS:

One GFCI may control several electrical outlets. Garage outlets are required to be on GFCI's. If appliances that need continuous power, (air conditioners, freezers, etc.) are plugged into GFCI outlets, the appliances should be checked often to make sure the GFCI has not tripped.

- ❖ **Circuit Breakers:** To reset circuit breakers first switch the breaker to *Full Off* and then back to *Full On*.
- ❖ **Power Failures:** In the event of a loss of electrical power in your home, follow these steps:
  - If the power loss is just in one area of your home, chances are an individual circuit breaker has turned off. Unplug any appliances in the area that is without power and turn other appliances off as well. Check the circuit breaker and, if necessary, reset it. Plug your appliances back in. If the circuit breaker fails repeatedly, you have either a short circuit in one of your appliances or a short circuit in the electrical system in your home. Do not attempt further repair, and call a licensed electrician.



- If electrical power is lost throughout your home, first check to see if your neighbors are without power. If the outage is neighborhood wide, contact your power company. If just your home's power is out, check the master circuit breaker. If the master circuit breaker has tripped, reset it. To reset, turn all breakers off, turn the master breaker on, and then turn the other breakers on one by one.
  - If the master circuit breaker trips repeatedly, refer the problem to a licensed electrician.
- ❖ **Electrical Troubleshooting:** If electrical outlets won't work, make certain the circuit breaker has not been tripped. If it has, reset it. If not, make sure a wall switch that is in the *OFF* position does not control the outlet.
- If individual ceiling lights or lamps don't come on, check the bulb in another fixture. If the bulb is good, check the circuit breaker to see if it is tripped, and reset if necessary. Also, check for wall switches that may be turned *OFF*.
  - If an outlet sparks when plugged into, be certain the appliance is *OFF* before plugging it in. If it still sparks, try another outlet. If you get sparks from a second outlet, the problem is usually in the appliance cord. If you do not get sparks, have the receptacle inspected. Please note that sparks from wall switches should be checked by an electrician.
  - If a wall switch or receptacle is hot to the touch, immediately trip the circuit breaker serving that fixture and contact an electrician.

---

**Special Note:** We highly recommend that you consult a licensed electrician to make any changes or additions to your electrical system. A permit may be required.

**Caution:** Respect your electrical system. Do not insert metal objects into wall outlets.

## PLUMBING:

### DRAINS

Each plumbing fixture in your home has a J-shaped pipe designed to provide a water barrier between your home and the odor of sewer gas. The trap holds water, which keeps airborne bacteria and the odor of sewer gas from entering your home.

If you seldom use a fixture, turn it on at regular intervals to replace evaporating water and keep the barrier intact. Because of their shape, traps are the point where drains are most likely to become clogged.



### *HELPFUL HINTS:*

- ❖ *Bathtub, sink, and shower drains:* If a drain in these fixtures becomes clogged, first use a plunger. Be sure the rubber cup covers the drain opening and that the water comes well up over the cup edge. Working the plunger up and down rhythmically 10 or 20 times in succession, will build up pressure in the pipe and be more effective than sporadic, separated plunges. Be sure to plug the overflow outlet, if there is one, with a piece of old cloth, and close the other drain when working on a double sink. If the plunger does not solve the problem, use a plumber's snake if you are comfortable with its use, or call a plumbing repair person.
- ❖ If a plunger or snake can partially open a drain, often hot water (no hotter than 140 degrees for plastic pipe) will finish the job. If not, open the trap, putting a bucket or pan under it to catch the water. A piece of wire may help dislodge the blockage. The snake can also be run in at this point.
- ❖ Although it is sold commercially as a drain cleaner, never use caustic soda to open a drain. It will combine with the grease from soap or food wastes to form an insoluble compound.

- ❖ Potash lye or caustic potash may help finish opening a drain, but never use them on a completely stopped up drain. They may take as long as overnight to work, and if you have opened the trap, the chemicals would be a hazard.

*Caution:* Because potash lye and caustic potash are highly corrosive, always pour them slowly into the drain to keep them from splattering. Never pour water into the chemicals. Wear old clothes, rubber gloves, and goggles or safety glasses. Never use a plunger after chemicals have been added to a drain, as the water may splash and cause an injury or damage nearby surfaces. Follow label directions.

- ❖ In order to avoid stopped up drains, never pour grease into a drain or toilet. Ordinary washing soda, not baking soda, added to a drain on a regular basis will help keep it clear of grease from soap and cooking utensils. Run hot water through the drain, turn off the water, add three (3) tablespoons of washing soda, and follow it with just enough hot water to wash it down the drain opening. Let it sit for fifteen (15) minutes and run more hot water.



- ❖ *Washer Drain:* The wall mounted overflow drain in the washer area is intended to handle minor leaks and overflows and will not handle water flooding that is caused by broken hoses, major overflows or other major leaks from a washing machine. The Builder will not be responsible for damages that are caused by a washing machine.

### FIXTURES

Your plumbing system and fixtures should serve you well for many years if properly cared for. To avoid costly major repairs, promptly take care of minor problems as soon as they occur.

❖ **Faucets/Fixtures:** Most of the plumbing fixtures in your new home are plated with polished brass, bright chromium or a combination of the two. The finishes are not covered by the Limited Warranty, but may be covered by a manufacturer's warranty. These surfaces are resistant to water corrosion. However, the brass and chromium plating materials are relatively soft, which means abrasive cleaners, scouring pads and tools, and ammonia-based products can damage them.

#### *Helpful Hints:*

- ❖ Clean your plumbing fixtures with warm soapy water and a soft cloth or sponge. Rinse with clear water and wipe dry to prevent spotting and soap build-up.
- ❖ If water is permitted to accumulate and stand at the base of your fixtures, corrosion and tarnishing can result. Always wipe the area dry.
- ❖ Avoid excessive force when you turn your faucets on and off. The seals in the faucets can be damaged in a short time. Because they have moving parts, faucets are more likely than plumbing, with no moving parts, to require repair from time to time.

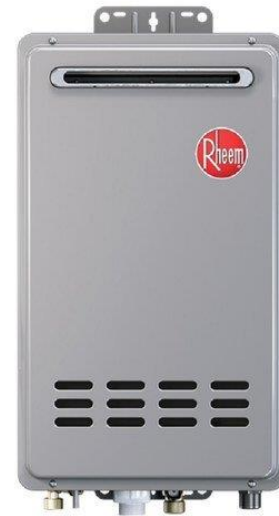


❖ **Aerators:** To maintain your faucets, you will need to clean the aerators by soaking them in undiluted vinegar every three (3) to four (4) months. This attachment to the faucets adds air to the water to reduce splashing and water usage.

- ❖ **Faucet leaks:** If a faucet leaks, usually you can fix it by replacing washers. Instead of washers, some new single-control faucets for hot and cold water have cartridges that last longer, but still must be changed. Be sure to turn off the water at the shut-off valve before repairing a faucet.
- ❖ **Leaking pipes:** The copper, CPVC, and PVC pipes installed in your new home should last the lifetime of the house. If your washing machine, dishwasher or other water-using appliances seems to be leaking, check the trap to see that the drain is not clogged.

### WATER HEATER:

Your water heater is covered by a warranty from its manufacturer. Please read the operating instructions that the manufacturer provides. Failure to perform routine preventive maintenance can prevent the water heater from operating properly. Call the manufacturer listed on the front of the water heater to request service.



#### *Helpful Hints:*

- ❖ Inspect and keep the area around the water heater clear and free of flammable materials, such as gasoline and other flammable vapors and liquids.
- ❖ Visually inspect the water heater for damage and/or denting. If present, contact a service personnel to verify proper operation.
- ❖ Check for abnormal sound during normal operation (e.g., hissing or banging noises). Contact a qualified service technician or plumbing contractor if abnormal sounds are noted.
- ❖ Check all gas and water pipes for leaks.
- ❖ Consult user manual for draining and other use and maintenance instructions

### AIR CONDITIONING:

Your home's air conditioning system is easy to use and maintain. Just select a temperature, set the thermostat, and forget it!

Do not cycle the air conditioning system on and off. Leave the system on through the entire summer/cooling season. When outside temperatures increase through the hottest part of the summer, you may wish to increase the thermostat setting to provide a more reasonable difference between inside and outside temperatures. This avoids overworking the cooling system. The system cannot be expected to reduce and maintain an interior temperature more than eighteen (18) degrees lower than the outside temperature.

To increase the system's efficiency and conserve fuel, close windows and doors tightly. Turn off unused lights and heat-producing appliances. Cover windows in direct sunlight with shades, blinds, draperies or awnings.

If your air conditioning system fails to operate properly, follow this checklist before calling for service:

- ❖ Check the thermostat setting and the thermostat thermometer. The thermostat setting should be **below** the temperature on the thermometer to operate.
- ❖ Check the thermostat selector. It should be on **COOL**.
- ❖ Check the main electrical switch. It should be **ON**. Work the switch several times to remove any dirt from the contacts.
- ❖ Check all circuit breakers in the main switch box. They should be **ON**. Remember to work them several times.
- ❖ Inspect filters to make sure they are not clogged.
- ❖ If your unit is not operating properly after checking all of the above, call the service number provided in your move-in package.

## FILTER

Your air conditioning system has an air filter to help keep the air in your home clean. You were shown its location during your Final Walk-Thru/Home Orientation. For maximum efficiency, this filter should be replaced roughly every thirty (30) days. Be sure to buy the right-sized filter. The size is usually printed along the frame edge.

*Helpful Hint:* Check your furnace and/or air conditioning air filters weekly for the first two (2) months after you move in because your filters may clog more frequently from accumulated construction dust.



**NOTE:** Many homeowners enter into a service agreement with an HVAC company so that the units are maintained regularly and repairs or servicing is performed as needed.

Sometimes filters are located in wall or ceiling registers like the examples below



Filter in ceiling



Filter in wall

## VENTS:

### DRYER VENTS

According to the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA), roughly 15,500 fires are caused annually by clothes dryers, resulting in nearly 30 deaths, more than 400 injuries, and over \$190 million in property damage. You should follow manufactures instructions for safe care and operation. You should also clean your vent duct as needed and at least every six months to make sure it is clear of any lint and buildup.



---

### MICROWAVE HOOD

The mesh filters in your kitchen microwave/fan should be cleaned regularly to reduce fire hazard and keep the pulling power of the unit at its maximum efficiency. This will also keep the area walls, floors, and ceiling cleaner.



Clean both the top and underside of the microwave hood with a damp, sudsy cloth. Cleaning the underside is very important since deposits here form a hard residue which is very difficult to remove if not cleaned regularly.



### FIREPLACE:

Your home may be equipped with a prefabricated, direct vent gas fireplace. Direct vent means that no combustion air is drawn from the living environment and that all products of combustion are exhausted to the exterior.

#### *Helpful Hints:*

- ❖ Never burn any combustible materials in your gas fireplace.
- ❖ Clean the glass front twice annually or as required in heavy usage. Use a glass cleaner or vinegar applied with crumpled newspaper. Do not use razor blades on glass.

Your gas fireplace may be equipped with a push button electric gas starter. Refer to your owner's manual for information. Also, reference your owner's manual for cleaning instructions.



When lit for the first time, the fireplace will emit a slight odor for one or two hours. This is due to the curing of the logs and “burn in” of internal parts and lubricants used in the manufacturing process. This condition is temporary. Open doors and windows to ventilate the room(s) sufficiently. **Important:** Clean inside of the glass door whenever you see dirt build-up on glass. Operation of the fireplace with dirty glass will make it very difficult to clean the glass.

- ❖ **Maintenance Instructions:** Refer to manufacturer's recommendations.

### GARAGE DOOR OPENERS:

Your garage door opener will perform best and last the longest if you take time to service your garage door. A simple door balance check once a month will ensure your door is not causing stress to the opener, and annual lubrication of the door and opener will ensure the smoothest operation possible. Follow this standard maintenance schedule to obtain the longest possible life from your Chamberlain garage door opener.

#### *Warning:*

#### **To prevent possible injury or death:**

- ❖ ALWAYS call a trained door system technician if your garage door binds, sticks, or is out of balance. An unbalanced garage door may not reverse when required.
- ❖ NEVER try to loosen, move or adjust garage door, door springs, cables, pulleys, brackets or their hardware, all of which are under EXTREME tension.

#### **ONCE A MONTH YOU SHOULD:**

##### **Test the balance of the door:**

1. With the door closed, disconnect the garage door from the garage door opener, by pulling the red manual release rope straight down and then back toward the motor unit. With the door disconnected from the opener you should be able to open and close the door easily with one hand. The door should be lightweight and operate smoothly in both the up and down direction. If the door sticks or binds the door is out of alignment and will need to be serviced by a professional.
2. Open the door half way and then release the door. The door should remain in place completely supported by the springs. If the door begins to fall towards the floor or starts to rise upwards, the door is out of balance and will need to be serviced by a professional.

##### **Test the Safety Reversal System:**

1. With the door fully open, place a one-inch board (or a 2x4 laid flat) on the floor, centered under the garage door.

2. Operate the door in the down direction. The door must reverse upon striking the obstruction. If the door stops on the obstruction, it is not traveling far enough in the down direction. Increase the DOWN limit (located on the side of the overhead motor unit) by turning the DOWN limit adjustment screw counterclockwise (opposite of arrow) 1/4 turn.
3. Repeat the test.
  - a. On a sectional door, make sure limit adjustments do not force the door arm beyond a straight up and down position.
  - b. When the door reverses on the one-inch board (or a 2x4 laid flat), remove the obstruction and run the opener through 3 or 4 complete travel cycles to test adjustment.
  - c. If the door will not reverse after repeated adjustment attempts, call for professional garage door service.
  - d. Repeat this test once a month and adjust as needed.

### **ONCE A YEAR YOU SHOULD:**

#### **Lubricate Moving Parts:**

1. Use a small amount of white lithium based lubricant to lube the door's rollers, bearings and hinges.
2. You may also lubricate the frame of the house where the garage door contacts the wood with a regular wax candle. This will help the door slide easier against the house while opening and closing.

### **ONCE EVERY 3-4 YEARS YOU SHOULD:**

Re-lubricate the garage door opener rail. Using a clean rag, wipe away existing lubrication from the center rail and reapply a small layer of lubrication. We recommend using a white lithium based grease for all lubrication purposes.

### WINDOWS:

Despite the energy-efficiency of today's windows, they still remain a source of heat loss and you may feel cold radiating from a properly installed and functioning window during winter weather. This is normal and to be expected.

Due to the fact that modern houses are extremely well-sealed, you may experience condensation buildup on your windows during times of high humidity. Here are some easy steps to take to ventilate excess humidity out of your home:

- ❖ Turn on exhaust fans and open windows to ventilate excess moisture out of kitchens, bathrooms or laundry rooms which are typically sources of warm, humid air.
  
- ❖ You can air out your home for a few minutes each day by opening a window or door at the front and back of the house to produce some cross ventilation.



#### *Other Helpful Hints:*

- ❖ Keep all windowsill channels free of dirt and debris to maintain proper seal and operation. Use your vacuum's crevice attachment to remove any dirt in your sills. In the event you feel a draft from a window, make sure to check the track for dirt build-up before requesting warranty service.
  
- ❖ To ensure proper drainage, you should periodically check the weep holes in your windows to see that they are free of dirt.

### LANDSCAPING:

The sod that was chosen for this area is considered to be a strong, hardy grass that thrives in this region. Certain maintenance procedures are important for its proper growth and maturity. Refer to guidelines for sod maintenance from the sod supplier.

- ❖ **Adding soil:** If your landscaping projects require that additional soil be added to your lot, be careful that the drainage is not altered significantly. Keep the surface of the soil at least six inches (6") below the level of stucco screed or siding materials. This will aid in preventing wood rot.
- ❖ **Flowerbeds:** Flowerbeds can significantly change drainage patterns. We suggest that you consult a professional landscape contractor before you dig flowerbeds. In any case, keep plantings of flowerbeds a minimum of five feet (5') from the foundation.
- ❖ **Maintaining your yard:** The grading on your property was done by engineers and was designed to promote proper drainage. Before you undertake a project that will alter the drainage grading on your property, consult with a professional contractor or landscape architect.

### *Helpful Hints:*

- ❖ Do not let water stand or pond near your home. If you notice standing water (ponding) after watering or a rain, correct the problem as soon as possible.
- ❖ Take steps to prevent water run-off to neighboring properties. You could be liable for any damage.
- ❖ Clear surface drains of debris after each rainfall and whenever necessary during the rest of the year.
- ❖ **Watering:** During the first few months, your yard will require frequent watering. We recommend deep watering for long periods. This enables the root system to develop. Water in the pre-dawn hours for maximum effect and to prevent evaporation. Check your local watering restrictions.

- ❖ **Weeding:** Due to the country setting of some of our communities, weeds are a definite problem. To combat this, you should purchase a reputable weed control product and apply it to your lawn as per the manufacturer's specifications. Additional hand weeding will also be required to aid in the control of weeds.



**Caution:** Inorganic fertilizers are often much stronger than organic types and are more difficult to apply in the proper amounts. Improper application may result in damage to the new lawn and surrounding concrete.

- ❖ **Lawn Diseases:** Most lawn diseases happen when lawns are over-watered and under-fertilized. Adjust your watering and fertilizer schedule when rust and other diseases appear. If diseased spots persist, discuss the problem with a professional nursery person.
- ❖ **Insects:** Grasses are resistant to most insect infestations. Corrective measures should be taken only when larger numbers of insects have been seen and damage is evident. At the first sign of damage to your lawn, take a specimen of the insect to a plant nursery for advice.
- ❖ **Pests:** Due to the country setting of many homes, you're bound to encounter pests on your property, especially during phases of nearby construction. Your unwanted visitors may include snakes, ants, birds, bees and such burrowing animals as field mice and gophers. Unfortunately, some of these animals can wreak havoc with slopes by creating tunnels or burrows that lead to soil erosion. If burrowing animals become a problem, contact a professional pest control expert. The builder is not responsible for the removal of pests from your property.
- ❖ **Trees and shrubs:** During the first year, your trees and shrubs will require more frequent watering. A good rule of thumb is to wait until the surface soil is dry between watering. After the first year, watering once or twice a week is normal.

### *Helpful Hints:*

- ❖ Use a pronged tool to cultivate the soil around your trees and shrubs to promote good water absorption.
- ❖ Forming a bowl-shaped mound of soil around the base of trees can prevent water runoff and improve the efficiency of your watering.
- ❖ Signs of under-watered plants are yellowed or brown leaf tips.
- ❖ Prune trees and shrubs as needed.



Please keep in mind that it is the homeowner's responsibility, through proper care and maintenance, to establish a lawn. You may find it helpful to contact a landscape, nursery or garden supply store to obtain literature on the various lawn products.

*Helpful Hint:* When you plant additional landscaping shrubbery, please remember to maintain the slope of earth away from the house and plant shrubbery six feet (6') from

the foundation. This allows for the root system and future plant growth. Homeowners should also pay careful attention to the placement of trees, shrubs, fences, sandboxes, swing sets, etc., in the rear and side yards. This could interfere with the drainage swales and affect the proper flow of water off the property.

Failure to do so could allow water to swell the soil and cause foundation damage and mildew under the sod.

### **Sprinkler/Irrigation System:**

Check your irrigation system regularly. Look for clogged, cracked or broken heads, as well as leaks. If a line is broken, consult with a sprinkler system professional. Avoid digging or trenching around the location of your irrigation lines – and avoid directing the spray at stucco and masonry.

### *Landscape Maintenance Tips:*

- ❖ Your landscaping, whether a do-it-yourself project or one installed by a professional landscaper, should be completed in a manner that ensures proper drainage so that your property, as well as your neighbor's, is protected from surface waters.
- ❖ Maintain the drainage pattern as identified on your lot plan. From the rear yard through the side yard and/or to the street, utilize drainage pipes, rock, ground covers or grasses to prevent erosion along the side yard "swales".
- ❖ Swales that have been graded around your home or on the lot pad should not be blocked. If you have any questions regarding drainage patterns, refer to your lot plan. These shallow ditches have been put there for the purpose of quickly removing water toward the driveway, street or other positive outlet.
- ❖ Do not let water gather against foundations by use of retaining walls. These walls are built to withstand the ordinary moisture in the ground. If water is permitted to pond against them, it may cause structural damage due to erosion or expansion.
- ❖ Do not create depressed planter boxes, areas, or install retaining walls next to foundations so that irrigation or rainwater collects in them.
- ❖ Avoid planting shrubbery too close to your foundation. Six feet (6') is a good minimum. When preparing flowerbeds or planting areas adjacent to foundations, make sure that the ground surface slopes away from the foundation.
- ❖ Never water toward the foundation of your house or water more than is necessary for the growth and maintenance of lawns, flowers, shrubs or trees. Remember, less water is more desirable than too much.

Sometimes it is desirable to install concrete patios at the rear, sides or front of the house. In order that such installations do not have a detrimental effect on your house, the following rules should be observed:

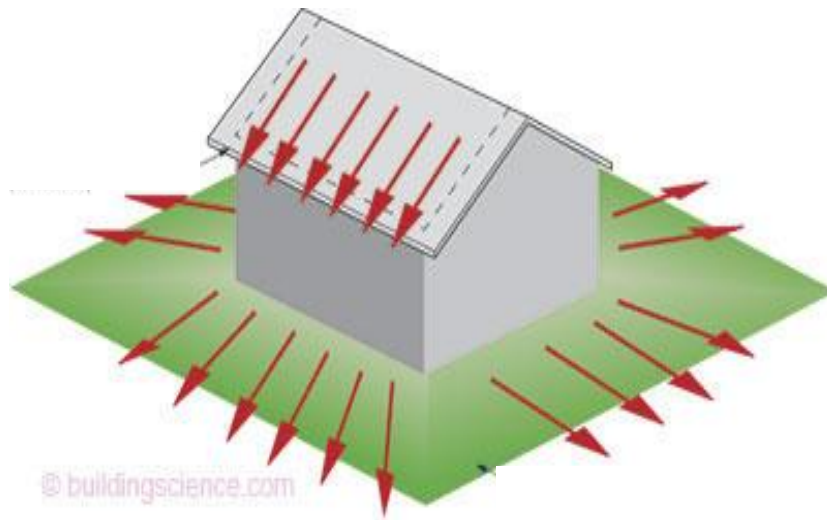
- ❖ Patio slabs should be poured up to house foundations, wherever possible, and a planting strip between the patio slab and foundation should not be left unless proper under slab drainage away from the foundation is provided.





- ❖ Since patio slabs are usually much larger than sidewalks, there is more chance that drainage patterns will be obstructed, particularly at the rear of the house. It is therefore emphasized that positive drainage is restored around the perimeter of the slab by constructing drainage swales or other means. It is extremely important that this be done in the event patio slabs are covered.

By observing the above rules, the patio slabs can be constructed as desired and yet preserve the integrity of the drainage pattern of your lot.



*Ensure positive drainage*

### SIDING:

- ❖ **Patching:** Dents, chips, and cracks can be filled using a good quality cement-patching compound, which can be found at a local home care or hardware store.
- ❖ **Mold/Mildew:** Remove using a commercial mold/mildew remover. Consult the paint manufacturer's recommendations before applying any mold or mildew remover.
- ❖ **Loose siding:** Remail using a corrosion-resistant roofing type of 6D galvanized common nail or similar type of fastener. (See James Hardie's written application instructions for further details.)
- ❖ **Caulk replacement:** When caulk is in need of replacement, carefully remove existing caulk and replace with a high-quality, paintable latex caulk. Caulking should be applied in accordance with the caulking manufacturer's written application instructions.
- ❖ **Paint maintenance:** Remove any damaged, chipped or cracked paint. Prior to repainting, make sure that the surface area is properly cleaned and sanded. Repaint immediately using a good quality 100% acrylic paint. For best results, refer to the paint manufacturer's specifications for application rates and required topcoats.
- ❖ **Replacement:** Replacement of one or more pieces of HARDIPLANK SHOULD BE DONE IN ACCORDANCE WITH James Hardie's written installation instructions.
- ❖ Call 1(800)9-HARDIE to obtain written installation instructions or for more detailed technical information.



### STUCCO:

You might have selected a home with stucco as an exterior finish.

Stucco is a brittle cement product that is subject to expansion and contraction, given this area's environment. Minor hairline cracks will develop in the outer layer of stucco. This is normal and does not reduce the function of the stucco at all.

The white, powdery substance that sometimes accumulates on stucco surfaces is called efflorescence. This is a natural phenomenon and cannot be prevented. In some cases, it can be removed by scrubbing with a stiff brush and strong vinegar. Consult your home care center or hardware store for commercial products to remove efflorescence.

***Helpful Hint:*** Avoid spraying water from irrigation or water systems on stucco or siding surfaces. Check the spray from your lawn and plant irrigation system frequently to make certain water is not spraying or accumulating on stucco or siding surfaces.



### CONCRETE & FOUNDATION:

Concrete, by the very nature of the material, will crack. To date, no known prevention has been found for this problem. The major reason for concrete cracking is settlement. Also, the expansion and contraction of concrete surfaces due to temperature changes during the year can cause cracking. We provide contraction and expansion joints in the concrete in an effort to minimize and control the cracks.

#### *Helpful Hints:*

- ❖ In the event a foundation crack allows the entry of water to the inside of your home, please notify our Customer Care Service Department immediately. We will notify you of the type of action to be taken to correct this situation.
- ❖ In the future, if you decide to pour a patio or service walk at your home, make sure to keep the grade at the top of the patio or walk at least two inches (2") below the bottom course of the siding or the bottom of the stucco.



A concrete sealer, available at any home-care store, will make an unpainted concrete floor easier to keep clean. Follow the manufacturer's directions for cleaning after the sealer has been applied.

#### *Care and Maintenance of Exterior Concrete:*

- ❖ Please remember to avoid the spread of inorganic fertilizer during the spring and summer months with regard to your exterior concrete areas. Inorganic fertilizer can also cause concrete to deteriorate.
- ❖ Do not place granular materials, plantings, bark or borders of any kind, other than grass, around or along the edges of your concrete flatwork as this encourages water to get under the concrete, which can cause earth to settle. This can lead to cracking or breakage. Remember; try to keep water flowing away from the concrete to prevent water from getting underneath it.

### ROOF:

Maintaining your roof is an essential part of protecting your home. In order to accomplish this you will need to conduct periodic inspections so you can identify any potential problems early on\*. Besides inspecting bi-annually, it is also a good idea to inspect the roof after storms and other severe weather.



#### *Helpful Hints:*

- ❖ Clear roof drains, gutters and downspouts
- ❖ Check and maintain caulking and sealants
- ❖ Inspect sheet metal flashing

\* ***Warning:*** Working at heights can be dangerous. Only do so when you are completely confident it can be done safely. When in doubt, hire a professional.

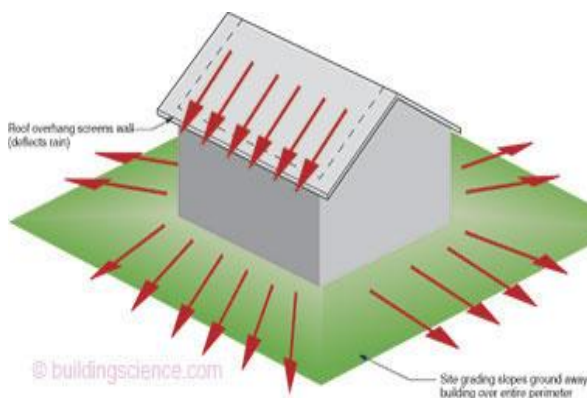
### GUTTERS & DOWNSPOUTS:

The gutter and downspout system on your new home is made of aluminum, which has been prefinished.

Gutters and downspouts should be kept free of tree limbs, leaves, balls, and other obstructions that will stop the system from functioning properly and which may, in time, cause leaks.



You should make sure that all downspouts are directed away from the building to eliminate pooling at the foundation, which may cause a foundation leak. Do not fix the tip-out portion of the downspout in the upright position because you may inadvertently cause water to accumulate next to your foundation.



\* ***Warning:*** Working at heights can be dangerous. Only do so when you are completely confident it can be done safely. When in doubt, hire a professional

## HURRICANE SHUTTERS

Your home is equipped with Hurricane Shutters manufactured by Global Protection Products, LLC. These shutters are stored in your garage and include a hardware kit that is essential for installation.

**IMPORTANT!** YOU SHOULD STORE YOUR HARDWARE KIT NEAR YOUR SHUTTERS SO YOU ARE PREPARED IN THE EVENT YOU NEED TO INSTALL THEM.



***Metal Shutters:*** For information on how to install your metal shutters, please read the instruction enclosed with your Hurricane Shutter Kit. To view a video on how to install your metal shutters, you can visit <http://www.gppent.com/how-to-install-shutters-english.php>.

***Fabric Shutters:*** For information on how to install your fabric shutters, please read the instruction enclosed with your Hurricane Shutter Kit.



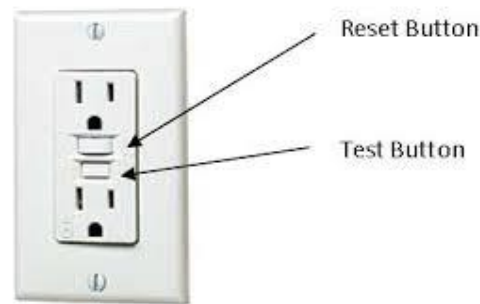
Please note that installation of hurricane shutters will require some basic knowledge of working with tools and ladders. Care should always be taken, as edges and corners of metal shutters can be sharp and cause injury if not handled carefully.

***Helpful Hint:*** It is recommended that you install your shutters onto your home soon after closing. By doing this you will familiarize yourself with the process, as well as identify any issues that may exist.

For more information on your hurricane shutters, or to request service, please contact Global Protection Products, LLC at 1-800-748-8371, or <http://www.gppent.com/index.php>

### GROUND FAULT INTERRUPTERS:

These are special circuit breakers that are designed to break the flow of electricity in the event of a short circuit, and prevent dangerous electrical shock. These electrical safety devices are installed in bathrooms and other selected areas. They may be tripped by an electrical short, as well as moisture, and should be checked during an electrical failure. Do not plug refrigerators and/or freezers into GFI.



***GFI troubleshooting:*** If any receptacle on a GFI circuit collects any moisture, as it may after a rain or during a period of high humidity, the receptacle may “trip” and automatically shut off all power. If this happens, the power will remain off until the receptacle dries and is reset by you. The receptacle cannot be reset until it dries. Opening any outside covers may reduce the drying time by letting the air and sun dry the receptacle.

***HELPFUL HINTS:*** One GFCI may control several electrical outlets. Garage outlets are required to be on GFCI's. If appliances that need continuous power, (air conditioners, freezers, etc.) are plugged into GFCI outlets, the appliances should be checked often to make sure the GFCI has not tripped.

- ❖ **Circuit Breakers:** To reset circuit breakers first switch the breaker to *Full Off* and then back to *Full On*.
- ❖ **Power Failures:** In the event of a loss of electrical power in your home, follow these steps:
  - If the power loss is just in one area of your home, chances are an individual circuit breaker has turned off. Unplug any appliances in the area that is without power and turn other appliances off as well. Check the circuit breaker and, if necessary, reset it. Plug your appliances back in. If the circuit breaker fails



repeatedly, you have either a short circuit in one of your appliances or a short circuit in the electrical system in your home. Do not attempt further repair.

- Call a licensed electrician if the condition is still covered under our limited warranty. If electrical power is lost throughout your home, first check to see if your neighbors are without power. If the outage is neighborhood wide, contact your power company. If just your home's power is out, check the master circuit breaker. If the master circuit breaker has tripped, reset it. To reset, turn all breakers off, turn the master breaker on, and then turn the other breakers on one by one.
  - If the master circuit breaker trips repeatedly, refer the problem to a licensed electrician.
- ❖ **Electrical Troubleshooting:** If electrical outlets won't work, make certain the circuit breaker has not been tripped. If it has, reset it. If not, make sure a wall switch that is in the *OFF* position does not control the outlet.



Reset Circuit Breakers

- If individual ceiling lights or lamps don't come on, check the bulb in another fixture. If the bulb is good, check the circuit breaker to see if it is tripped, and reset if necessary. Also, check for wall switches that may be turned *OFF*.
- If an outlet sparks when plugged into, be certain the appliance is *OFF* before plugging it in. If it still sparks, try another outlet. If you get sparks from a second outlet, the problem is usually in the appliance cord. If you do not get sparks, have the receptacle inspected. Please note that sparks from wall switches should be checked by an electrician.

- If a wall switch or receptacle is hot to the touch, immediately trip the circuit breaker serving that fixture and contact an electrician.



**Special Note:** We highly recommend that you consult a licensed electrician to make any changes or additions to your electrical system. A permit may be required.

**Caution:** Respect your electrical system. Do not insert metal objects into wall outlets.

### SMOKE/CO DETECTORS:

Your home has a smoke detector in every bedroom and a smoke detector in centrally located areas on each floor. Your smoke detectors are all interconnected, so if one detector's alarm sounds, all of the detector alarms will sound. Smoke from kitchen cooking as well as water vapor from bathroom showers can set off the smoke detectors in your home. This is normal. Your smoke detectors are all wired into the home's electrical system. In addition, your smoke detectors are equipped with a battery back-up system. If the electrical power fails for any reason, your smoke detectors will still operate properly.

#### **Helpful Hints:**

- ❖ The batteries in your smoke detectors should be replaced twice a year. Choose replacement dates that are easy to remember, such as when you change your clocks.
- ❖ **Testing smoke detectors:** It is recommended that you test your smoke detectors once a month to make sure they are operating properly. The test function will be explained to you during your final walk-thru/home orientation. If you ever find that your smoke detectors are not working properly, take remedial steps immediately.

### DAILY:

Condensation

Inspect glass surfaces daily for condensation and moisture accumulation. Wipe wet areas with a clean soft cloth to avoid mildew and damage to surfaces.

### WEEKLY:

Carpets

Vacuum carpets in high-traffic areas. The build-up of dust and dirt in the carpet can dramatically reduce the life of your carpet. Daily to weekly vacuuming of the carpet will keep your carpet looking better and make it last longer.

Smoke alarms:

Perform weekly testing as per manufacturers specifications.

### MONTHLY:

Air Conditioner

For safety and efficiency, inspect filter for dirt and debris monthly. Clean and/or replace filters monthly.

Plumbing

Check under kitchen and bathroom cabinets for leaks. Check the area around the hot water heater for leaks.

Kitchen Exhaust

Remove and clean the filter. Clean accumulated grease deposits from the fan housing.

Caulking

Inspect caulking around sinks, tubs, and showers. Give special attention to the area where the tub meets vinyl or tile flooring. Recaulk as necessary.

### EVERY THREE MONTHS:

Exterior Doors

Oil hinges and locks, if required. Inspect finish for cracks and peeling. Use touch-up paint where required on interior side.

Interior Doors

Lubricate hinges.

Garage Door

Lubricate hardware. Inspect mechanism for free travel. Adjust if necessary.

Kitchen Tile Grout

Inspect for loose or missing grout. Re-grout if necessary. Re-caulk at the edge of the backsplash if necessary.



Tiled Areas	Inspect caulked areas for missing or damaged caulking. Re-caulk if necessary.
Faucet Aerators	Check for proper flow of water. If the flow is reduced, clean the aerator screens. During the first two (2) months, the faucet aerators could require more frequent cleaning.
Shower Doors	Inspect for proper fit. Adjust if necessary. Inspect caulking and re-caulk if necessary.
Tub/Tub Enclosures	Inspect for proper fit. Adjust if necessary. Inspect caulking and re-caulk if necessary.

**EVERY SIX MONTHS:**

Smoke Detectors	Replace the batteries every six (6) months, even if the unit tests okay. The unit will test okay when the batteries only have a couple of days or weeks of charge left in them.
-----------------	---

**YEARLY:**

Air Conditioning	After your first year of occupancy, it is a good idea for you to contact a heating and cooling professional to inspect your Air Conditioner on an annual basis.
Fire Sprinklers	Visually inspect all you fire sprinklers and inspect any visible pipes to make sure nothing is hanging from them. Make sure nothing is obstructing any fire sprinkler.