

# Caring for Your Home

A home is one of the last hand-built products left in the world. Once we have assembled the natural and manufactured materials, the components interact with each other and the environment. Although quality materials and workmanship have been used in your home, this does not mean that it will require no care or maintenance. A home, like an automobile, requires care and attention from day one. General homeowner maintenance is essential to providing a quality home for a lifetime.

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

We are proud of the homes we build and the neighborhoods in which we build. We strive to create long-lasting value. This cannot be achieved unless you, as the homeowner, properly maintain your home and all of its components. Periodic maintenance is necessary because of normal wear and tear, the inherent characteristics of the materials used in your home, and normal service required by the mechanical systems. Natural fluctuations in temperature and humidity also affect your home.

Many times a minor adjustment or repair done immediately saves a more serious, time-consuming, and sometimes costly repair later. Note also that neglect of routine maintenance can void applicable limited warranty coverage on all or part of your home. By caring for your new home attentively, you ensure your enjoyment of it for years. The attention provided by each homeowner contributes significantly to the overall desirability of the community.

We recognize that it is impossible to anticipate and describe every attention needed for good home care, but we have covered many important details. The subjects covered include components of homes we build, listed in alphabetical order. Each topic includes suggestions for use and maintenance followed by Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC's limited warranty guidelines. This manual may discuss some components that are not present in your home.

Please take time to read the literature provided by the manufacturers of consumer products and other items in your home. Although much of the information may be familiar to you, some points may differ significantly from homes you have had in the past.

We make every effort to keep our information current and accurate. However, if any detail in our discussion conflicts with the manufacturer's recommendations, you should follow the manufacturer's recommendations. Activate specific manufacturer's warranties by completing and mailing any registration cards included with their materials. In some cases, manufacturer's warranties may extend beyond the first year and it is in your best interests to be apprised of such coverage.

## Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC Limited Warranty Guidelines

While we strive to build a defect-free home, we are realistic enough to know that we may make mistakes or that something in the home may not perform as intended. When either occurs, we will make necessary corrections. In support of this commitment, we provide you with a limited warranty provided by 2-10 Home Buyers Warranty Program. In addition to the information contained in the limited warranty itself, this manual includes details about one-year material and

workmanship standards. The purpose is to let you know what our quality standard is for the typical concerns that can come up in a new home. The manual describes our standards for each item and what we will do to remedy items that do not meet our standards.

Our criteria for qualifying warranty repairs are based on typical industry practices in our region and meet or exceed those practices for the components of your home. However, we reserve the right to exceed these guidelines if common sense or individual circumstances dictate, without being obligated to exceed all guidelines to a similar degree or for all homeowners.

You will receive the signed limited warranty document at your closing. Please read through this information, as well as the service procedures discussed on the following pages. If you have any questions regarding the standards or procedures, contact our office.

If any warranty materials discussed in this manual are in conflict with the 2-10 Home Buyers Warranty, then the 2-10 Home Buyers Warranty will take precedence. A sample of the 2-10 Home Buyers Warranty is provided along with this manual.

*Our warranty service system is designed to accept written reports of non-emergency items. This provides you with the maximum protection and allows us to operate efficiently, thereby providing faster service to all homeowners. Emergency reports are the only reports accepted by phone.*

## **Reporting Procedures**

All service requests should be put in writing. Please email us at [warranty@ernesthomes.com](mailto:warranty@ernesthomes.com)

### ***Sixty-Day Report***

In order for our service program to operate at maximum efficiency and for your own convenience, we suggest that you wait 60 days before submitting any warranty list. This allows you sufficient time to become settled in your new home and to thoroughly examine all components.

### ***Year-End Report***

Near the end of the eleventh month of your materials and workmanship warranty, you should submit a year-end report. We will also be happy to discuss any maintenance questions you may have at that time.

### ***Emergency Service***

As defined by the limited warranty, an emergency includes situations such as:

- Total loss of heat when the outside temperature is below 45 degrees F.
- Total loss of electricity. (Check with the utility company before reporting this circumstance to Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC or electrician.)
- Total loss of water. (Check with the water department to be certain the problem is not a

- general outage in the area.)
- Plumbing leak that requires the entire water supply to be shut off.
  - Gas leak. (Contact your utility company or plumber if the leak is at the furnace or water heater supply lines.)
  - Roof or water leak.

During business hours, call Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC's office:

**(912) 756-4135**

After hours, or on weekends or holidays, call our pager, 459-1512, or the necessary trade contractor directly. Their phone numbers are listed on the Emergency Phone Numbers sheet you receive at orientation.

### ***Other Warranty Service***

If you wish to initiate non-emergency warranty service between the 60-day and year-end report, you are welcome to do so by sending in a service request form or writing a letter. We will handle these requests according to the same procedures that apply to the 60-day and year-end reports.

### ***Kitchen Appliance Warranties***

The manufacturers of kitchen appliances will work directly with you if any repairs are needed for these products. Customer service phone numbers are listed on the number card you receive during the Home Owner Orientation. Be prepared to provide the model and serial number of the item and the closing date on your home. Appliance warranties are generally for one year; refer to the literature provided by the manufacturer for complete information.

## **Service Processing Procedures**

You can help us to serve you better by providing complete information, including:

- Name, address, and phone numbers where you can be reached during business hours.
- A complete description of the problem, for example, "guest bath cold water line leaks under sink," rather than "plumbing problem."

When we receive a warranty service request, we may contact you for an inspection appointment. Warranty inspection appointments are available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. We inspect the items listed in your written request to confirm warranty coverage and determine appropriate action. Generally reported items fall into one of three categories:

- Trade contractor item
- In-house item
- Home maintenance item

If a trade contractor or an in-house employee is required to complete repairs, we issue a warranty work order and the repair technician contacts you to schedule the work. Warranty work appointments are available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. We intend to complete

warranty work orders within 30 workdays of the inspection unless you are unavailable for access. If a back-ordered part or similar circumstance causes a delay, we will let you know.

If the item is home maintenance, we will review the maintenance steps with you and offer whatever informational assistance we can. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC does not provide routine home maintenance.

# Reporting Warranty Items

The many details of warranty coverage can be confusing. We hope this chart will make reporting items easier. If you do not know whom to contact, call our office and we will guide you.

<b>Appliances</b>	Contact the service provider directly with model and serial number, closing date, and description of problem.						
<b>Emergency</b>	<p>During our business hours (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.), call our main office, (912) 756-4135.</p> <p>After business hours or on weekends or holidays, contact us at 459-1512 or contact the trade or appropriate utility company directly using the emergency numbers you receive at your orientation.</p>						
<b>Non-emergency</b>	<p>Mail, fax or email your written list of items to our office.</p> <p>P.O. Box 1008 Richmond Hill, Georgia 31324 Fax (912) 756-3084 <a href="mailto:warranty@ernesthomes.com">warranty@ernesthomes.com</a></p>						
<b>Storm damage or other natural disaster</b>	Contact your homeowner's insurance agent immediately. Contain damage as much as possible without endangering yourself. In extreme situations, photograph the damage.						
<b>Hours</b>	<table><tr><td>Office:</td><td>Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.</td></tr><tr><td>Inspection appointments:</td><td>Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.</td></tr><tr><td>Work appointments:</td><td>Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.</td></tr></table>	Office:	Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.	Inspection appointments:	Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.	Work appointments:	Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.
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Inspection appointments:	Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.						
Work appointments:	Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.						
<b>Questions?</b>	Call the main office during normal business hours, (912) 756-4135.						

# Air Conditioning

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Air conditioning can greatly enhance the comfort of your home, but if it is used improperly or inefficiently, wasted energy and frustration will result. These hints and suggestions are provided to help you maximize your air conditioning system.

Your air conditioning system is a whole-house system. The air conditioner unit is the mechanism that produces cooler air. The air conditioning system involves everything inside your home including, for example, drapes, blinds, and windows.

Your home air conditioning is a closed system, which means that the interior air is continually recycled and cooled until the desired air temperature is reached. Warm outside air disrupts the system and makes cooling impossible. Therefore, you should keep all windows closed. The heat from the sun shining through windows with open drapes is intense enough to overcome the cooling effect of the air conditioning unit. For best results, close the drapes on these windows.

Time is very important in your expectations of an air conditioning system. Unlike a light bulb, which reacts instantly when you turn on a switch, the air conditioning unit only begins a process when you set the thermostat.

For example, if you come home at 6 p.m. when the temperature has reached 90 degrees F and set your thermostat to 75 degrees, the air conditioning unit will begin cooling, but will take much longer to reach the desired temperature. During the whole day, the sun has been heating not only the air in the house, but the walls, the carpet, and the furniture. At 6 p.m. the air conditioning unit starts cooling the air, but the walls, carpet, and furniture release heat and nullify this cooling. By the time the air conditioning unit has cooled the walls, carpet, and furniture, you may well have lost patience.

If evening cooling is your primary goal, set the thermostat at a moderate temperature in the morning while the house is cooler, allowing the system to maintain the cooler temperature. The temperature setting may then be lowered slightly when you arrive home, with better results. Once the system is operating, setting the thermostat at 60 degrees will *not* cool the home any faster and can result in the unit freezing up and not performing at all. Extended use under these conditions can damage the unit.

### *Adjust Vents*

Your system was engineered to have all the vents open. Maximize airflow to occupied parts of your home by adjusting the vents. Likewise, when the seasons change, readjust them for comfortable heating.

### *Compressor Level*

Maintain the air conditioning compressor in a level position to prevent inefficient operation and damage to the equipment.

*See also Grading and Drainage.*

### ***Manufacturer's Instructions***

Since the air conditioning system is combined with the heating system, follow the maintenance instructions for your furnace (the unit in the attic). The manufacturer's manual specifies maintenance for the condenser. Review and follow these points carefully.

### ***Temperature Variations***

Temperatures may vary from room to room by several degrees F. This is due to such variables as floor plan, orientation of the home on the lot, type and use of window coverings, and traffic through the home.

### **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

The air conditioning system should maintain a temperature of 78 degrees F measured in the center of each room at a height of five feet above the floor. When the temperature outside exceeds 95 F the system will keep the inside temperature 15 degrees cooler than the outside temperature. Lower temperature settings are often possible, but neither the manufacturer nor Ernest Signature Custom Homes guarantees this.

### ***Condenser***

The air conditioning condenser must be in a level position to operate correctly. If it settles during the warranty period, Ernest Signature Custom Homes will correct this.

### ***Non-emergency***

Lack of air conditioning service is not an emergency. Heating and air conditioning contractors in our region respond to air conditioning service requests in the order received.

## **Alarm System**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

If your home selections included pre-wire for an alarm system, you will arrange for the final connection after your move-in. The alarm company will demonstrate the system and instruct you in its use. We recommend that you test the system each month.

### **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will correct wiring that does not perform as intended for the alarm system.

# Appliances

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Read and follow all manufacturers' instructions for the use and maintenance of each appliance in your home and keep them available for reference.

### *Manufacturer's Service*

If a problem arises with an appliance, call the customer service number you received at the Home Owner Orientation. When reporting warranty items to the service provider, be prepared to supply the following details:

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

### *Registration*

Mail warranty registration cards directly to the manufacturer.

## Limited Warranty Guidelines

We confirm that all appliance surfaces are in acceptable condition during your orientation. We assign all appliance warranties to you, effective on the date of closing. The appliance manufacturers warrant their products directly to you according to the terms and conditions of these written warranties.

## Appliance Serial Numbers

For warranty service on an appliance, contact the appropriate manufacturer directly at the service number provided. You will need to supply the model and serial number (usually located on a small metal plate or seal attached to the appliance in an inconspicuous location), and the date of purchase (your closing date).

Closing Date

<i>Appliance</i>	<i>Manufacturer</i>	<i>Model #</i>	<i>Serial #</i>	<i>Service Phone #</i>
Range				
Range Hood				
Cooktop				
Oven				
Microwave				



# Attic Access

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The attic space is neither designed nor intended for storage. We provide access to this area for maintenance of mechanical equipment that may traverse the attic space. When you perform needed tasks in the attic, use caution and avoid stepping off wood members onto the drywall. This can result in personal injury or damage to the ceiling below. Your limited warranty does not cover such injury or damage.

## Limited Warranty Guidelines

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC and the local building department inspect the attic before your closing to confirm insulation is correct.

# Brass/Chrome Fixtures

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The manufacturer treats brass fixtures with a clear protective coating, electro statically applied, to provide beauty and durability. This coating is not impervious to wear and tear. Atmospheric conditions, sunlight, caustic agents such as paints, and scratches from sharp objects can cause the protective coating to crack or peel, exposing the brass and resulting in spotting and discoloration.

### *Cleaning*

Initial care of these products requires only periodic cleaning with a mild, nonabrasive soap and buffing with a soft cloth.

### *Corrosion*

Unless you have ordered solid brass fixtures, the brass on your fixtures is a coating on top of a base metal. Water having a high mineral content is corrosive to any brass coated or solid.

### *Polish*

When peeling, spotting, or discoloration occurs, you can sometimes restore the beauty of the metal by completely removing the remaining coating and hand polishing the item with a suitable brass polish. Applying a light coat of wax and buffing with a soft cloth helps maintain the gloss.

### *Tarnish*

Like sterling silver, brass will gradually tarnish and eventually take on an antique appearance.

## Limited Warranty Guidelines

During the orientation we will confirm that brass fixtures are in acceptable condition. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC does not warrant against corrosion damage to the external surfaces or internal workings of plumbing fixtures. This limitation includes solid brass or brass-coated fixtures.

# Brick

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Brick is one of the most durable and lowest maintenance finishes for a home's exterior. A record of your brick color is included in your selection sheets.

### *Efflorescence*

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

### *Tuck-Pointing*

After several years, face brick may require tuck-pointing (repairing the mortar between the bricks). Otherwise, no regular maintenance is required.

### *Weep Holes*

You may notice small holes in the mortar along the lower row of bricks. These holes allow moisture that has accumulated behind the brick to escape. Do not fill these weep holes or permit landscaping materials to cover them.

## Limited Warranty Guidelines

We check the brickwork during the orientation to confirm correct installation of designated materials.

### *Cracks*

One time during the warranty period, we repair masonry cracks that are visible from 20' or larger than 1/4 inch. We will point up cracks by applying mortar. We will repair only once, so we suggest you wait for our 11-month inspection. Subsequent or additional cracks are normal homeowner maintenance.

# Cabinets

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Your selection sheets are your record of the brand, style, and color of cabinets in your home. If

you selected wood or wood veneer cabinets, expect differences in grain and color between and within the cabinet components due to natural variations in wood and the way it takes stain.

### ***Cleaning***

Products such as lemon oil or polishes that include scratch cover are suggested for wood cabinet care. Follow container directions. Use such products a maximum of once every 3 to 6 months to avoid excessive build-up. Avoid paraffin-based spray waxes and washing cabinets with water, as both will damage the luster of the finish.

### ***Hinges***

If hinges catch or drawer glides become sluggish, a small amount of silicone lubricant will improve their performance.

### ***Moisture***

Damage to cabinet surfaces and warping can result from operating appliances that generate large amounts of moisture (such as a crock pot) too near the cabinet. When operating such appliances, place them in a location that is not directly under a cabinet.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation we will confirm that all cabinet parts are installed and that their surfaces are in acceptable condition.

### ***Alignment***

Doors, drawer fronts, and handles should be level and even.

### ***Operation***

Cabinets should operate properly under normal use.

### ***Separations***

We will correct gaps between cabinets and the ceiling or cabinets and the walls by caulking or other means if the gap exceeds 1/8 inch (locations behind appliances are not included in this repair).

### ***Warping***

If doors or drawer fronts warp in excess of 1/4 inch within 24 inches, we will correct this by adjustment or replacement.

### ***Wood Grain***

Readily noticeable variations in wood grain and color are normal in all wood or wood veneer selections. Replacements are not made due to such variations.

# Carpet

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Your selection sheets provide a record of the brand, style, and color of floor coverings in your home. Please retain this information for future reference. Refer to the various manufacturers' recommendations for additional information on the care of your floor coverings.

### *Cleaning*

You can add years to the life of your carpet with regular care. Carpet wears out because of foot traffic and dirt particles that get trampled deep into the pile beyond the suction of the vacuum.

The dirt particles wear down the fibers like sandpaper and dull the carpet. The most important thing you can do to protect your carpet is to vacuum it frequently.

Vacuum twice each week lightly and once a week thoroughly. Heavy traffic areas may require more frequent cleaning. A light vacuuming is three passes; a thorough job may need seven passes. A vacuum cleaner with a beater-bar agitates the pile and is more effective in bringing dirt to the surface for easy removal.

Vacuuming high-traffic areas daily helps keep them clean and maintains the upright position of the nap. Wipe spills and clean stains immediately. For best results, blot or dab any spill or stain; avoid rubbing. Test stain removers on an out-of-the-way area of the carpet, such as in a closet, to check for any undesirable effects. Have your carpet professionally cleaned regularly, usually once a year.

Some problem conditions that may occur with your new carpet and our suggested remedies are presented below.

### *Crushing*

Furniture and traffic may crush a carpet's pile fibers. Frequent vacuuming in high-traffic areas and glides or cups under heavy pieces of furniture can help prevent this. Rotating your furniture to change the traffic pattern in a room promotes more even wear. Some carpets resist matting and crushing because of their level of fiber, but this does not imply or guarantee that no matting or crushing will occur. Heavy traffic areas such as halls and stairways are more susceptible to wear and crushing. This is considered normal wear.

### *Fading*

Science has yet to develop a color that will not fade with time. All carpets will slowly lose some color due to natural and artificial forces in the environment. You can delay this process by frequently removing soil with vacuuming, regularly changing air filters in heating and air conditioning systems, keeping humidity and room temperature from getting too high, and reducing sunlight exposure with window coverings.

### *Filtration*

If interior doors are kept closed while the air conditioning is operating, air circulation from the closed room flows through the small space at the bottom of the door. This forces the air over the carpet fibers, which in turn act as a filter, catching particulate pollution. Over time, a noticeable stain develops at the threshold.

### ***Fuzzing***

In loop carpets, fibers may break. Simply clip the excess fibers. If it continues, call a professional.

### ***Pilling***

Pilling or small balls of fiber can appear on your carpet, depending on the type of carpet fiber and the type of traffic. If this occurs, clip off the pills. If they cover a large area, seek professional advice.

### ***Rippling***

With wall-to-wall carpeting, high humidity may cause rippling. If the carpet remains rippled after the humidity has left, have a professional re-stretch the carpeting using a power stretcher, not a knee-kicker.

### ***Seams***

Carpet usually comes in 12-foot widths, making seams necessary in most rooms. Visible seams are not a defect unless they have been improperly made or unless the material has a defect, making the seam appear more pronounced than normal. The more dense and uniform the carpet texture, the more visible the seams will be. Carpet styles with low, tight naps result in the most visible seams. Seams are never more visible than when the carpet is first installed. Usually with time, use, and vacuuming the seams become less visible. You can see examples of how carpet seams diminish after they have been vacuumed and have experienced traffic in the model homes.

### ***Shading***

Shading is an inherent quality of fine-cut pile carpets. Household traffic causes pile fibers to assume different angles; as a result, the carpet appears darker and lighter in these areas. A good vacuuming, which makes the pile all go in the same direction, provides a temporary remedy.

### ***Shedding***

New carpeting, especially pile, sheds bits of fiber for a period of time. Eventually these loose fibers are removed by vacuuming. Shedding usually occurs more with wool carpeting than with nylon or other synthetics.

### ***Snags***

Sharp-edged objects can grab or snag the carpet fiber. When this occurs, cut off the snag. If the snag is especially large, call a professional.

### ***Sprouting***

Occasionally you may find small tufts of fiber sprouting above carpet surface. Simply use

scissors to cut off the sprout. Do not attempt to pull it, because other fibers will come out in the process.

### ***Stains***

No carpet is stain proof. Although your carpet manufacturer designates your carpet as stain-resistant, some substances may still cause permanent staining. These include hair dyes, shoe polish, paints, and India ink. Some substances destroy or change the color of carpets, including bleaches, acne medications, drain cleaners, plant food, insecticides, and food or beverages with strongly colored natural dyes as found in some brands of mustard and herbal tea.

Refer to your care and maintenance brochures for recommended cleaning procedures for your particular fiber. Pretest any spot-removal solution in an inconspicuous area before using it in a large area. Apply several drops of the solution, hold a white tissue on the area, and count to ten. Examine both tissue and carpet for dye transfer and check for carpet damage.

### ***Static***

Cooler temperatures outside often contribute to static electricity inside. To avoid the problem, look for carpets made with anti-static. You can also install a humidifier to help control static build-up.

### ***Edges***

Edges of carpet along moldings and edges of stairs should be held firmly in place. In some areas, metal or other edging material may be used where carpet meets another floor covering.

### ***Stretching***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will make only one visit within the first year to stretch the carpet if it is needed. Whether stretching is required in one, several or all rooms there will be one visit only. We suggest that this be performed with your 11-month service.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your orientation, we will confirm that your carpet is in acceptable condition. We will correct stains or spots noted at this time by cleaning, patching, or replacement. We will not be responsible for dye lot variations if replacements are made.

# **Caulking**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Time and weather will shrink and dry caulking so that it no longer provides a good seal. As routine maintenance, check the caulking and make needed repairs. Caulking compounds and dispenser guns are available at hardware stores. Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully to be certain that you select an appropriate caulk for the intended purpose.

### ***Colored Caulk***

Colored caulking is available where larger selections are provided. As with any colored material, dye lots can vary.

### ***Latex Caulk***

Latex caulking is appropriate for an area that requires painting, such as along the stair stringer or where wood trim meets the wall.

### ***Silicone Caulk***

Caulking that contains silicone will not accept paint; it works best where water is present, for example, where tub meets tile or a sink meets a counter top.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation we confirm that appropriate areas are adequately caulked.

*See also Counter tops, Expansion and Contraction, Stairs, and Wood Trim.*

# **Ceramic Tile**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Your selection sheets include the brand and color of your ceramic tile.

### ***Cleaning***

Ceramic tile is one of the easiest floor coverings to maintain. Simply vacuum when needed. Occasionally, a wet mopping with warm water may be appropriate. Avoid adding detergent to the water. If you feel a cleaning agent is required, use a mild solution of warm water and dishwasher crystals (they will not result in a heavy, difficult-to-remove lather on the grout). Rinse thoroughly.

The ceramic tile installed on walls or counter tops in your home may be washed with any nonabrasive soap, detergent, or tile cleaner. Abrasive cleaners will dull the finish.

### ***Grout Discoloration***

Clean grout that becomes yellowed or stained with a fiber brush, cleanser, and water. Grout cleansers and whiteners are available at most hardware stores.

### ***Sealing Grout***

Sealing grout is your decision and responsibility. Once grout has been sealed, ongoing maintenance of that seal is necessary and limited warranty coverage on grout that has been sealed is void.

### ***Separations***

Expect slight separations to occur in the grout between tiles. This grout is for decorative purposes only; it does not hold the tile in place. Cracks in the grout can be filled using premixed grout purchased from flooring or hardware stores. Follow package directions.

Tile around bathtubs or counter tops may appear to be pulling up after a time. This is caused by normal shrinkage of grout or caulk and shrinkage of wood members as they dry out. If this occurs, the best remedy is to purchase tub caulk or premixed grout from a hardware store. Follow directions on the container. This maintenance is important to protect the underlying surface from water damage.

### **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation we confirm that tile and grout areas are in acceptable condition. We will repair or replace cracked, badly chipped, or loose tiles noted at that time. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC is not responsible for variations in color or discontinued patterns. New grout may vary in color from the original.

## **Concrete Flatwork**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

By maintaining good drainage, you protect your home's foundation and the concrete flatwork: porch, patio, driveway, garage floor, and sidewalks.

Movement of any concrete slab results in cracking. Minimize this movement by following our landscaping recommendations, the objective of which is to prevent moisture from reaching soils around and under the home.

#### ***Cleaning***

Avoid washing exterior concrete slabs with cold water from an outside faucet when temperatures are high and the sun has been shining on the concrete. The abrupt change in temperature can damage the surface bond of the concrete. We recommend sweeping for keeping exterior concrete clean. If washing is necessary, do this when temperatures are moderate.

Repeated cleaning of the garage floor by hosing can increase soil movement by allowing water to penetrate any existing cracks. We recommend sweeping to clean the garage floor.

#### ***Cracks***

A concrete slab 10 feet across shrinks approximately 5/8 inch as it cures. Some of this shrinkage shows up as cracks. Cracking of concrete flatwork also results from temperature changes that cause expansion and contraction.

During the summer, moisture finds its way under the concrete along the edges or through cracks in the surface. In winter, this moisture forms frost that can lift the concrete, increasing the cracking. Maintaining drainage away from all concrete slabs will minimize cracking from this cause.

As cracks occur, seal them with a waterproof concrete caulk (available at hardware or home

improvement stores) to prevent moisture from penetrating to the soil beneath.

### ***Expansion Joints***

We install expansion joints to help control expansion. However, as the concrete shrinks during the curing process, moisture can penetrate under the concrete and lift the expansion joint. When this occurs, fill the resulting gap with a gray silicone sealant, which you can purchase at most hardware stores.

### ***Heavy Vehicles***

Do not permit heavy vehicles such as moving vans or concrete trucks to drive on your concrete work. We design and install this concrete for residential use only.

### ***Chemicals***

Protect concrete from abuse by chemical agents such as pet urine, fertilizers, radiator overflow, repeated hosing. All of these items can cause spalling (chipping of the surface) of concrete.

### ***Sealer***

A concrete sealer, available at paint stores, will help you keep an unpainted concrete floor clean. Do not use soap on unpainted concrete. Instead, use plain water and washing soda or, if necessary, a scouring powder.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Concrete flatwork is not attached to the home's foundation walls. These are not a structural (load-bearing) element of the home and are not covered by the structural warranty. The limited warranty coverage is for one year unless the requirements of your loan state otherwise.

### ***Color***

Concrete slabs vary in color. No correction is provided for this condition.

### ***Cracks***

If concrete cracks reach 1/4 inches in width or 1/4 inch in vertical displacement we will patch or repair them one time during the warranty year. Subsequently, concrete slab maintenance is your responsibility. Due to the nature of concrete and how it behaves when exposed to the environment, exterior concrete flatwork does not have any warranty coverage.

### ***Finished Floors***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will correct cracks, settling, or heaving that rupture finish floor materials that we installed as part of the home as you originally purchased it once during the warranty period.

### ***Level Floors***

Concrete floors in the habitable areas of the home will be level to within 3/8 inch within any 32-inch measurement with the exception of an area specifically designed to slope toward a floor drain.

### ***Settling or Heaving***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair slabs that settle or heave in excess of 2 inches or if such movement results in negative drainage (toward the house) or hazardous vertical displacement.

### ***Spalling (Surface Chips)***

Causes of spalling include repeated hosing of concrete for cleaning, animal urine, radiator overflow, fertilizer. Repair of spalling is a home maintenance task.

### ***Standing Water***

Water may stand on exterior concrete slabs for several hours after precipitation or from roof runoff. We will correct conditions if standing water is 3/8" deep and remains after 24 hours.

## **Condensation**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Condensation on interior surfaces of the windows and frames comes from high humidity within the home combined with low outside temperatures. Family lifestyle significantly influences these conditions. Always use your exhaust fans when cooking and showering to help pull the moisture from the room. *See also Ventilation.*

### **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Condensation results from factors outside of our control. The limited warranty coverage excludes condensation.

## **Counter tops**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Use a cutting board to protect your counters when you cut or chop. Protect the counter from heat and from extremely hot pans. If you cannot put your hand on it, do not put it on the counter. Do not use counter tops as ironing boards.

### ***Caulking***

The caulking between the counter top and the wall, along the joint at the backsplash, and around the sink may shrink, leaving a slight gap. Maintaining a good seal in these locations is important to keep moisture from reaching the wood under the laminates and to prevent warping.

## ***Cleaning***

Avoid abrasive cleaners that will damage the luster of the surface.

## ***Mats***

Rubber drain mats can trap moisture beneath them, causing the laminated plastic to warp and blister. Dry the surface as needed.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your orientation we confirm that all counter tops are in acceptable condition. We repair noticeable surface damage such as chips, cracks, and scratches noted on the orientation list. Repair of surface damage that occurs during or after your move-in is one of your home maintenance responsibilities.

## ***Laminates***

Laminated counter tops will have one or more discernible seams. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair gaps or differential at the seams that exceed 1/16 inch.

## ***Manufactured Marble***

Edges should be smooth and even. Where backsplash joints occur at corners, the top edges should be even within 1/16 inch.

## ***Stone (Granite)***

Due to natural variations in granite the sample you have selected may vary from the counter top installed in your home. Granite is a natural stone product and therefore exact color cannot be guaranteed. Seams may be visible and especially noticeable with certain materials and darker finishes.

## ***Separation from Wall***

Separation of counter tops from walls, backsplash, and around sinks results from normal shrinkage of materials. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will re-caulk these areas one time during the materials and workmanship warranty. Subsequently caulking will be your home maintenance responsibility.

# **Crawl Space**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

The crawl space is not intended as a storage area for items that could be damaged by moisture. Wood stored in a crawl space can attract termites.

You may notice slight dampness in the crawl space. Landscaping that is correctly installed helps prevent excessive amounts of water from entering crawl spaces.

*See also Ventilation.*

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation we will check the condition of soils in the crawl space. Soils in the crawl space may be damp but should not have standing water. Provided that you have not altered the drainage nor caused excessive moisture to accumulate and remain in this area with incorrect landscaping, we will correct the conditions that result in persistent standing water.

# **Doors and Locks**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

The doors installed in your home are wood products subject to natural characteristics of wood such as warping and shrinking. Due to natural fluctuations of humidity and the use of forced air furnaces, showers, and dishwashers, interior doors may occasionally require minor adjustments.

### ***Bifold Doors***

Bifold doors are inherently more sensitive than swinging doors and need to be treated accordingly. You are responsible for the cleaning and maintenance necessary to preserve proper operation.

### ***Exterior Finish***

To ensure longer life for your exterior wood doors, plan to refinish them at least once a year. Stained exterior doors with clear finishes tend to weather faster than painted doors. Treat the finish with a wood preserver every three months to preserve the varnish and prevent the door from drying and cracking. Reseal stained exterior doors whenever the finish begins cracking or crazing.

### ***Failure to Latch***

If a door will not latch because of minor settling, you can correct this by making a new opening in the jamb for the latch plate (mortising) and raising or lowering the plate accordingly.

### ***Hinges***

You can remedy a squeaky door hinge by removing the hinge pin and applying a silicone lubricant to it. Avoid using oil, as it can gum up or attract dirt. Graphite works well as a lubricant but can create a gray smudge on the door or floor covering beneath the hinge if too much is applied.

### ***Keys***

Keep a duplicate privacy lock key where children cannot reach it in the event a youngster locks him- or herself in a room. The top edge of the door casing is often used as a place to keep the key. A small screwdriver or similarly shaped device can open some types of privacy locks.

### ***Locks***

Lubricate door locks with graphite or other waterproof lubricant. Avoid oil, as it will gum up.

### ***Slamming***

Slamming doors can damage both doors and jambs and can even cause cracking in walls. Teach children not to hang on the doorknob and swing back and forth; this will loosen the hardware and causes the door to sag.

### ***Shrinkage***

Use putty, filler, or latex caulk to fill any minor separations that develop at mitered joints in door trim. Follow with painting. Panels of wood doors shrink and expand in response to changes in temperature and humidity. Touching up the paint or stain on unfinished exposed areas is your home maintenance responsibility.

### ***Sticking***

The most common cause of a sticking door is the natural expansion of lumber due to changes in humidity. When sticking is due to swelling during a damp season, do not plane the door unless it continues to stick after the weather changes.

### ***Warping***

If a door warps slightly, keeping it closed as much as possible often returns it to normal.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation we confirm that all doors are in acceptable condition and correctly adjusted.

### ***Adjustments***

Due to normal settling of the home, doors may require adjustment for proper fit. We will make these adjustments one time during the warranty period.

### ***Panel Shrinkage***

Panels of wood doors shrink and expand in response to changes in temperature and humidity. Although touching up the paint or stain on unfinished exposed areas is your home maintenance responsibility, we will repair split panels that allow light to be visible one time during the warranty period.

### ***Warping***

We will repair doors that warp in excess of 1/4 inch as measured diagonally from corner to corner.

# Drywall

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Slight cracking, nail pops, or seams may become visible in walls and ceilings. These are caused by the shrinkage of the wood and normal deflection of framing members to which the drywall is attached.

### *Repairs*

With the exception of the one-time repair service care of drywall is your maintenance responsibility. Most drywall repairs can be easily made. This work is best done when you redecorate the room.

Repair hairline cracks with a coat of paint. You can repair slightly larger cracks with spackle or caulk. To correct a nail pop, reset the nail with a hammer and punch. Cover it with spackle, which is available at paint and hardware stores. Apply two or three thin coats. When dry, sand the surface with fine-grain sandpaper, and then paint. You can fill indentations caused by sharp objects in the same manner.

## Limited Warranty Guidelines

At the home owner orientation, we confirm that drywall surfaces are in acceptable condition. **Blemishes that are readily visible from a distance of 6 feet under normal lighting conditions will be repaired before closing.** During the materials and workmanship warranty we will complete a onetime only repair for drywall shrinkage cracks and nail pops. We will touch up the repaired area using the same paint color that was on the surface when the home was delivered. A perfect match between original and new paint cannot be expected. We will meet the performance guidelines set forth in the **Residential Construction Performance Guidelines for Professional Builders & Remodelers** to match the immediate surrounding areas as closely as practical.

Repainting the entire wall or the entire room to correct this is your choice and responsibility. You are also responsible for custom paint colors or wallpaper that has been applied subsequent to closing. Due to the effects of time on paint and wallpaper, as well as possible dye lot variations, touch-ups are unlikely to match the surrounding area.

### *Lighting Conditions*

We will not repair drywall flaws that are only visible under particular lighting conditions.

### *Related Warranty Repairs*

If a drywall repair is needed as a result of poor workmanship (such as blisters in tape) or other warranty-based repair (such as a plumbing leak), we will complete the repair by touching up the repaired area with the same paint that was on the surface when the home was delivered. A perfect match between original and new paint cannot be expected. We will meet the performance guidelines set forth in the **Residential Construction Performance Guidelines for Professional Builders & Remodelers** to match the immediate surrounding areas as closely as practical.

# Electrical Systems

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Know the location of the breaker panel; it includes a main shut-off that controls all the electrical power to the home. Individual breakers control the separate circuits. Each breaker is marked to help you identify which breaker is connected to which major appliances, outlets, or other service. Should a failure occur in any part of your home, always check the breakers in the main panel box.

### ***Breakers***

Circuit breakers have three positions: on, off, and tripped. When a circuit breaker trips, it must first be turned off before it can be turned on. Switching the breaker directly from tripped to on will not restore service.

### ***Breaker Tripping***

Breakers trip due to overloads caused by plugging too many appliances into the circuit, a worn cord or defective appliance, or operating an appliance with too high a voltage requirement for the circuit. The starting of an electric motor can also trip a breaker.

If any circuit trips repeatedly, unplug all items connected to it and reset. If it trips when nothing is connected to it, you need an electrician. If the circuit remains on, one of the items you unplugged is defective and will require repair or replacement.

### ***Buzzing***

Fluorescent fixtures use transformer action to operate. This action sometimes causes a buzzing.

### ***Fixture Location***

We install light fixtures in the locations indicated on the plans. Moving fixtures to accommodate specific furniture arrangements or room use is your responsibility.

### ***GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters) & AFCI (Arc Fault Circuit Interrupter)***

GFCI receptacles have a built-in element that senses fluctuations in power. Quite simply, the GFCI is a circuit breaker. Building codes require installation of these receptacles in bathrooms, the kitchen, outside, and the garage (areas where an individual can come into contact with water while holding an electric appliance or tool). Heavy appliances such as freezers or power tools will trip the GFCI breaker.

*Do not plug a refrigerator or food freezer into a GFCI-controlled outlet. The likelihood of the contents being ruined is high and the limited warranty does not cover such damage.*

Each GFCI receptacle has a test and reset button. Once each month, press the test button. This will trip the circuit. To return service, press the reset button. If a GFCI breaker trips during normal use, it may indicate a faulty appliance and you will need to investigate the problem. One GFCI breaker can control up to three or four outlets.

### ***Grounded System***

Your electrical system is a three-wire grounded system. Never remove the bare wire that connects to the box or device.

### ***Light Bulbs***

You are responsible for replacing burned-out bulbs other than those noted during your orientation.

### ***Modifications***

If you wish to make any modifications, contact the electrician listed on the Emergency Phone Numbers you receive at the orientation. Modifying your electrical system during the warranty period can void that portion of your limited warranty.

### ***Outlets***

If an outlet is not working, check first to see if it is controlled by a wall switch or GFCI. Next, check the breaker.

If there are small children in the home, install safety plugs to cover unused outlets. This also minimizes the air infiltration that sometimes occurs with these outlets. Teach children to never touch electrical outlets, sockets, or fixtures.

### ***Underground Cables***

Before digging, check the location of buried service leads by calling the local utility locating service. In most cases, wires run in a straight line from the service panel to the nearest public utility pad. Maintain positive drainage around the foundation to protect this service.

## **Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation we confirm that light fixtures are in acceptable condition and that all bulbs are working. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC's limited warranty excludes any fixture you supplied.

### ***Designed Load***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair any electrical wiring that fails to carry its designed load to meet specifications. If electrical outlets, switches, or fixtures do not function as intended, Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair or replace them.

### ***GFCI (Ground-Fault Circuit-Interrupters)***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC is not responsible for food spoilage that results from your plugging refrigerators or freezers into a GFCI outlet.

### ***Power Surge***

Power surges are the result of local conditions beyond the control of Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC and are excluded from limited warranty coverage. These can result in burned-out bulbs or damage to sensitive electronic equipment such as TVs, alarm systems, and computers. Damage resulting from lightning strikes is excluded from limited warranty coverage.

## **Electric Water Heater**

### **Homeowner Care and Maintenance**

Carefully read the manufacturer's literature and warranty for your specific model of water heater.

#### ***Drain Tank***

Review and follow the manufacturer's timetable and instructions for draining several gallons of water from the bottom of the water heater. This reduces build-up of chemical deposits from the water, thereby prolonging the life of the tank as well as saving energy dollars. Also drain the tank if it is being shut down during periods of freezing temperatures. Carefully follow the instructions in the manufacturer's literature.

#### ***Element Cleaning or Replacement***

The heating elements in the water heater will require periodic cleaning. The frequency is determined in part by the quality of the water in your area. Again, refer to the manufacturer's literature for step-by-step instructions and drawings, or contact an authorized service company.

#### ***No Hot Water***

If you discover you have no hot water, check the breaker, the temperature setting, and the water-supply valve before calling for service. Refer to the manufacturer's literature for locations of these items and other troubleshooting information.

#### ***Pressure Relief Valve***

At least once each year, manually operate the pressure relief valve. Stay clear of the discharge line to avoid injury. See manufacturer's literature for diagrams and detailed instructions.

#### ***Safety***

Keep the area around a water heater clear of stored household items. Never use the top of the water heater as a storage shelf.

#### ***Temperature***

The recommended setting for operation of a dishwasher is 140 degrees. Higher settings can

waste energy dollars and increase the danger of injury from scalding. Hot water will take longer to arrive at sinks, tubs, and showers that are farther from the water heater.

## **Limited Warranty**

Refer to the manufacturer's limited warranty for complete information regarding warranty coverage on your water heater.

# **Expansion and Contraction**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Changes in temperature and humidity cause all building materials to expand and contract. Dissimilar materials expand or contract at different rates. This movement results in separation between materials, particularly dissimilar ones. You will see the effects in small cracks in drywall and in paint, especially where moldings meet drywall, at mitered corners, and where tile grout meets tub or sink. While this can alarm an uninformed homeowner, it is normal.

Shrinkage of the wood members of your home is inevitable and occurs in every new home. Although this is most noticeable during the first year, it may continue beyond that time. In most cases, caulk and paint are all that you need to conceal this minor evidence of a natural phenomenon. Even though properly installed, caulking shrinks and cracks. Maintenance of caulking is your responsibility.

## **Limited Warranty**

We provide a one-time repair to many of the effects of expansion and contraction. See individual categories for details.

# **Fireplace**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Most of us feel a fireplace is an excellent way to create a warm, cozy atmosphere. However, without sufficient information, your use of the fireplace can result in heat (and dollars) being wasted. To help prevent that, consider the following points.

Look upon burning a fire as a luxury that adds much to the atmosphere but just a little to the heat in a home. About 10 percent of the heat produced by a fire is radiated into the house. In many older homes, the air used by the fireplace for combustion is replaced with cold outside air drawn in through cracks around doors and windows. However, your home is constructed so tightly that this does not happen.

Close the damper and cold air vent when not in use. Leaving these open is equivalent to having an open window in the house.

Do not close them over a roaring fire, especially if you are burning hard woods (such as oak or hickory) because this could break the glass. Also, when closing the doors over a burning fire, open the mesh screens first. This prevents excessive heat build-up on the mesh, which might

result in warping or discoloration.

Your objective in building a fire should be a clean, steady, slow-burning fire. Begin with a small fire to allow the components of the fireplace to heat up slowly. Failure to do so may damage the fireplace and can void the warranty. Start the fire by burning kindling and newspaper under the grate; two to three layers of logs stacked with air space between, largest logs to the rear, works best. One sheet of paper burned on top of the stack will help the chimney start to draw. Any logs 6 inches in diameter or larger should be split.

*Do not burn trash in the fireplace and never use any type of liquid fire starter.*

Remove old ashes and coals from under the grate when completely cool. A light layer is desirable as an insulator and will help to reflect heat.

### ***Chimney Cleaning***

Creosote and other wood-burning by-products accumulate inside the flue over a period of time. This build-up can be a fire hazard. The way you use your fireplace and the type of wood you burn determine the frequency of your chimney cleanings. For instance, burning soft woods or improperly seasoned woods necessitates more frequent cleaning. Hire a qualified chimney sweep for this cleaning.

### ***Spark Arrester***

If the spark arrester becomes clogged, the diminished air flow will affect the performance of the fireplace and may be a fire hazard. Have the arrester cleaned professionally when needed.

### ***Gas Fireplace***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC offers direct-vent gas fireplaces. If you ordered this type of fireplace, it is demonstrated during the orientation. Read and follow all manufacturers' directions.

A slight delay between turning the switch on and flame ignition is normal. The flames should ignite gently and silently. If you notice any deviation from this and any gas smell, immediately shut off the switch and report it to the gas company.

Excessive winds can cause a downdraft, which can blow out the pilot, requiring you to relight it before using the fireplace.

*The exterior vent cover for a direct-vent gas fireplace becomes extremely hot when the fireplace is operating.*

### ***Ventless Fireplace***

Ventless fireplaces are 99.5% efficient. These units give off usable heat in the home. They can operate on either propane or natural gas. If a propane fireplace is used, the propane and the propane tank are the responsibility of the homeowner. Please read all operating instructions before using.

## **Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will assure that any fireplace is constructed according to local coding. Fireplaces are not intended to be the sole heat source in the home. The fireplace should function properly when Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC's and the manufacturer's directions are followed. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC Is not responsible for malfunctions of a fireplace due to natural causes beyond their control.

### ***Chimney Separation***

Separation of a brick chimney from a newly constructed home may occur. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair separation from the main structure in excess of 1/2 inch in 10 feet. Caulking is acceptable in most cases.

### ***Cracks***

Normal shrinkage of mortar results in hairline cracks in masonry. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair cracks that exceed 1/8 inch in width. The repair consists of pointing or patching and the mortar color will be matched as closely as possible, but expect some variation.

Exterior masonry may have chips, irregular surfaces, and color variations, which occur during manufacturing, shipping, or handling. Unless such conditions affect the structural integrity of the home, no repair is provided.

### ***Discoloration***

Discoloration of the firebox or brick is a normal result of use and requires no corrective action. Mortar-style fireplaces may develop cracks due to temperature changes and other factors.

### ***Downdraft***

Although extremely high winds can result in a downdraft, this condition should be temporary and occasional. We will determine and correct continuous malfunction if caused by a construction or design defect.

### ***Glass Doors***

During the orientation we confirm that glass fireplace doors, when included with the home, are in acceptable condition.

### ***Water Infiltration***

In unusually heavy or prolonged precipitation, especially when accompanied by high winds, some water can enter the home through the chimney. The limited warranty excludes this occurrence.

# Foundation

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

We install the foundation of your home according to the engineered plans and/or the County Building Department's acceptable building codes. To protect your home's foundation, follow guidelines for installation and maintenance of landscaping and drainage in this manual.

### *Cracks*

Surface cracks can develop in the wall. Surface cracks are not detrimental to the structural integrity of your home. If a crack develops in a foundation wall that allows water to come through, follow the procedures for submitting a warranty claim. Shrinkage or backfill cracks are not unusual in foundation walls. We will seal cracks that exceed 1/8 inch in width.

### *Cosmetic Imperfections*

Slight cosmetic imperfections in foundations walls, such as pits, surface voids, or a visible seam where two pours meet, are possible and require no repair unless they allow water to enter.

# Garage Overhead Door

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Since the garage door is a large, moving object, periodic maintenance is necessary.

### *30-Weight Oil*

Every six months, apply a 30-weight automobile oil or similar lubricant to all moving parts: track, rollers, hinges, pulleys, and springs. At the same time, check to see that all hardware is tight and operating as intended without binding or scraping. Avoid over lubricating to prevent drips on vehicles or the concrete floor.

### *Lock*

If the lock becomes stiff, apply a silicone or graphite lubricant. Do not use oil on a lock, as it will stiffen in winter and make the lock difficult to operate.

### *Opener*

To prevent damage to a garage door opener, be sure the door is completely unlocked and the rope-pull has been removed before using the operator. If you have an opener installed after closing on your home, we suggest that you order it from the company that provided and installed the garage door to assure uninterrupted warranty coverage. Be familiar with the steps for manual

operation of the door in the event of a power failure.

If we installed a door opener as one of your selections, during orientation we demonstrate the electric eye that provides a safety stop in the event someone crosses through the opening while the overhead door is in motion. Use care not to place tools or other stored items where they interfere with the function of the electric eye.

### ***Painting***

Repaint the garage door when you repaint your home, or more often if needed to maintain a satisfactory appearance.

### ***Safety***

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe and reliable operation. Do not allow anyone except the operator near the door when it is in motion. Keep hands and fingers away from all parts of the door except the handle. Do not allow children to play with or around the door.

For your safety, after the expiration of the one-year warranty, have any needed adjustments made by a qualified specialist. The door springs are under a considerable amount of tension and require special tools and knowledge for accurate and safe servicing. Have the door inspected by a professional garage door technician after any significant impact to the door.

### ***Sag***

The garage door may sag slightly due to its weight and span. This will stabilize after the panels have dried.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

The garage door should operate smoothly and with reasonable ease. The door can become misaligned and require adjustment, which we will provide unless the problem is caused by the installation of a garage door opener subsequent to closing on the home.

### ***Light Visible***

Garage overhead doors cannot be air tight. Some light will be visible around the edges and across the top of the door. Severe weather conditions may result in some precipitation entering around the door. This is not unusual, and is not considered a defect.

# **Gas Shut-Offs**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

You will find shut-offs on gas lines near their connection to each item that operates on gas. In addition, there is a main shut-off at the meter. We point these out during the orientation. If you suspect a gas leak, leave the home and call the gas company immediately for emergency service.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

The gas company is responsible for leaks up to the meter. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will correct leaks from the meter into the home.

# **Grading and Drainage**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

The final grades around your home have been inspected and approved for proper drainage of your lot. The local building authorities as well as Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC inspect the site.

### ***Drainage***

To ensure proper drainage within 10 feet around the home we have established necessary grades and swales within the property. Maintain the slopes around your home to permit the water to drain away from the home as rapidly as possible. This is essential to protect your foundation. Failure to do so can result in major structural damage and will void your warranty.

### ***Roof Water***

Do not remove the splash blocks or downspout extensions from under the downspouts. Keep these in place at all times, sloped so the water drains away from your home quickly.

### ***Rototilling***

Rototilling can significantly change drainage swales. You can minimize this by rototilling parallel to the swales rather than across them.

### ***Settling***

The area we excavated for your home's foundation was larger than the home to allow room to work. In addition, some trenching is necessary for installation of utility lines. Although we replaced and compacted the soil, it does not return to its original density. Some settling will occur, especially after prolonged or heavy rainfall. Settling can continue for several years. Inspect the perimeter of your home regularly for signs of settling and fill settled areas as needed to maintain positive drainage.

*See also Landscaping.*

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We established the final grade to ensure adequate drainage away from the home. Maintaining this drainage is your responsibility. If you alter the drainage pattern after closing, or if changes in drainage occur due to lack of maintenance, the limited warranty is void.

### ***Backfill Settlement***

Backfilled or excavated areas around the foundation and at utility trenches should not interfere with the drainage away from your home. If these areas settle during the first year, Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will fill the areas one time.

### ***Erosion***

We are not responsible for erosion due to acts of God, weather conditions, property alterations by you, construction on adjacent properties (that isn't ours), utility company's work, improper consumer maintenance, or other issues outside of our control.

### ***New Sod***

New sod installation and the extra watering that accompanies it can cause temporary drainage problems, as can unusually severe weather conditions.

### ***Swales***

We do not alter drainage patterns to suit individual landscape plans. Typically, a lot receives water from and passes water on to other lots, so changes in grade often affect adjacent or nearby lots. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC advises against making such changes. After heavy rain water may stand in swales up to 48 hours.

### ***Under Concrete***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will fill visible sunken areas under concrete during the first year.

## **Gutters and Downspouts**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

If gutters and down spouts are included in your specifications and are installed by Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC, then check gutters periodically and remove leaves or other debris. Materials that accumulate in gutters can slow water drainage from the roof, cause overflows, and clog the down spouts.

### ***Extensions or Splashblocks***

Extensions should discharge outside of rock or bark beds so that water is not dammed behind the edging materials that might be used.

### ***Ladders***

Use caution when leaning ladders against gutters, as this may cause dents.

### ***Leaks***

If a joint between sections of gutter drips, caulk the inside joint using a commercial gutter caulking compound available at hardware stores.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Gutters over 3 feet long are installed with a slight slope so that roof water will flow to the downspouts.

### ***Leaks***

We correct leaks that occur during the warranty period.

### ***Overflow***

Gutters may overflow during periods of excessively heavy rain. This is expected and requires no repair.

### ***Standing Water***

Small amounts of water (up to one inch) will stand for short periods of time in gutters immediately after rain. No correction is required for these conditions.

# **Hardware**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Doorknobs and locks should operate correctly with little attention. Over time, they may need slight adjustments due to normal shrinkage of the framing. Occasionally, you may need to tighten screws.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We confirm that all hardware is in acceptable condition during orientation. The limited warranty excludes repairs for cosmetic damage subsequent to the orientation.

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair hardware items that do not function as intended during the first year warranty period.

# **Hardwood Floors**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

In daily care of hardwood floors, preventive maintenance is the primary goal.

### ***Cleaning***

Sweep on a daily basis or as needed. Never wet mop a hardwood floor. Excessive water causes

wood to expand and can possibly damage the floor. Follow the manufacturer's cleaning instructions you received during the Final Orientation.

### ***Dimples***

Placing heavy furniture or dropping heavy or sharp objects on hardwood floors can result in dimples.

### ***Filmy Appearance***

A white, filmy appearance can result from moisture, often from wet shoes or boots.

### ***Furniture Legs***

Install proper floor protectors on furniture placed on hardwood floors. Protectors will allow chairs to move easily over the floor without scuffing. Regularly clean the protectors to remove any grit that may have accumulated.

### ***Humidity***

Wood floors respond noticeably to changes in humidity in your home. Especially during winter months the individual planks or pieces expand and contract as water content changes. A humidifier helps but does not eliminate this reaction.

### ***Mats and Area Rugs***

Use protective mats at the exterior doors to help prevent sand and grit from getting on the floor. Gritty sand is wood flooring's worst enemy. However, be aware that rubber backing on area rugs or mats can cause yellowing and warping of the floor surface.

### ***Recoat***

If your floors have a polyurethane finish, you may want to have an extra coat of polyurethane applied by a qualified contractor within six months to one year. The exact timing will depend on your particular lifestyle. If another finish was used, refer to the manufacturer's recommendations.

### ***Separation***

Expect some shrinkage around heat vents or any heat-producing appliances, or during seasonal weather changes.

*See also Warping.*

### ***Shoes***

Keep high heels in good repair. Heels that have lost their protective cap (thus exposing the fastening nail) will exert over 8,000 pounds of pressure per square inch on the floor. That's enough to damage hardened concrete; it will mark your wood floor.

### ***Spills***

Clean up food spills immediately with a dry cloth. Use a vinegar-and-warm-water solution for tough food spills.

### ***Splinters***

When floors are new, small splinters of wood can appear.

### ***Sun Exposure***

Exposure to direct sunlight can cause irreparable damage to hardwood floors. To preserve the beauty of your hardwood floors, install and use window coverings in these areas.

### ***Traffic Paths***

A dulling of the finish in heavy traffic areas is likely.

### ***Warping***

Warping will occur if the floor repeatedly becomes wet or is thoroughly soaked even once. Slight warping in the area of heat vents or heat-producing appliances is also typical.

### ***Wax***

Waxing and the use of products like oil soap are neither necessary nor recommended. Once you wax a polyurethane finish floor, recoating is difficult because the new finish will not bond to the wax. The preferred maintenance is preventive cleaning and recoating annually or as needed to maintain the desired luster.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation we will confirm that hardwood floors are in acceptable condition. We will correct any readily noticeable cosmetic defects listed during the orientation. You are responsible for routine maintenance of hardwood floors.

### ***Separations***

Shrinkage will result in separations between the members of hardwood floors. If these exceed 1/8 inch we will fill them one time. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC is not responsible for removing excess filler that appears on the surface if the boards expand due to subsequent changes in humidity and expel the filler.

# **Heating System**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

If your home is equipped with a “furnace” type heating system, please read and follow this section. Otherwise, refer to the section titled “Heat Pump”.

Good maintenance of the furnace can save energy dollars and prolong the life of the furnace. Carefully read and follow the manufacturer's literature on use and maintenance. The guidelines here include general information only.

### ***Adjust Vents***

Experiment with the adjustable registers 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.

### ***Avoid Overheating***

Do not overheat your new home. Overheating can cause excessive shrinkage of framing lumber and could materially damage the home. In the beginning, use as little heat as possible and increase it gradually.

### ***Blower Panel***

You need to position the blower panel correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. This panel compresses a button that tells the blower it is safe to operate. If this panel is not on tightly, the fan will not come on.

### ***Combustion Air***

Furnaces we install in closets over crawl spaces include combustion air vents.

*Never cover or block the combustion air vent in any way. Outside air is needed to supply the furnace with sufficient oxygen. Blocking the combustion air vent will cause the furnace to draw air down the vent pipe and pull poisonous gases back into your home.*

### ***Ductwork Noise***

Some popping or pinging sounds are the natural result of ductwork heating and cooling in response to air flow as the system operates.

### ***Filter***

Remember to change or clean the filter monthly during the heating season (year-round if you also have air conditioning). A clogged filter can slow airflow and cause cold spots in your home. Although it takes less than one minute to change the filter, this is one of the most frequently overlooked details of normal furnace care. Buy filters in large quantity for the sake of convenience.

If you have a permanent, washable, removable filter, you need to clean this monthly. Use water only to clean the filter, tap to dry or air dry, and leave unit off for a brief period. Do not use soaps or detergents on the filter.

### ***Furnished Home***

The heating system was designed with a furnished home in mind. If you move in during the

cooler part of the year and have not yet acquired all of your draperies and furnishings, the home may seem cooler than you would expect.

### ***Gas Odor***

If you smell gas, call the gas company immediately.

### ***Odor***

A new heating system may emit an odor for a few moments when you first turn it on. An established system may emit an odor after being unused for an extended time (such as after the summer months if you do not use air conditioning). This is caused by dust that has settled in the ducts and should pass quickly.

### ***Pilot***

If your furnace includes a pilot light, please follow the manufacturer's instructions when lighting it.

### ***Registers***

Heat register covers are removable and adjustable. You are responsible for adjusting the dampers in these covers to regulate the heat flow within the home. Registers in the rooms farther away from the furnace will usually need to be opened wider.

### ***Return Air Vents***

For maximum comfort and efficient energy use, arrange furniture and draperies to allow unobstructed air flow from registers and to cold air returns.

### ***Temperature***

Depending on the style of home, temperatures can normally vary from floor to floor as much as 10 degrees or more on extremely cold days. The furnace blower will typically cycle on and off more frequently and for shorter periods during severe cold spells.

### ***Thermostat***

The furnace will come on automatically when the temperature at the thermostat registers below the setting you have selected. Once the furnace is on, setting the thermostat to a higher temperature will not heat the home faster. Thermostats are calibrated to within plus or minus 5 degrees.

### ***Trial Run***

Have a trial run early in the fall to test the furnace. (The same applies to air conditioning in the spring.) If service is needed, it is much better to discover that before the heating season.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We will install heating systems according to local building codes and mechanical requirements. Adequacy of the system is determined by its ability to establish a temperature of 70 degrees F,

as measured in the center of the room, 5 feet above the floor. In extremely cold temperatures (10 degrees below or colder), the system should be able to maintain a temperature differential of 80 degrees from the outside temperature.

### ***Duct Placement***

The exact placement of heat ducts may vary from those positions shown in similar floor plans.

### ***Ductwork***

Although the heat system is not a sealed system, the ductwork should remain attached and securely fastened. If it becomes unattached we will repair as needed.

## **Heat Pump**

### **Homeowner Care and Maintenance**

If your home contains a heat pump system, you should be aware of the performance characteristics unique to these systems. As with any system, read the manufacturer's literature and follow all instructions for efficient operation and maintenance of your system. Clean or replace filters once a month. Provide professional service for your system at least once every two years.

### ***Air Circulation across Coils***

Keep the outside unit clear of any materials that would interfere with air circulation. Snow, ice, landscaping materials, trash, leaves, and other accumulating items can cause inefficiency or damage the unit.

### ***Air Conditioning and Heating***

A heat pump system operates differently from a gas forced-air furnace. The same system provides both heat and air conditioning. This is possible because a refrigerant flows back and forth in the coils of the heat pump, controlled by a reversing valve. In the heating mode, the heat pump removes heat from the outside air and transfers it to the inside air. In the cooling mode, it does just the opposite, removing heat from the inside air and discharging it outside of the home. The thermostat inside your home controls this heating or cooling activity.

### ***Air Temperature at Vents***

Do not expect dramatic temperature differences in the air coming from the vents as is common with other kinds of systems. The coils used in a heat pump system operate at lower temperatures than those common in a gas forced-air system. As a result, for example, in the heat mode, air from the supply vents will typically range from 85 to 90 degrees F. The vents will not feel hot, though the air discharged is warmer than the air in the room by as much as 20 degrees.

### ***Auxiliary Heat System***

At lower outside temperatures, less heat is available for the heat pump to draw from the exterior air. Therefore, from time to time the auxiliary heat system will come on to maintain the temperature you set at the thermostat. The auxiliary system will also come on whenever the temperature at the thermostat is moved 1.5 degrees or more at one time. If the light stays on

when the outside temperature is more than 30 degrees F, contact a service person.

### ***Defrost Cycle***

When the heat pump is operating in the heat mode, the coils outside may reach below freezing temperatures. Moisture in the air will condense into frost and accumulate on the coils under these circumstances. From time to time, the system will go into defrost mode to clear accumulated frost from the coils. This is a normal part of the operation of the system and will occur automatically. During the defrost cycle, the outside fan will stop temporarily. The temperature of air flow into the home will be a bit lower during the defrost cycle. The defrost cycle can only occur once every 90 minutes and lasts no longer than 10 minutes.

### ***Night Setback***

Unless you have a night setback thermostat designed to work with a heat pump system, do not turn the thermostat down in the evenings. Adjust the temperature a fraction of a degree at a time until a comfortable, permanent setting is found.

### ***Register Adjustment***

Registers will require adjustment from time to time to maximize your family's comfort. Do not completely close off more than one supply register at a time. This can restrict the airflow too much and reduce the efficiency of the system. A good technique is to completely open all the vents, then gradually move the temperature setting up until the coolest room is comfortable. Once the coolest room is comfortable, gradually close the vents in the warmer rooms until all rooms are comfortable as well. Reverse the process for air conditioning.

### ***Return Air Vents***

As with any heating system, return air vents must be clear so the air flows through the ducts unimpeded. Avoid placing furniture where it blocks the return air vents.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Refer to the manufacturer's limited warranty for information regarding warranty coverage.

# **Insulation**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Do not step on drywall ceilings, because this can result in personal injury or damage to the drywall.

Electrical outlets normally emit noticeable amounts of cold air when outside temperatures are low.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will install insulation to meet or exceed the building codes applicable at the time of construction and outlined as part of your purchase agreement.

# Landscaping

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Plan to install the basic components of your landscaping as soon after closing as weather permits. In addition to meeting your homeowners association requirements to landscape in a timely manner, well-designed landscaping prevents erosion and protects the foundation of your home.

### ***Additions***

Before installing patio additions or other permanent improvements, consider soil conditions in the design and engineering of your addition.

### ***Backfill***

We construct the foundation of your home beginning with an excavation into the earth. When the foundation walls are complete, the area surrounding them is backfilled. Soil in this area is not as compact as undisturbed ground. Water can penetrate through the backfill area to the lower areas of your foundation. This can cause potentially severe problems such as cracks in foundation walls, and floor slab movement. Avoid this through proper installation of landscaping and good maintenance of drainage.

Backfill areas will settle and require prompt attention to avoid damage to your home and voiding of the structural warranty.

Keep downspout extensions in the down position to channel roof runoff away from the foundation area of your home. Routine inspection of downspouts, backfill areas, and other drainage components is an excellent maintenance habit.

*See also Grading and Drainage.*

### ***Bark or Rock Beds***

Do not allow edgings around decorative rock or bark beds to dam the free flow of water away from the home. You can use a nonwoven landscape fabric between the soil and rock or bark to restrict weed growth while still permitting normal evaporation of ground moisture.

### ***Clearing/Tree Removal***

Your home site was purchased either with the necessary trees already removed by the land developer or with trees still on the home site. In the case where the home site was already cleared by the developer, only trees that must be removed in order to build your home will be removed. This includes trees that are in the way of the driveway, patio, sidewalks, decks, etc. Depending on the size of the tree, typically any tree within 5' – 10' from the home will have to be removed. In the case where the home site was not cleared by the developer, the same guidelines shall be followed when we clear the home site. Also in this latter case, as a standard practice we will remove certain trees, at our discretion, from the back yard of your home site up

to a distance of 30' – 40' from the back of your home. This is to provide a usable space for your enjoyment for recreation.

On some home sites, there may be certain areas that will be left in a “natural” condition. These areas may be anywhere on the home site, although they are normally in the back, especially where the home site is more than 100' deep. At our discretion, trees and “underbrush” in these areas will be left in their natural state in order to preserve the environment thereby improving the community appearance as a whole. These natural areas will not be sodded, seeded, or leveled but shall remain in the condition they were in when the home site was purchased.

### ***Contractors***

You are responsible for changes to the drainage pattern made by any landscape, concrete, deck, or pool contractor. Discuss drainage with any company you hire to do an installation in your yard. Do not permit them to tie into existing drainage pipes without approval from Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC.

### ***First 5 Feet***

Do not install trees of any type within 5 feet of your home.

### ***Irrigation***

Make provisions for efficient irrigation. Conduct weekly operational checks to ensure proper performance of the system. Direct sprinkler heads away from the home. Trickler or bubbler type irrigation systems are not recommended for use adjacent to the structure. Regularly drain and service sprinkler systems.

### ***Planning***

Locate plants and irrigation heads out of the way of pedestrian or bicycle traffic and car bumpers. Space groves of trees or single trees to allow for efficient mowing and growth. Group plants with similar water, sun, and space requirements together.

*See also Xeriscape.*

### ***Plant Selection***

Plant with regard to your local climate. Favor native over exotic species. Consider ultimate size, shape, and growth of the species.

### ***Requirements***

Check with your local building department and homeowners association before designing, installing, or changing landscaping for any regulations that they require you to follow.

### ***Fertilizers***

Apply appropriate fertilizer and weed and pest controls as needed for optimal growth. Investigate organic compounds for additional protection of the environment.

### ***Utility Lines***

A slight depression may develop in the front lawn along the line of the utility trench. To correct this, roll back the sod, spread top soil underneath to level the area, and then relay the sod.

### ***Waiting to Landscape***

If you leave ground non-landscaped, it erodes. Correcting erosion that occurs after closing is your responsibility.

### ***Xeriscape***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC recommends careful consideration of landscape design and selection of planting materials to minimize the demands of your yard on water supplies. Detailed information about Xeriscape is available from reputable nurseries. This has the triple benefit of helping the environment, saving on water bills, and reducing the amount of moisture that can reach your foundation.

## **Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC Limited Warranty**

We will confirm the healthy condition of all plant materials during the orientation. Maintaining landscaping is your responsibility.

# **Mildew**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Mildew is a fungus that spreads through the air in microscopic spores. They love moisture and feed on surfaces or dirt. On siding, they look like a layer of dirt. Cleaning mildew from your home is your responsibility. Solutions that remove mildew are available from local paint or home improvement stores. Wear protective eyewear and rubber gloves for this task; the chemicals that remove mildew are unfriendly to humans.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We will remove any mildew noted during the orientation. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC warranty excludes mildew.

# **Mirrors**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

To clean your mirrors, use any reliable liquid glass cleaner or polisher available at most hardware or grocery stores. Avoid acidic cleaners and splashing water under the mirror; either can cause the silvering to deteriorate. Avoid getting glass cleaners on plumbing fixtures as some formulas can deteriorate the finish.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We will confirm that all mirrors are in acceptable condition during the orientation. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will correct scratches, chips, or other damage to mirrors noted during the orientation.

## **Paint and Stain**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

When washing walls avoid abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, or scrub brushes. Flat paints show washing marks more easily than gloss paints do. Often, homeowners prefer the results obtained by touching up rather than washing.

#### ***Colors***

Your selection sheets are your record of the paint and stain color names, numbers, and brands in your home.

#### ***Exterior***

Regular attention will preserve the beauty and value of your home. Check the painted and stained surfaces of your home's exterior annually. Repaint before much chipping or wearing away of the original finish occurs; this will save the cost of extensive surface preparation. Plan on refinishing the exterior surface of your home approximately every two to three years or as often as your paint manufacturer suggests for your area and climate. Climatic conditions control the chemical structure of the paint used on the exterior. Over time, this finish will fade and dull a bit. When you repaint the exterior of your home, begin by resetting popped nails and removing blistered or peeling portions of paint with a wire brush or putty knife. Sand, spot with primer, and then paint the entire area. Use a quality exterior paint formulated for local climate conditions.

Avoid having sprinklers spray water on the exterior walls of your home. This will cause blistering, peeling, splintering, and other damage to the home.

#### ***Severe Weather***

Hail and wind can cause a great deal of damage in a severe storm, so inspect the house after such weather. Promptly report damage caused by severe weather to your insurance company.

#### ***Stain***

For minor interior stain touch-ups, a furniture-polish-and-stain treatment is inexpensive, easy to use, and will blend in with the wood grain. Follow directions on the bottle.

#### ***Caulking***

Caulking and maintenance of exterior painted surfaces is a homeowner maintenance item. Lack of proper maintenance of all caulk joints on the exterior of your home will cause damage to the materials that are painted.

### ***Touch-Up***

When doing paint touch-ups, use a small brush, applying paint only to the damaged spot. Touch-up may not match the surrounding area exactly, even if the same paint mix is used. When it is time to repaint a room, prepare the wall surfaces first by cleaning with a reliable cleaning product designed for the type of paint to be cleaned.

### ***Wall Cracks***

We suggest that you wait until after the first heating season to repair drywall cracks or other separations due to shrinkage.

*See also Drywall.*

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your orientation we will confirm that all painted or stained surfaces are in acceptable condition. We will touch up paint as indicated on the orientation list. You are responsible for all subsequent touch-up, except painting we perform as part of another warranty repair.

### ***Cracking***

As it ages, exterior wood trim will develop minor cracks and raised grain. Much of this will occur during the first year. Raised grain permits moisture to get under the paint and can result in peeling. This is not a defect in materials or workmanship. Paint maintenance of wood trim and gutters is your responsibility.

### ***Fading***

Expect fading of exterior paint or stain due to the effects of sun and weather. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC limited warranty excludes this occurrence.

### ***Touch-Up Visible***

Paint touch-up is visible under certain lighting conditions.

### ***Wood Grain***

Due to wood characteristics, color variations will result when stain is applied to wood. This is natural and requires no repair. Today's water-base paints often make wood grain visible on painted trim. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC does not provide corrections for this condition.

# **Phone Jacks**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Your home is equipped with telephone jacks as shown on the blueprints and selection sheets. Initiating phone service, additions to phone service, and moving phone outlets for decorating purposes or convenience are your responsibility.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair wiring that does not perform as intended from the phone service box into the home. From the service box outward, care of the wiring is the responsibility of the local telephone service company.

# **Plumbing**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

We want to draw your attention to a water-saving regulation that went into effect in 1993, which prohibits the manufacture of toilets that use more than 1.6 gallons of water per flush. In the search for a balance among comfort, convenience, and sensible use of natural resources, the government conducted several studies. The 1.6-gallon toilet turned out to be the size that overall consistently saves water.

As a result of implementing this standard, flushing twice is occasionally necessary to completely empty the toilet bowl. Even though you flush twice on occasion, rest assured that overall you are saving water and we have complied with the law. Similarly, flow restrictors are manufactured into most faucets and all shower heads and cannot be removed. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

### ***Aerators***

Even though your plumbing lines have been flushed to remove dirt and foreign matter, small amounts of minerals may enter the line. Aerators on the faucets strain much of this from your water. Minerals caught in these aerators may cause the faucets to drip because washers wear more rapidly when they come in contact with foreign matter.

*See also Dripping Faucet.*

### ***Cleaning***

Follow manufacturer's directions for cleaning fixtures. Avoid abrasive cleansers. They remove the shiny finish and leave behind a porous surface that is difficult to keep clean. Clean plumbing fixtures with a soft sponge and soapy water (a nonabrasive cleaner or a liquid detergent is usually recommended by manufacturers). Then polish the fixtures with a dry cloth to prevent water spots. Care for brass fixtures with a good-quality brass cleaner, available at most hardware stores.

### ***Clogs***

The main causes of toilet clogs are domestic items such as disposable diapers, excessive amounts of toilet paper, sanitary supplies, Q-tips, dental floss, and children's toys. Improper garbage disposal use also causes many plumbing clogs. Always use plenty of cold water when running the disposal. This recommendation also applies to grease; supplied with a steady flow of cold water, the grease congeals and is cut up by the blades. If you use hot water, the grease remains a liquid, then cools and solidifies in the sewer line. Allow the water to run 10 to 15 seconds after shutting off the disposal.

You can usually clear clogged traps with a plumber's helper (plunger). If you use chemical agents, follow directions carefully to avoid personal injury or damage to the fixtures.

Clean a plunger drain stopper usually found in bathroom sinks by loosening the nut under the sink at the back, pulling out the rod attached to the plunger, and lifting the stopper. Clean and return the mechanism to its original position.

### ***Dripping Faucet***

You can repair a dripping faucet by shutting off the water at the valve directly under the sink, then removing the faucet stem, changing the washer, and reinstalling the faucet stem. The showerhead is repaired the same way. Replace the washer with another of the same type and size. You can minimize the frequency of this repair by remembering not to turn faucets off with excessive force. (Please note that some manufacturers do not use rubber washers.)

### ***Extended Absence***

If you plan to be away for an extended period, you should drain your water supply lines. To do this, shut off the main supply line and open the faucets to relieve pressure in the lines. You may also wish to shut off the water heater. Do this by turning off the cold water supply valve on top and the gas control at the bottom. Drain the tank by running a hose from the spigot on the bottom to the basement floor drain. If you leave the tank full, keep the pilot on and set the temperature to its lowest or "vacation" setting. Check manufacturer's directions for additional hints and instructions.

### ***Freezing Pipes***

Set the heat at 65 degrees F if you are away during winter months. Keep garage doors closed to protect plumbing lines running through this area from freezing temperatures.

In unusually frigid weather or if you will be gone more than a day or two, open cabinet doors to allow warm air to circulate around pipes. Use an ordinary hair dryer to thaw pipes that are frozen. Never use an open flame.

### ***Gold or Brass Finish***

Avoid using any abrasive cleaners on gold or antique brass fixtures. Use only mild detergent and water or a cleaning product recommended by the manufacturer.

### ***Laundry Tub***

If you have a laundry room tub, the faucet does not have an aerator. This is to allow the tub faucet to accept a hose connection.

### ***Leaks***

If a major plumbing leak occurs, the first step is to turn off the supply of water to the area involved. This may mean shutting off the water to the entire home. Then contact the appropriate contractor.

### ***Low Pressure***

Occasional cleaning of the aerators on your faucets (normally every three to four months) will allow proper flow of water. The water department controls the overall water pressure.

### ***Marble or Manufactured Marble***

Marble and manufactured marble will not chip as readily as porcelain enamel but can be damaged by a sharp blow. Avoid abrasive cleansers or razor blades on manufactured marble; both damage the surface. Always mix hot and cold water at manufactured marble sinks; running only hot water can damage the sink.

### ***Outside Faucets***

Outside faucets are freeze-proof, but in order for this feature to be effective, you must remove hoses during cold weather, even if the faucet is located in your garage. If a hose is left attached, the water that remains in the hose can freeze and expand back into the pipe, causing a break in the line. Repair of a broken line that feeds an exterior faucet is a maintenance item. Note that Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC does not warrant sillcocks against freezing.

### ***Porcelain***

You can damage porcelain enamel with a sharp blow from a heavy object or by scratching. Do not stand in the bathtub wearing shoes unless you have placed a protective layer of newspaper over the bottom of the tub. If you splatter paint onto the porcelain enamel surfaces during redecorating, wipe it up immediately. If a spot dries before you notice it, use a recommended solvent.

### ***Running Toilet***

To stop running water, check the shut-off float in the tank. You will most likely find it has lifted too high in the tank, preventing the valve from shutting off completely. In this case, gently bend the float rod down until it stops the water at the correct level. The float should be free and not rub the side of the tank or any other parts. Also check the chain on the flush handle. If it is too tight, it will prevent the rubber stopper at the bottom of the tank from sealing, resulting in running water.

### ***Shut-Offs***

Your main water shut-off is located in your meter box. You use this shut-off for major water emergencies such as a water line break or build an addition to your home. Each toilet has a shut-off on the water line under the tank. Hot and cold shut-offs for each sink are on the water lines under the sink. Your secondary shut-off is located in your garage.

### ***Tank Care***

Avoid exposing the toilet to blows from sharp or heavy objects, which can cause chipping or cracking. Avoid abnormal pressures against the tank. It is possible to crack the tank at points where it is attached to the bowl.

### ***Sprinklers***

You should routinely inspect sprinkler heads and provide seasonal service to maintain proper functioning.

### ***Stainless Steel***

Clean stainless steel sinks with soap and water to preserve their luster. Avoid abrasive cleaners; these will damage the finish. An occasional cleaning with a good stainless steel cleaner will enhance the finish. Avoid leaving produce on a stainless steel surface, since prolonged contact with produce can stain the finish.

### **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation we will confirm that all plumbing fixtures are in acceptable condition and that all faucets and drains operate freely. We will correct clogged drains that occur during the first 30 days after closing. If a household item is removed from a clogged drain during this time, we will bill you for the drain service. After the first 30 days, you are responsible for correcting clogged drains.

### ***Cosmetic Damage***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will correct any fixture damage noted on the orientation list. Repairing chips, scratches, or other surface damage noted subsequent to the orientation list is your responsibility.

### ***Exterior Faucets***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair leaks at exterior faucets noted on the orientation list. Subsequent to orientation, repair of a broken line to an exterior faucet is your responsibility.

### ***Leaks***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair leaks in the plumbing system during the warranty period. If a plumbing leak caused by a warranted item results in drywall or floor covering damage, we will repair or replace items that were part of the home as originally purchased. We do not make adjustments for secondary damages (for example, damage to wallpaper, drapes, and personal belongings). Insurance should cover these items.

### ***Noise/Temp***

Changes in temperature or the flow of the water itself will cause some noise in the pipes. This is normal and requires no repair. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair persistent water hammer. Expect temperatures to vary if water is used in more than one location at a time in the home.

### ***Supply***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will correct construction conditions that disrupt the supply of water to your home.

# Resilient Flooring

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Although resilient floors are designed for minimum care, they do have maintenance needs. Follow any manufacturer's specific recommendations for care and cleaning. Some resilient floors require regular application of a good floor finish. This assures you of retaining a high gloss. However, avoid using cleaning or finishing agents on the new floor until the adhesive has thoroughly set. This will take about two weeks.

### *Color and Pattern*

Your color selection sheets provide a record of the brand, style, and color of floor coverings in your home. Please retain this information for future reference.

### *Limit Water*

Wipe up spills and vacuum crumbs instead of washing resilient floors frequently with water. Limit mopping or washing with water; excessive amounts of water on resilient floors can penetrate seams and get under edges, causing the material to lift and curl.

### *Moving Furniture*

Moving appliances across resilient floor covering can result in tears and wrinkles. Install coasters on furniture legs to prevent permanent damage. If you damage the resilient floor, you can have it patched by professionals.

### *No Wax*

The resilient flooring installed in your home is the no-wax type. No-wax means a clear, tough coating that provides both a shiny appearance and a durable surface. However, even this surface will scuff or mark. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for maintaining the finish.

### *Raised Nail Heads*

Raised nail heads are the result of movements of the floor joist caused by natural shrinkage and deflection. We have used special nails and glued the underlayment to help minimize this movement.

### *Scrubbing and Buffing*

Frequent scrubbing or electric buffing is harder on floors than regular foot traffic. Use acrylic finishes if you scrub or buff.

### *Seams*

Any brand or type of resilient flooring may separate slightly due to shrinkage. Seams can lift or curl if excessive moisture is allowed to penetrate them. You can use a special caulking at tub or floor joints to seal seams at those locations. Avoid getting large amounts of water on the floor from baths and showers.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We will confirm that resilient floor covering is in acceptable condition during your orientation. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC limited warranty does not cover damage to resilient floors caused by moving furniture or appliances into the home. We can assist you in contacting professionals who can repair such damage if it occurs in your home. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC is not responsible for discontinued selections.

### ***Adhesion***

Resilient floor covering should adhere. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair lifting or bubbling and nail pops that appear on the surface.

### ***Ridges***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC has sanded and filled the joints of underlayment to minimize the possibility of ridges showing through resilient floor coverings. Ridging is measured by centering a 6-inch straight edge perpendicular to the ridge with one end tight to the floor. If the opposite end of the straight edge is 1/8 inch or more from the floor, Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair this condition.

### ***Seams***

Seams will occur and are sealed at the time of installation. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will correct gaps in excess of 1/16 inch where resilient flooring pieces meet or 1/8 inch where resilient flooring meets another material. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will correct curling at seams unless caused by excessive water.

# **Roof**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

The shingles on your roof do not require any treatment or sealer.

### ***Clean Gutters***

Maintain the gutters and downspouts so that they are free of debris and able to quickly drain precipitation from the roof.

### ***Leaks***

If a leak occurs, try to detect the exact location. This will greatly simplify finding the area that requires repair when the roof is dry.

### ***Limit Walking***

Limit walking on your roof. Your weight and movement can loosen the roofing material and in turn result in leaks. Never walk on the roof of your home when the shingles are wet they are slippery.

### ***Severe Weather***

After severe storms, do a visual inspection of the roof for damages. Notify your insurance company if you find pieces of shingle in the yard or shingle edges lifted on the roof.

### ***Leaves and Debris Buildup***

The buildup of leaves and debris can cause damage to the roof if not removed periodically. It is a Homeowner's maintenance responsibility to keep roof free from leaves and other debris.

### **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair roof leaks other than those caused by severe weather, such as hail damage, or some action you have taken, such as walking on the roof. Roof repairs are made only when the roof is dry.

### ***Ice Build-Up***

Ice build-up may develop in the eaves during extended periods of cold and snow. Damage that results from this is excluded from warranty coverage. Your insurance may cover this damage.

### ***Inclement Weather***

Storm damage is excluded from warranty coverage. Notify your homeowner insurance company if storm damage is discovered.

## **Rough Carpentry**

### **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Some floor and stair squeaks are unavoidable. Although Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC does not warrant against floor squeaks, a reasonable effort will be made to correct them.

### ***Floor Deflection***

Floors will deflect (bend) when walked on. This will be more noticeable next to hutches, book cases, pianos, chairs, and other heavy furniture. This is not a structural deficiency and Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will take no action for this occurrence.

### ***Plumb Walls***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will correct walls that are out of plumb more than 1/2 inch in an 8-foot distance or walls that are bowed more than 1/4 inch in any 32-inch measurement.

## **Siding**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Siding expands and contracts in response to changes in humidity and temperature. Slight waves are visible in siding under certain weather conditions; this cannot be entirely eliminated.

Wood or wood-product siding will require routine refinishing. The timing will vary with climatic conditions.

*See also Paint and Wood Trim.*

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will caulk and apply touch-up paint to cracks that exceed 3/16 inch. We provide this repair one time only near the end of the first year. Paint or stain touch-up will not match.

We will correct any separation at joints or where siding meets another material if the separation allows water to enter the home. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will correct delaminating siding.

# **Smoke Detectors**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Read the manufacturer's manual for detailed information on the care of your smoke detectors.

### ***Cleaning***

For your safety, clean each smoke detector monthly to prevent a false alarm or lack of response in a fire. After cleaning, push the test button to confirm the alarm is working.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC does not represent that the smoke detectors will provide the protection for which they are installed or intended. We will test smoke detectors during the orientation to confirm that they are working and to familiarize you with the alarm. You are responsible for obtaining fire insurance.

# **Stairs**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

No known method of installation prevents all vibration or squeaks in a staircase. A shrinkage crack will develop where the stairs meet the wall. When this occurs, apply a thin bead of latex caulk and, when dry, touch up with paint.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Although Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC does not warrant against stair vibration and squeaks, a reasonable effort will be made to correct them.

# **Stucco**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Stucco is a brittle cement product that is subject to expansion and contraction. Minor hairline cracks will develop in the outer layer of stucco. This is normal and does not reduce the function of the stucco in any way.

### ***Drainage***

To ensure proper drainage, keep dirt and concrete flatwork a minimum of 6 inches below the stucco screed (mesh underneath final coat of stucco). Do not pour concrete or masonry over the stucco screed or right up to the foundation.

### ***Efflorescence***

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, you can remove it by scrubbing with a stiff brush and vinegar. Consult your home center or hardware store for commercial products to remove efflorescence.

### ***Sprinklers***

Since stucco is not a water barrier, avoid spraying water from irrigation or watering systems on stucco surfaces to avoid possible leaks. Check the spray from the lawn and plant irrigation system frequently to make certain that water is not spraying or accumulating on stucco surfaces.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

One time during the warranty period, Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair stucco cracks. The repair will not exactly match the surrounding area.

# **Termites**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

We treat the foundation for termites and provide you with a certificate confirming that treatment. Plan to renew this treatment annually or as directed by the literature that accompanies the certificate. Treatment for other types of insects or animal infestations is your responsibility.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We certify treatment of your foundation for termites at closing. This is our final action for termites. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC warranty excludes treatment for any other insect

(such as ants) or animal (such as mice) infestations.

# Ventilation

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Homes today are built more tightly than ever. This saves energy dollars but creates a potential concern. Condensation, cooking odors, indoor pollutants, radon, and carbon monoxide may all accumulate. We provide mechanical and passive methods for ventilating homes. Your attention to ventilation is important to health and safety.

Building codes require attic and crawl space vents to minimize accumulation of moisture. Attic ventilation occurs through vents in the soffit (the underside of the overhangs) or on gable ends. Driving rain or snow sometimes enters the attic through these vents. Do not cover them to prevent this. Instead, cover the insulation in front of the vent. When you do this, precipitation that blows in safely evaporates and ventilation can still occur.

Homes with crawl spaces usually include two or more vents. Open crawl space vents for summer months and close them for winter months, pulling insulation over them. Failure to close these vents and replace insulation may result in plumbing lines freezing in the crawl space. This occurrence is not covered by your warranty.

Your daily habits can help keep your home well ventilated:

- Do not cover or interfere in any way with the fresh air supply to your furnace.
- Develop the habit of running the hood fan when you are cooking.
- Operate the bath fans when bathrooms are in use.
- Air your house by opening windows for a time when weather permits.

Proper ventilation will prevent excessive moisture from forming on the inside of the windows. This helps reduce cleaning chores considerably.

## Limited Warranty Guidelines

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC warranty guidelines for active components (for example, exhaust fans) are discussed under the appropriate headings (such as electrical systems, heating system, and so on).

# Windows, Screens, and Patio Doors

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Contact a glass company for reglazing of any windows that break. Glass is difficult to install without special tools.

### *Cleaning*

Clean vinyl with warm, clear water. Do not use powdered cleaner. After each cleaning, apply a silicone lubricant. Clean glass as needed with vinegar and water, a commercial glass cleaner, or the product recommended by the window manufacturer.

### ***Condensation***

Condensation on interior surfaces of the window and frame is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures. Your family's lifestyle controls the humidity level within your home. If your home includes a humidifier, closely observe the manufacturer's directions for its use.

### ***Door Locks***

Acquaint yourself with the operation of patio door hardware for maximum security.

### ***Door Tracks***

Keep patio door tracks clean for smooth operation and to prevent damage to the door frame. Silicone lubricants work well for these tracks.

### ***Invisible Glass***

Under certain lighting conditions, door glass may be hard to see. If you keep the screen fully closed when the glass door is open, your family will be accustomed to opening something before going through.

### ***Sticking Windows***

Most sliding windows (both vertical and horizontal) are designed for a 10-pound pull. If sticking occurs or excessive pressure is required to open or close a window, apply a silicone lubricant. This is available at hardware stores. Avoid petroleum-based products.

### ***Storing Screens***

Many homeowners remove and store screens for the winter to allow more light into the home. To make re-installation more convenient, label each screen as you remove it. Use caution: screens perforate easily and the frames bend if they are not handled with care.

### ***Weep Holes***

In heavy rains, water may collect in the bottom channel of window frames. Weep holes are provided to allow excess water to escape to the outside. Keep the bottom window channels and weep holes free of dirt and debris for proper operation.

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We will confirm that all windows and screens are in acceptable condition during the orientation. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will repair or replace broken windows or damaged screens noted on the orientation list. Windows should operate with reasonable ease and locks

should perform as designed.

### ***Condensation***

Condensation on interior surfaces of the window and frame is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures. You influence the humidity level within your home; Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC provides no corrective measure for this condition. Condensation that accumulates between the panes of glass in dual-glazed windows indicates a broken seal. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will replace the window if this occurs during the warranty period.

### ***Infiltration***

Some air and dust will infiltrate around windows, especially before the installation of landscaping in the general area. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC warranty excludes this occurrence.

### ***Scratches***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC confirms that all window glass is in acceptable condition at the orientation. Minor scratches on windows can result from delivery, handling, and other construction activities. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will replace windows, prior to closing, which have scratches readily visible from a distance of 4 feet. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC does not replace windows that have scratches visible only under certain lighting conditions.

### ***Tinting***

If you add tinting to dual-glazed windows, all warranties are voided. Damage can result from condensation or excessive heat build-up between the panes of glass. Refer to the manufacturer's literature for additional information.

*See also Ventilation.*

## **Wood Trim**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Shrinkage of wood trim occurs during the first two years or longer, depending on temperature and humidity. All lumber is more vulnerable to shrinkage during the heating season. Maintaining a moderate and stable temperature helps to minimize the effects of shrinkage. Wood will shrink less lengthwise than across the grain. Wood shrinkage can result in separation at joints of trim pieces. You can usually correct this with caulking and touch-up painting.

Shrinkage may also cause a piece of trim to pull away from the wall. If this occurs, drive in another nail close to, but not exactly in, the existing nail hole. Fill the old nail hole with putty and touch up with paint as needed. If the base shoe (small trim between base molding and the floor) appears to be lifting from the floor, this is probably due to slight shrinkage of the floor joists below. Again, you can correct this condition by removing the old nails and re-nailing. You

may prefer to wait until after the first heating season to make any needed repairs at one time when redecorating.

*See also Expansion and Contraction.*

## **Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation we will confirm that wood trim is in acceptable condition. Minor imperfections in wood materials will be visible and will require no action. Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will correct readily noticeable construction damage such as chips and gouges listed during the orientation.

### ***Exterior***

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC will caulk and apply touch-up paint to cracks in exterior trim components that exceed 3/16 inch. We provide this repair one time only near the end of the first year. Paint or stain touch-up will not match. We will correct any separation at joints that allows water to enter the home.

### ***Raised Grain***

Because of the effects of weather on natural wood, you should expect raised grain to develop. This is normal and not a defect in the wood or paint. Warranty coverage excludes this condition.

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC  
P.O. Box 1008, Richmond Hill, GA 31324  
Phone: 912-756-4135 Fax: 912-756-3084  
[warranty@ernesthomes.com](mailto:warranty@ernesthomes.com)

# Warranty Service Request

Note: Insert Copy Of Warranty Service Request Form.

Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC  
P.O. Box 1008, Richmond Hill, GA 31324  
Phone: 912-756-4135 Fax: 912-756-3084  
[warranty@ernesthomes.com](mailto:warranty@ernesthomes.com)

## One-Time Repairs



## Ernest Signature Custom Homes, LLC Homeowner Manual

### Sample Maintenance Schedule

Item	Monthly	Quarterly	Semiannually	Annually	Comment
Clean and test smoke alarms	X				
Test and reset all GFCIs	X				
Clean and change air filter	X				
Operate heat system			X		early in the fall
Operate air conditioning system			X		early in the spring
Inspect drainage			X		
Seal concrete cracks			X		
Inspect exterior paint or stain			X		
Touch up caulk			X		
Touch up grout			X		
Lube garage overhead door and tighten bolts			X		
Drain some water from bottom of water heater				X	or as directed by the manufacturer's literature
Clean gutters			X		
Operate pressure relief valve on water heater				X	
Clean window weep holes				X	or as needed
Clean faucet aerators and showerheads to remove mineral deposits	X				