

# CAPSTONE

— H O M E S —



## Homeowner's Care and Maintenance Guide South Dakota

---

April 2026



**Congratulations on your decision to purchase a new home from Capstone Homes.**

Capstone Homes has designed this Homeowner Guide to support you following your home purchase.

**This Homeowners Care and Maintenance Guide is provided for informational and marketing purposes only. It is not part of your Purchase Agreement or Warranty Agreement and does not create or modify any warranties or contractual obligations. If there is any inconsistency between this Guide and your Purchase Agreement or Warranty Agreement, the Purchase Agreement and Warranty Agreement control.**

This guide provides you with maintenance information and a component-by-component description of our home warranty guidelines. We recommend that you take time to review this material thoroughly.

If you need clarification or additional details about any topic discussed, please give us a call. We are delighted to welcome you to the Capstone Homes family and are always ready to serve you.

Sincerely,

**CAPSTONE**  
— H O M E S —

# Homeowner's Care and Maintenance Guide

Caring for Your Home.....	1
Use and Maintenance Guidelines.....	2
Warranty Guidelines.....	3
Manufacturer Warranties.....	3
Appliance Warranty Service.....	3
Warranty Service Requests.....	4
Emergency Service.....	4
Anniversary Visit (between 10 and 11 months).....	5
One-Time, Year-End Repairs.....	5
Interim Warranty Items.....	5
Inspection and Repair Hours.....	6
Access to Your Home.....	6
Renters.....	6
Warranty Repairs.....	7
Warranty Decisions.....	7
Trade Follow-up on Warranty Work Orders.....	7
Exterior Items.....	7
Children.....	8
Pets.....	8
Your Belongings.....	8
Surfaces.....	8
Signatures on Work Orders.....	8
Completion Time.....	8
Missed Appointments.....	9
Construction Defect Litigation Solicitation.....	9
Warranty Visit.....	10
Warranty Clipboard.....	11
Air Conditioning.....	12
Appliances.....	14
Asphalt.....	14
Attic.....	15
Brick and Cultured Stone.....	16
Cabinets.....	17
Carbon Monoxide Detectors.....	18
Caulking.....	18
Ceramic Tile.....	19
Concrete Flatwork.....	20
Condensation.....	22
Countertops.....	24
Granite.....	24
Quartz.....	25
Crawl Space.....	25
Damp Proofing.....	26
Decks.....	26
Doors and Locks.....	27
Drywall.....	29
Easements.....	30
Electrical System.....	30
Energy and Water Conservation.....	32
Extended Absences.....	34
Expansion and Contraction.....	36
Fencing.....	36

---

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

Fireplace.....	37
Fire Prevention.....	38
Fixtures.....	40
Flooring.....	41
Carpet.....	41
LVT (Luxury Vinyl Tile) & LVP (Luxury Vinyl Plank) .....	43
Foundation.....	44
Framing.....	45
Garage Overhead Door.....	46
Gas Shut-Offs.....	47
Ghosting.....	47
Grading and Drainage.....	48
Gutters and Downspouts.....	50
Hardware.....	51
Heating System.....	51
Humidifier.....	55
Insulation.....	55
Landscaping.....	55
Mildew.....	59
Mirrors.....	59
Mold Prevention.....	59
Multi-Family Lifestyle.....	61
Paint and Stain.....	62
Pests and Wildlife.....	64
Plumbing.....	64
Property Boundaries.....	68
Railings.....	68
Roof.....	69
Shower Doors or Tub Enclosures.....	71
Siding.....	72
Smoke Detectors.....	73
Stairs.....	73
Sump Pump.....	73
Telephone and Cable Outlets.....	74
Utility Locations.....	75
Ventilation.....	75
Water Heater-Electric.....	77
Water Heater-Gas.....	78
Windows, Screens, Sliding Glass Doors.....	79
Wood Trim.....	80
Interior.....	81
Exterior.....	82
Home Care Supplies.....	83
Maintenance Schedule.....	84
Appliance Service.....	85

---

## Caring for Your Home

We construct your home with carefully selected materials and the work of experienced craftsmen and laborers, all under the supervision of our field personnel. Although this group works from detailed plans and specifications, a home is one of the last hand-built products left in the world, so each one is unique and, over time, behaves differently.

Like an automobile, your home requires care from the first day. Regular attention is essential to maintaining a quality home for a lifetime. This chapter of our homeowner guide was assembled to assist you in that effort.

This guide will cover the following topics:

- Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines: an introduction to the maintenance information in this homeowner guide
- One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines: an introduction to the criteria we use to screen one-year limited warranty items
- Warranty Service Requests: information about handling emergencies or appliance issues, standard warranty visits, and interim items
- Warranty Repairs: decisions and scheduling, details about working in your home, completion times, and missed appointments
- Warranty Clipboard: this form gives you a place to make notes of items, questions, and feedback you want to remember to share with us about your home and our service
- Air Conditioning through Wood Trim: an alphabetical list of the items in your home, including maintenance hints, warranty criteria, and troubleshooting tips where applicable
- Home Care Supplies: create a shopping list of tools and supplies you will need to care for your home
- Maintenance Schedule: a place to make notes about routine maintenance tasks and plan your schedule
- Additional Warranty Coverage: in addition to our one-year warranty, your home comes with other warranties
- Appliance Service: a worksheet where you can record serial and model numbers along with the manufacturer's service phone number

## Use and Maintenance Guidelines

We are proud of the homes we build and the neighborhoods in which we build them. We strive to create lasting value. This is best achieved when you know and perform appropriate maintenance tasks. Periodic maintenance is necessary due to normal wear and tear, the inherent characteristics of the materials used in your home, and the normal service required by the mechanical systems. Natural fluctuations in temperature and humidity also affect your home and require maintenance.

We recognize that it is impossible to anticipate and describe every attention needed for good home care. We focused on items that homeowners commonly ask about. The subjects are listed in alphabetical order to make it convenient to find answers to your questions. Because we offer a variety of floor plans and optional features, this homeowner's guide may discuss components that are not present in your home.

### Checklists

You will find several checklists included in this homeowner's guide. These cover fire prevention reminders, energy and water conservation tips, green home care ideas, suggestions for extended absences, appliance service information, home maintenance supplies list, and a maintenance schedule. Again, we make no claim that we have included every detail. We do believe we have provided you with a good start and allowed space for you to add your own notes to our checklists.

### Prompt Attention

Often, minor maintenance attention provided immediately saves you from a more serious, time-consuming, and sometimes costly repair later. Note also that neglecting routine maintenance can impact applicable limited warranty coverage on all or part of your home.

By caring for it attentively, you ensure uninterrupted warranty coverage and years of enjoyment of your home. The attention provided by each homeowner also contributes significantly to the overall value of your home and of the community.

We make every effort to keep the information in this homeowner's guide up to date. However, if any detail in our discussion conflicts with the manufacturer's recommendations, you should follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

Some manufacturers' warranties may extend beyond the first year, and it is in your best interests to know about such coverage. Remember to either register online or mail in any registration cards you receive with manufacturer materials. Being in the manufacturer's system ensures that, in the event of a recall, the company can contact you and arrange to provide the necessary correction.

## Warranty Guidelines

While we strive to build a flawless home, we are realistic enough to know that with repeated use, an item may fail to perform as intended. When this occurs, we will make the necessary corrections so that the item meets our warranty guidelines. In support of this commitment, we provide you with a limited warranty. The guidelines described in the pages that follow apply to the one-year period unless otherwise stated.

Any warranty items omitted from the descriptions provided will be evaluated in accordance with the National Association of Home Builders publication titled “Construction Performance Guidelines,” current edition, with the year you closed on your home. If an issue arises that is not addressed in that material, we will provide service in accordance with regional practices.

If you sell your home during the warranty period, please advise us of the new owner’s name and the closing date. Please pass this homeowner guide along to the new owners or suggest that they contact us to request one.

### Manufacturer Warranties

Please take the time to read the literature (warranties and use-and-care guides) provided by the manufacturers of consumer products and other items in your home. The information contained in that material is not repeated here. 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 the information in this homeowner’s guide up to date. However, if any detail in our discussion conflicts with the manufacturer’s recommendations, you should follow the manufacturer’s recommendations.

Some manufacturers’ warranties may extend beyond the first year, and it is in your best interests to know about such coverage. Remember to mail in any registration cards you receive with manufacturer materials. Being in the manufacturer’s system ensures that, in the event of a recall, the company can contact you and arrange to provide the necessary correction.

### Appliance Warranty Service

The kitchen appliance manufacturers ask that you contact them directly for any repair needs. They may be able to resolve the issue over the phone, and if not, they prefer to schedule an appointment with you. Please inform us as well, so we can document the item for your file and follow up with you.

You can find the phone numbers for appliance service in the use and care manuals for each appliance or on the manufacturer’s website. When you contact the manufacturer or their service provider, you will need to provide the appliance’s model and serial number, as well as the closing date of your home purchase. To help you keep this information organized, a form is included at the end of this homeowner guide for you to record these details in one convenient location for future reference.

Appliance warranties are generally for one year but can be longer. Refer to the literature provided by the manufacturer for complete information.

## Warranty Service Requests

Providing warranty service for a new home is more complicated than for other products. When you purchased your home, you purchased hundreds of items and the work of 35 to 50 independent trade contractors. With so many details and people involved, a planned system is essential. Our system includes numerous types of services. If you are ever in doubt as to which applies to your situation, contact our warranty office for assistance.

- Emergency service: service requests should be made by phone
- Appliance service: direct from the manufacturer
- Anniversary visit if needed: typically, 10-11 months after closing. The homeowner will need to email us the list of items and request an appointment.
- Interim warranty service: for your protection, put all non-emergency service requests in writing in an email to [warranty@capstonehomes-mn.com](mailto:warranty@capstonehomes-mn.com).

### Emergency Service

While emergency warranty situations are rare, when they occur, prompt response is essential. Begin by checking the items you can. TROUBLESHOOTING tips appear in this homeowner's guide for several of your home's components: plumbing, heating, electrical, roofing, and water heater. By using the troubleshooting tips, you may resolve the problem immediately or mitigate the situation until a technician arrives. If your efforts do not resolve the problem, the information you gather will be useful to the technician you contact.

During business hours, contact our warranty office. Outside of these times, including weekends and holidays, refer to the emergency list provided at closing for contact details.

Our trade contractors or local utility companies provide emergency responses to the following conditions:

- Total loss of heat during winter months: October to May
- Total loss of electricity: Contact the power company first; if an issue is still present, contact the electrician
- Total loss of water
- Plumbing leak that requires shutting off the entire water supply
- Gas leak: If you suspect a gas leak, leave the home immediately and call the gas company from another location to request emergency service

Note that if a utility service (gas, electricity, water) is out in an entire area, attention from the local utility company is needed. Trade contractors are unable to help with such outages.

If you have contacted a mechanical trade outside our normal business hours, please inform our warranty office on the following business day. This allows us to document the situation and follow up appropriately.

### Roof Leak

While we agree with homeowners that a roof leak is indeed an emergency, repairs cannot be performed safely or effectively while the roof is wet. During business hours, please contact our warranty office with the necessary information. Take all possible steps to mitigate damage, and we will follow up when conditions allow. (See the Roof section for more details.)

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### Other Emergencies

In addition to the emergency situations covered by our limited warranty, be prepared for other emergencies. Post phone numbers for the fire department, police, paramedics, and poison control in an easily accessible area. Have companies in mind in case you need a locksmith, water extraction, glass breakage repair, or sewer roter service. If you are new to the area, neighbors may be able to recommend good service providers.

### Anniversary Visit (between 10 and 11 months)

If needed, the homeowner will schedule the year-end appointment by contacting Capstone Homes at least two months prior to the anniversary date.. Please email a list of items you would like reviewed to [warranty@capstonehomes-mn.com](mailto:warranty@capstonehomes-mn.com). Capstone Homes will review the submitted items and schedule the appointments accordingly. The anniversary visit typically takes less than an hour. Please keep notes of any items you'd like us to review with you..

### One-Time, Year-End Repairs

If needed, we will provide several “one-time repairs.” Please refer to the individual headings below for details on measurements indicating that repairs are appropriate. In most cases, you will benefit by waiting until the anniversary warranty visit to request attention to items that include year-end service.

- Caulking: separations or cracks
- Ceramic Tile: grout cracks
- Countertops: separation from wall or backsplash
- Drywall: separation and nail pops (Painting to be completed by Homeowner)
- Floor squeaks if excessive

### Interim Warranty Items

If you need to initiate non-emergency warranty service before the anniversary visit, you are welcome to do so by submitting a warranty request via email, the homeowner portal, or by letter. Please include your name, address, phone numbers, and your concerns.

Homeowners scheduled for an anniversary visit are given priority. We schedule appointments for interim requests on a first-come, first-served basis. As a result, service on interim requests may take a bit longer to address, or they can be addressed at the year-end visit.

### Put It in Writing!

A written report of the items provides you with maximum protection by documenting each issue in your warranty file. This also allows us to operate efficiently, thereby providing faster service to all homeowners. In each case, keep a copy of what you submitted along with the date you reported the items. You can email your request to [warranty@capstonehomes-mn.com](mailto:warranty@capstonehomes-mn.com), enter it in the homeowner portal, or send us notice in writing by mail to:

Capstone Homes  
14015 Sunfish Lake Blvd., Suite 400  
Ramsey, MN 55303

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### Help Us to Serve You

We can provide service faster and more accurately if we have all the necessary information. With any warranty request, please include:

- Your name, address, and preferred method of contact during business hours
- Provide a detailed description of the issue, such as “Guest bath - cold water line leaks under sink,” instead of vague terms like “plumbing problem.”
- Any additional information you think we should know to expedite service. For instance, the best days or times to reach you

### Inspection and Repair Hours

Many homeowners ask whether evening and weekend appointment times are available. Capstone Homes understands the desire for appointments outside our standard business hours. In investigating how such appointments could be arranged, we discovered several factors that make extended service hours impractical.

- A significant portion of repairs requires daylight for proper execution. These include drywall, paint, and exterior work of almost any type
- Many of the 35 to 50 independent trade contractors involved in the construction of your home are small businesses. While they are dedicated to their craft, they do not have the capacity to work into the evening hours.
- Administrative staff and supervisors need to be available to answer questions. Having some personnel work extended hours results in being short-staffed during regular business hours.

Until we discover satisfactory solutions to these challenges, we appreciate your understanding and cooperation regarding our warranty inspection & repair hours: Monday through Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. If these hours change, we will notify you by mail or email.

### Access to Your Home

Whether for inspection or repair appointments, we refrain from accepting keys and entering your home in your absence, as do our trade contractors. While we recognize that this means resolving warranty items may take longer, we believe your peace of mind and security should be our top priority.

Warranty visits are conducted when an adult is present to accompany our representative and identify the items that require attention. Our in-house service technicians, along with those from our trades or suppliers, will only perform repairs when an adult is available to let them into your home. An adult is a person 18 years or older who has your written authorization to admit service personnel and sign completed work orders. You can request an Alternative Representative Authorization form from our warranty office.

### Renters

If you rent your home, a written authorization will permit us to work directly with your renter or property management company representative. You will receive copies of all correspondence and work orders. Without this authorization, we can only accept warranty service requests directly from you. You can request an Alternative Representative Authorization form from our warranty office.

# Warranty Repairs

Items listed on warranty requests 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 perform repairs, we issue a warranty work order describing the issue to be addressed. If the item is a home maintenance task, we will review the maintenance steps with you and offer whatever informational assistance we can. Occasionally, the inspection step is unnecessary. In that case, we issue the necessary work orders to the trade contractor, who will schedule an appointment with you, the homeowner, for any items that require entry into the home; exterior items will be completed without an appointment.

## Warranty Decisions

In addition to the information in the limited warranty document, this homeowner's guide includes details on the criteria we will use to evaluate concerns you report. The purpose is to inform you of our warranty commitment for common issues that can arise in a new home. Descriptions include the corrective action we will take in many common situations.

If a warranty question arises that is not covered here, we will assess it in accordance with regional practices.

### **We Sometimes Break Our Own Rules—in Your Favor**

Our standards for qualifying warranty repairs align with or exceed the established guidelines outlined by the home building industry's practices. Please note that we reserve the right, at our discretion, to exceed these guidelines if common sense or individual circumstances make it appropriate, without being obligated to exceed all guidelines to a similar degree or to do so for other homeowners with different circumstances.

### **We Sometimes Say No**

With a product as complex as a home, differences of opinion can occur regarding which tasks are homeowner maintenance responsibilities and which are our warranty responsibilities. When you request warranty service for a maintenance item, we will provide you with instructions on how to care for it effectively. This way, you can ensure its longevity and performance. We are available to answer your home-care questions during and after your warranty period. It is the homeowner's responsibility to perform routine maintenance on the home.

## Trade Follow-up on Warranty Work Orders

A trade has a minimum of 15 days from the inspection date to contact you to schedule an appointment for any repairs. This time frame allows us to notify appropriate people, order any needed materials or parts, and allow the trade to arrange for repairs to be completed. Please be sure that you are available the entire time that the trades are working in your home. On occasion, work must occur in sequence, and more than one appointment may be needed.

## Exterior Items

Exterior items can usually be inspected or repaired without an adult present, provided access is available (for instance, the gate is unlocked, and pets are restrained).

### Children

Children are naturally curious about tools and work in progress on your home. However, to protect them from potential injury and to allow repair personnel uninterrupted work, we ask that children be cared for away from ongoing work. This policy is for the protection of your children, our employees, and our trades personnel. We have instructed all repair personnel to reschedule the appointment if children are in or around the work area.

### Pets

We recognize that many homeowners count their pets as members of their households. To prevent the possibility of a pet becoming injured or lost or giving in to its natural curiosity, we ask that you restrict all pets to a comfortable location during any warranty visit. This policy also protects our employees and trades personnel. We have instructed all personnel to reschedule the appointment if pets have access to the work area.

### Your Belongings

When warranty work is needed in your home, we will ask that you remove any vulnerable items or those that might make the repair difficult. This includes furniture or personal items in or near the work area. We will reschedule the repair appointment rather than risk damaging your belongings.

### Surfaces

We expect all personnel who work in your home to arrive on time, park in the street, and have appropriate materials to cover the work area, protecting your home from damage and catching any dust or scraps from the work being performed. Similarly, all personnel should clean up the work area, removing whatever excess materials they brought in.

Before beginning any work, we require that repair personnel check the work area for any existing surface damage. They will document any scratches, chips, or other cosmetic damage with you before beginning repairs to avoid any later disagreement about how and when the damage occurred.

### Signatures on Work Orders

Signing a work order acknowledges that a technician worked in your home on the date shown and for the items listed. Your signature on a work order does not negate any of your rights under the warranty, nor does it release us from any confirmed warranty obligation. If you prefer not to sign the work order, the technician will note that and sign it, then return it to us for our records.

If you have suggestions on how we can improve the service we provide, we want to hear them. If you are dissatisfied with any service we provide, you can note it on the work order or email the warranty office at [warranty@capstonehomes-mn.com](mailto:warranty@capstonehomes-mn.com) with your feedback. We will review your concern and determine whether our requirements have been met. If we have exceeded your expectations, our service team and the trades we work with sincerely appreciate your compliments on their efforts.

### Completion Time

Regular review of outstanding work orders is part of our office routine. By checking with trades and homeowners alike, we strive to complete warranty work within an appropriate and reasonable timeframe or to identify and address the cause of any delay.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

We intend to complete warranty work orders within 15 workdays; In the event parts need to be ordered or we need to go back to the manufacturer, that time could be 4-10 weeks. If a back-ordered part or similar circumstance causes a delay, we will let you know. Similarly, when weather prevents the timely completion of exterior tasks, we monitor these items and follow up to ensure they are completed when conditions improve. This might result in a wait of several months.

### **Missed Appointments**

Good communication is one key to successfully completing warranty items. We aim to stay transparent with homeowners and prevent any inconveniences. One of our challenges in this regard is when unexpected events sometimes result in missed appointments.

If an employee or tradesperson expects to be late, they should inform you as soon as they become aware of the delay, giving you the option to reschedule for a later time that day or to schedule a different appointment. If you need to cancel an appointment, please notify us promptly once you become aware of the change in your schedule.

### **Construction Defect Litigation Solicitation**

In recent years, some law firms have made it a practice to contact homeowners to initiate lawsuits against builders. Often, these firms have never visited the community or seen any of the homes involved.

If you receive any such solicitation, whether by mail, phone, or through a neighbor engaged by the law firm, we suggest you contact us immediately.

Regardless of the status of your warranty, Capstone Homes stands ready to investigate any claim of a construction defect. This is not merely fair but, more importantly, our company's integrity demands it. Should an actual construction defect be discovered, we will correct it. If the condition falls under the homeowner's maintenance responsibilities, we will assist you with information. In either case, a lawsuit is simply unnecessary.

Legal actions like these demand your time for depositions, often take years to resolve, and rarely leave homeowners with substantial amounts after deducting law firm fees, processing costs, and expert witness expenses.

Meanwhile, the resulting damage to your home's value and the community's reputation, combined with the need to disclose all these details at the time of sale, is likely to have a negative impact. In most cases, your warranty terminates, and your homeowners' insurance policy and related costs may also be affected.

Finally, your mortgage company may require that any proceeds you receive be turned over to them to compensate for the diminished value of your home.

All in all, it is worth a phone call to Capstone Homes before risking such repercussions.

## Warranty Visit

### Meeting Details

**Appointment Set by:** Warranty Office

**Appointments Available:** Office Support: Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Inspection/Repairs: Monday through Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Where:** Your new home

**Attendees:** Homeowner(s)  
Warranty Rep

**Length:** 30 minutes to an hour, depending on your items

**Purpose:** Review your list of items and perform repairs (If a trade is needed for the repair, they will contact you directly to set a date and time)  
Discuss any questions you have

**Preparation:** Note items or maintenance questions you want to discuss

**HOMEOWNER GUIDE**

**Warranty Clipboard**

Grading/Landscaping Status			
Warranty Reference	Warranty Visit	Contact Details	Emergency Contacts
Home site	Primary Date	Rep	After Hours
Floor Plan	Time	Phone	HVAC
Closing	Anniversary Date	Fax	Plumber
Expiration	Time	E-mail	Electrician

Questions	Comments

Warranty Review Items	One-Time Items

# Air Conditioning

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Air conditioning can greatly enhance your home's comfort, but if it is used improperly or inefficiently, it can waste energy and cause frustration. These hints and suggestions are provided to help you maximize your air conditioning system's performance.

Your air conditioning system services the entire house. The air conditioning unit is the mechanism that produces cooler air. The air conditioning system involves everything inside your home, including drapes, blinds, and windows.

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

Time is a significant factor in your expectations for an air conditioning system. Unlike a light bulb, which responds instantly, the air conditioning system only starts operating after you set the thermostat. For instance, if you arrive home at 6 pm when the temperature is 85° and set your thermostat to 65°, the air conditioning will start cooling, but it will take considerably longer to reach the target temperature. Throughout the day, the sun has been heating not only the air in the house but also the walls, carpet, and furniture. At 6 pm, the air conditioning unit starts cooling the air, but the walls, carpet, and furniture release heat, nullifying this cooling. By the time the air conditioning unit has cooled the walls, carpet, and furniture, you may have lost patience.

If evening cooling is your primary goal, set the thermostat to a moderate temperature in the morning while the house is still cool, allowing the system to maintain that temperature. When you arrive home, lower the setting slightly for better results. Once the system is operating, setting the thermostat to 65° will not cool the home any faster and may cause the unit to freeze up and stop working. Extended use under these conditions can damage the unit.

### Adjust Vents

Maximize airflow to the 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 equipment damage.

### Humidifier

If a humidifier is installed on the furnace system, turn it off when you use the air conditioning; otherwise, the additional moisture can cause the cooling system to freeze up. Cold air holds less moisture than warm air, and there is ample ambient moisture in summer air. If your humidifier adds more, it can overwork the air conditioner and reduce its cooling effect.

### Manufacturer's Instructions

The manufacturer's guide specifies maintenance for the condenser. Review and follow these points carefully. Since the air conditioning system is combined with the heating system, also follow the maintenance instructions for your furnace as part of maintaining your air conditioning system.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### Temperature Variations

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

### Trial Run

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

### Troubleshooting Tips: No Air Conditioning

Before calling for service, check to confirm:

- Thermostat is set to “cool”, and the temperature is set below the room temperature.
- Blower panel cover is installed correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. Similar to how a clothes dryer door operates, this panel presses a button that signals to the fan motor that it is safe to come on. If that button is not pushed in, the furnace will not operate.
- Air conditioner and furnace breakers on the main electrical panel are on. (Remember, if a breaker trips, you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.)
- The switch on the side of the furnace is on.
- Fuse in the furnace is good. (See furnace manufacturer literature for size and location.)
- Filter is clean to allow airflow.
- Vents in individual rooms are open.
- Air returns are unobstructed.

Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

The air conditioning system should maintain a temperature of 78°Fahrenheit or a differential of 15 degrees from the outside temperature, measured in the center of each room at a height of 5 feet above the floor. Lower temperature settings are often possible, but neither the manufacturer nor we guarantees this.

### Compressor

The air conditioning compressor must be level to operate correctly. If it settles during the warranty period, we will correct this.

### Coolant

The outside temperature must be at least 70° for the contractor to add coolant to the system. If your home was completed during the winter months, the system charging is unlikely to be complete and will need to be performed in the spring. Although we check and document this during your new home orientation, a reminder call in the spring is welcome.

### Non-Emergency

Lack of air conditioning is not an emergency. Air conditioning contractors in our region respond to service requests during normal business hours on a first-come, first-served basis.

## Appliances

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Please read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for the use and care of your appliances. The Appliance Service sheet at the end of this chapter provides a convenient place to find details about appliances, whether they are part of your original home purchase or were delivered after closing. By gathering these details as you settle into your new home, you will have them readily available in case you need to call a manufacturer for service.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

As applicable, we confirm that all appliance surfaces are in acceptable condition during your new home orientation. Please register all appliances; the purchase date will be the date you closed on your home. The appliance manufacturers warrant their products directly to you in accordance with the terms and conditions of these written warranties.

## Asphalt

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Asphalt is a flexible and specialized surface. Like any other surface in your home, it requires protection from potential damage. Over time, the effects of weather and earth movement will cause minor settling and cracking of asphalt. These are normal reactions to the elements and do not constitute improperly installed asphalt or defective material. Avoid using your driveway for one week after installation. Keep people, bicycles, lawn mowers, and other traffic off it.

### Chemical Spills

Asphalt is a petroleum product. Gasoline, oil, turpentine, and other solvents or petroleum products can dissolve or damage the surface. Wash such spills with soap and water immediately and then rinse them thoroughly with plain water.

### Hot Weather

Avoid any concentrated or prolonged loads on your asphalt, particularly in hot weather. High-heeled shoes, motorcycle or bicycle kickstands, trailers, or even cars left in the same spot for long periods can create depressions or punctures in asphalt.

### Non-residential Traffic

Prohibit commercial or other extremely heavy vehicles, such as moving vans or other large delivery trucks, from pulling onto your driveway. We design and install asphalt drives for conventional residential vehicle use only: family cars, vans, light trucks, bicycles, and so on.

### Sealcoating

Exposure to sunlight and other weather conditions will fade your driveway, making the surface gravel more visible. This is a normal condition and not a material or structural problem.

You do not need to treat the surface of your asphalt driveway. However, if you choose to treat it, wait a minimum of 12 months, and use a dilute asphalt emulsion, rather than the more common coal tar sealant.

Hairline cracks will usually be filled by the sealing process. Larger cracks can be filled or patched with a sand-and-sealer mixture prior to resealing.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Heaving**

Due to the extreme temperatures in our area, heaving can occur. This is uncontrollable and does not fall under the warranty.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We perform asphalt repairs by overlay patching. Capstone Homes is not responsible for any inevitable color differences between the patch and the original surface. Sealcoating can eliminate this cosmetic condition and is the homeowner's responsibility.

### **Settling**

Settling next to your garage floor, up to 1-1/2 inches across the width of the driveway, is normal. Settling or depressions elsewhere in the driveway of up to one inch in any eight-foot radius are considered normal. We will repair settling that exceeds these measurements.

### **Thermal Cracking**

Your driveway will exhibit thermal cracking, usually during the first 12 months. These cracks help your driveway adapt to heating and freezing cycles. Cracks should be evaluated in the hottest months, July or August. We will repair cracks that exceed 1/2 inch in width.

NOTE: Asphalt repairs may not match the existing surface in color or texture. Seams are also acceptable in asphalt repairs or changes.

## **Attic**

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

The attic is unheated and neither designed nor intended for storage.

### **Attic Access**

We provide access to this area for maintenance of mechanical services that may pass through the attic space. When performing necessary tasks in the attic, use caution and avoid stepping off the wood beams onto the drywall. This can result in personal injury or damage to the ceiling below. Your limited warranty coverage excludes such injury or damage.

### **Frozen Attic Condensation**

Frozen condensation is a condition that can develop in an attic space. Despite superior construction techniques, homes can experience attic condensation when the weather conditions are right.

A condition that can increase condensation levels in the attic is air infiltration from the home's warm finished areas. This can occur due to small openings in the air barrier that allow required equipment to penetrate the attic (such as attic access weatherstripping, plumbing stacks, and electrical wiring). These openings are sealed at construction, but no home is 100 percent airtight.

During extended periods of extremely cold temperatures, moisture in the attic air can freeze on the roof sheathing and/or roof trusses and may continue to accumulate. The result can be a substantial amount of frost or ice (sometimes referred to as attic frosting). Normally, the spring temperatures gradually melt the frost, allowing the moisture to evaporate. However, because our climate can have drastic temperature increases, if the temperature rises to above zero very rapidly, this frost or ice may melt so quickly that water collects in your attic.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

When this occurs, moisture or water can infiltrate into the interior of your home. Evidence of this can appear as staining on the ceiling or walls, or as water dripping from the bath fan or a light fixture.

This natural phenomenon is outside the control of any builder and, therefore, is excluded from warranty coverage. If you observe any of these conditions, follow the troubleshooting tips below.

### Troubleshooting Tips: Frozen Attic Condensation

- If you notice water in a light fixture, do NOT turn the light on. Turn off the breaker to the light and call for service.
- Wipe up water off floors, carpet, and furniture.
- Run your bathroom exhaust fans, ventilation fans, and range hood fans to help remove extra moisture.
- Turn down your humidifier.
- Allow for adequate air movement in your attic by ensuring that roof vents are clear of ice, snow, or debris.
- Keep your attic hatch closed and sealed with caulk. When open, it allows warm, moist air to escape from your home into the attic.
- Take steps to mitigate damage to your home and furnishings.
- If damage occurs, contact your homeowner's insurance company.

See also Condensation, Roof, and Ventilation

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

The construction department inspects the attic before your closing to confirm the insulation is correct.

#### Frozen Attic Condensation

If a construction defect allows excessive warm, moist air from the home to enter the attic, we will correct it.

## Brick and Cultured Stone

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Brick and stone are among the most durable and lowest-maintenance finishes for a home's exterior.

#### Efflorescence

The white, powdery substance that sometimes accumulates on masonry surfaces is called efflorescence. This is a natural phenomenon and cannot be prevented. In some cases, you can remove it by scrubbing it with a stiff brush and vinegar. Consult your home center or hardware store for commercial products to remove efflorescence. Scrubbing cultured stone can affect coloration. Check the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning directions.

#### Tuck-Pointing

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

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **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.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

### **Cracks: One-Time Repair**

One time during the warranty period, we repair masonry cracks that exceed 1/4 inch and that are visible from 20 feet away.

## **Cabinets**

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

Wood or wood-veneer cabinets have differences in grain and color between and within the cabinet components due to natural variations in wood grain and how each piece takes stain.

### **Cleaning**

Consult your manufacturer's recommendations regarding the product to use in caring for your cabinets. Follow container directions. Use such products at most once every three to six months to avoid excessive buildup. Avoid paraffin-based spray waxes and washing cabinets with water, as both will damage 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 crockpot) too near the cabinet. When operating such appliances, place them in a location that is not directly under a cabinet. Turning on the range hood fan while preparing meals can also help to minimize or avoid this problem.

### **Wood Grain**

Each species of wood shows characteristics unique to that type of wood. For instance, maple has a fine, smooth grain. Color can range from nearly white to slightly reddish-brown. Mineral or sugar streaks occur in maple and vary from piece to piece. Oak has a long linear grain, often displaying rays; it may exhibit small pinholes and tight knots. Color can range from golden to deeper tones, including grays and even greens.

Similarly, other types of wood will exhibit still other traits. Expect variation in the original materials and in the way those materials accept stain and finish products. These properties are part of the beauty of wood.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your homeowner's orientation, we will confirm that all cabinet parts are installed and that their surfaces are in acceptable condition.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Alignment**

Doors, drawer fronts, and handles should appear level and even when viewed from a normal position.

### **Operation**

Cabinets should operate properly under normal use.

### **Separations**

We will correct gaps between cabinets and the ceiling or walls by caulking or other means if the gap exceeds 1/8 inch. Locations behind appliances are exempt from this repair.

### **Warping**

If doors or drawer fronts warp by more than 1/8 inch from the cabinet face, we will correct this by adjustment or replacement. Replacements may have noticeable variations in wood grain and color.

### **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.

## **Carbon Monoxide Detectors**

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

Read the manufacturer's literature for detailed information on the care of your carbon monoxide detectors and when they should be replaced.

### **Cleaning**

For your safety, clean each carbon monoxide detector monthly to prevent false alarms or a lack of response when needed. After cleaning, push the test button to confirm the alarm is working.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors are inspected by the building official at the final inspection. Capstone Homes does not represent that the carbon monoxide detectors will provide the protection for which they are installed or intended.

## **Caulking**

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

Time and weather will shrink and dry out caulking, which no longer provides a good seal. Include checking and repairing the caulking as part of regular homeowner maintenance. Caulking compounds and dispenser guns are available at hardware stores. Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully to ensure you select an appropriate caulk for the intended purpose.

### **Colored Caulk**

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

### **Latex Caulk**

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

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Silicone Caulk**

Caulking containing silicone will not accept paint and works best where water is present, for example, where the tub meets the tile or a sink meets a countertop.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your homeowner's orientation, we confirm that appropriate areas are adequately caulked.

### **Separations: One-Time Repair**

We will touch up the caulking once during your materials-and-workmanship period. We suggest that this be performed with your anniversary warranty service.

See also Countertops, Expansion and Contraction, Stairs, and Wood Trim.

## **Ceramic Tile**

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

#### **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 countertops in your home may be washed with any nonabrasive soap, detergent, or tile cleaner. Abrasive cleaners will dull the finish.

#### **Grout Discoloration**

Use a brush, cleanser, and water to clean any yellowed or stained grout surface. Grout cleansers and whiteners are available at most hardware stores.

#### **Sealing Grout**

The grout in your home has a built-in sealer. If you want to use additional sealing grout, it is the homeowner's decision and responsibility. Once grout has been sealed, ongoing maintenance of the seal is necessary to protect against staining.

#### **Separations**

Expect slight separations to occur in the grout between tiles. Cracks in the grout can be filled using premixed grout purchased from hardware stores. Follow package directions. Tile around bathtubs or countertops may appear to pull up over time. This is caused by the normal shrinkage of grout or caulk and the 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.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your homeowner's 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. We are not responsible for variations in color or discontinued patterns. New grout may vary in color from the original.

### **Grout Cracks: One-Time Repair**

Cracks appearing in the grouting of ceramic tiles at joints or junctions with other materials are commonly due to shrinkage. We will repair cracks in grout joints exceeding 1/16 inch once during the first year. Cracks in grout are evaluated under normal viewing and lighting conditions. We are not responsible for color variations in grout or discontinued colored grout. Any grouting or caulking that is needed after that time is the homeowner's responsibility. If you adjusted or replaced any of the original grout, the warranty becomes void.

## **Concrete Flatwork**

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

Freeze-thaw cycles in our climate are responsible for most homeowners' concerns about concrete. The constant expansion and contraction of the soil beneath the concrete, and the concrete itself, cause shifting and movement that can result in cracks. By maintaining good drainage, you protect your home's foundation and the concrete flatwork: the basement floor, patio, driveway, garage floor, and sidewalks.

Reinforcing concrete using wire mesh or reinforcing bars does not eliminate cracking. The reinforcing helps control the cracking that will naturally occur.

### **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 temperature change can damage the surface bond of the concrete. We recommend sweeping to keep the concrete clean. If washing is necessary, do this when temperatures are moderate. Repeated hosing of the garage floor can increase soil movement by allowing water to penetrate existing cracks. We recommend sweeping to clean the garage floor.

Avoid using soap on an unpainted basement floor. Because of concrete's porous nature, soap (or any lathering cleaner) is extremely difficult to rinse off. Instead, use plain water and washing soda or, if necessary, a scouring powder.

### **Control Joints**

Control joints are grooves tooled or sawed into concrete flatwork to direct cracks to those locations rather than allowing them to form randomly. We use zip strips to help control where concrete cracks. The crack will look jagged and can also show spider webbing. This is normal.

### **Cracks**

Because concrete is a water-based product, shrinkage and cracking will occur. For example, a typical concrete slab 10 feet across can shrink 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.

Soil and climate conditions in our area can lead to frost heave, which can cause concrete to shift and crack. During the summer, moisture seeps beneath 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.

As cracks form, seal them with waterproof concrete caulk (available at hardware or home improvement stores) to prevent further moisture from penetrating the soil beneath.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Expansion (Isolation) Joints**

We sometimes install expansion joints (zip strips) to isolate a concrete slab from other parts of the home, such as foundation walls, garage floor, and so on. They permit the slab to move in response to soil expansion and can help reduce cracking. However, as concrete shrinks during curing, moisture can penetrate beneath it, causing separation or displacement. When this occurs, fill the resulting gap with gray silicone sealant, available at most hardware stores.

### **Heavy Vehicles**

Prohibit commercial or other extremely heavy vehicles, such as moving vans and large delivery trucks, from pulling onto your driveway. We design and install concrete drives for conventional residential vehicle use only: family cars, vans, light trucks, bicycles, and so on.

### **Ice, Snow, and Chemicals**

Driving or parking on snow creates ice on the drive, which magnifies the effects of snow on the concrete surface. Remove ice and snow from concrete slabs as promptly as possible after snowstorms. Use sand for slippery spots to avoid concrete damage. Protect concrete from abuse by chemical agents such as pet urine, fertilizers, radiator overflow, and repeated hosing, as well as de-icing agents such as road salt that can drip from vehicles. All these items can cause spalling (chipping of the concrete surface).

**Caution: The use of deicers or salt on your concrete will damage the surface and will void warranty coverage.**

### **Sealer**

A concrete sealer, available at paint stores, will help you keep concrete flatwork clean and protected from moisture. Sealant should be applied once a year according to the manufacturer's directions.

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

Causes of spalling include repeated hosing of concrete for cleaning, animal urine, radiator overflow, fertilizer, uncleared snow and ice, ice-melting agents, and road salts from vehicles. Repair of spalling is a home maintenance task unless it results from a warranty claim for faulty materials or workmanship.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Basement concrete slabs are floating—they are not attached to the home's foundation walls. These are not structural (load-bearing) elements of the home and are covered by the one-year material and workmanship warranty.

### **Color**

Concrete slabs vary in color. We provide no correction for this condition.

### **Separation**

We will correct the separation of concrete slabs from the foundation wall where the separation exceeds one inch.

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

Spalling is excluded from warranty coverage unless it results from faulty material or workmanship. Where this applies, we will repair the concrete surface if exposed aggregate exceeds 10 percent of the total area.

### Basement Floor

#### Basement Floor Cracks: One-Time Repair

Random cracks resulting from normal shrinkage are normal and expected. Cracks exceeding 1/4 inch in width or vertical displacement are considered excessive, and we will repair them one time during the warranty year. Subsequently, maintenance of the concrete slab is the homeowner's responsibility. When repairs are necessary, the color and texture of the repair materials will vary from the original concrete.

#### Level

Within the general surface of the floor, a line represented by a four-foot straight edge centered over the defect and 3/8 inch off the floor surface at the far end requires repair. However, the floor sloped for drainage purposes requires no correction.

### Garage Floor

We will repair cracks in garage floors that exceed 1/4 inch in width (Control cracks will not be caulked). The repair will be made by installing concrete caulk. When repairs are necessary, the color and texture of the repair material will differ from those of the original concrete.

#### Settling or Heaving

We will repair slabs that settle or heave if this movement causes water to drain towards the home.

#### Exterior

Exterior concrete is excluded from warranty coverage. Cracks, spalling, and heaving will occur in exterior concrete and should be expected.

## Condensation

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Condensation occurs when warmer, moist air comes in contact with a colder surface. Outside, you see this as dew; inside, you may see it as a layer of moisture on a glass containing a cold beverage, on windows, and glass doors. This condensation results from high humidity in the home, low outside temperatures, and inadequate ventilation. Family lifestyle significantly influences two of these three conditions.

During cold weather in particular, ensure that warm air from the heat registers located near windows can flow unobstructed. This helps minimize condensation. Also, ensure that window coverings are open at least slightly for the same reason.

#### Daily Habits

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 home's systems.
- Follow manufacturers' recommendations for the use of your energy recovery ventilator ERV.
- Develop the habit of running the hood fan while you are cooking.
- Run your bath fans for a minimum of 30 minutes after bathing or showering.
- Air your house by opening windows for a time when the weather permits.

### **Frozen Attic Condensation**

Frozen condensation is a condition that can develop in an attic space. Despite superior construction techniques, homes can experience attic condensation when the weather conditions are right.

A condition that can increase condensation levels in the attic is air infiltration from the home's warm finished areas. This can occur due to small openings in the air barrier through which required equipment must penetrate the attic (such as attic access weatherstripping, plumbing stacks, and electrical wiring). These openings are sealed at construction, but no home is 100 percent airtight.

During extended periods of extremely cold temperatures, moisture in the attic air can freeze on the roof sheathing and/or roof trusses and may continue to accumulate. The result can be a substantial amount of frost or ice (sometimes referred to as attic frosting).

Normally, the spring temperatures gradually melt the frost, allowing the moisture to evaporate. However, because our climate can have drastic temperature increases, if the temperature rises to above zero very rapidly, this frost or ice may melt so quickly that water collects in your attic.

When this occurs, moisture or water can infiltrate into the interior of your home. Evidence of this can appear as staining on the ceiling or walls, or as water dripping from a bath fan or light fixture.

This natural phenomenon is outside the control of any builder and, therefore, is excluded from warranty coverage. If you observe any of these conditions, follow the troubleshooting tips below.

### **Troubleshooting Tips: Frozen Attic Condensation**

- If you notice water in a light fixture, do NOT turn the light on. Turn off the breaker to the light and call for service.
- Run your bathroom exhaust fans, ventilation, and range hood fans to help remove extra moisture.
- Turn down your humidifier.
- Allow for adequate air movement in your attic by ensuring that roof vents are clear of ice, snow, or debris.
- Keep your attic hatch closed and sealed with caulk. When open, it allows warm, moist air to escape from your home into the attic.
- Take steps to mitigate damage to your home and furnishings. Wipe up water off floors, carpet, and furniture.
- If damage occurs, contact your homeowner's insurance company.

See also Attic, Roof, and Ventilation

### **Humidifier Operation**

If your home includes a humidifier, closely observe the manufacturer's directions for its use. Instructions to turn off the humidifier during the air conditioning season are typical. Moderate settings in winter can maintain desired comfort levels without contributing too much moisture to your home. You may need to experiment to find the correct level for your family's lifestyle.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **New Construction**

Some experts have estimated that a typical new home contains 50 gallons of water. Water is part of lumber, concrete, drywall texture, paint, caulk, and other building materials. Wet weather during construction adds more. This moisture evaporates into the air as you live in your home, adding to the moisture generated by normal living activities. Over time, this source of moisture will diminish.

### **Normal Activities**

As you live in your home, your daily lifestyle also contributes to the moisture in the air. Cooking, laundry, baths, showers, aquariums, plants, and household activities all add moisture to the air in your home. Likewise, your daily routine can mitigate the amount of moisture in your home and reduce condensation on interior surfaces.

### **Temperature**

Avoid setting your thermostat at extreme temperatures. Heating your home will cause materials to dry out faster, increasing the amount of moisture in the air. Drying the materials out too fast also increases shrinkage cracks and separations.

### **Ventilation**

The best way to ensure adequate moisture ventilation after a shower is to run the bathroom exhaust fans for at least 30 minutes. Use your range hood fan when using the stove. When weather conditions permit, open windows to let fresh air circulate through your home. Keep the dryer exhaust hose clean and securely connected.

See also Ventilation

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Condensation results from weather conditions and a family's lifestyle. We have no control over these factors. The limited warranty coverage excludes condensation.

### **Frozen Attic Condensation**

If a construction defect allows excessive warm, moist air from the home to enter the attic, we will correct it.

## **Countertops**

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

Please refer to the Capstone-provided folder at closing for details about the countertops.

### **Caulking**

The caulking between the countertop and the wall, along the backsplash joint (the section of counter that extends a few inches up the wall), and around the sink may shrink, leaving a slight gap. Maintaining a good seal in these locations is important to prevent moisture from reaching the wood beneath laminates or granite and to prevent warping.

### **Granite**

Granite is a term used to refer to a family of natural quarried stone products that come from various parts of the world. No two pieces of granite will have the same pattern or the same color. The granite installed in your home will vary in color and pattern from the sample you selected.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Cleaning**

Mix a small amount of mild detergent in clean water and use a clean cloth. Dry with a soft, clean cloth. Do not allow water to sit on the surface, especially on the seams. Avoid abrasive cleaners or scouring pads, which can damage the surface's luster.

### **Acids**

Remember that acid from citrus fruit, or soda, can etch some natural stone surfaces.

### **Sealer**

Granite is highly resistant to chips and scratches, but it is porous. The granite surface should be treated every six to twelve months with a sealer to help prevent staining. If droplets of water dripped on the countertop bead up the sealer is still doing its job. If not, the sealer should be applied.

### **Quartz**

Quartz is a man-made surface that has color all the way through it. It is stain-resistant; however, it can stain.

### **Cleaning**

Use mild dish soap and water daily to clean. Harsh chemicals can cause damage and need to be wiped away immediately, with the counter cleaned thoroughly. Stay away from harsh, abrasive cleansers and cleaners that contain bleach.

### **Heat**

Extreme heat can affect the quartz top, so it is recommended to use cutting boards, trivets, or hot pads under hot pans.

## **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your new home orientation, we confirm that all countertops are in acceptable condition. We repair noticeable surface damage, such as chips, cracks, and scratches, as noted in your homeowner orientation. Repair of surface damage noted after this is one of your home maintenance responsibilities.

### **Separation from Wall: One-Time Repair**

Separation between countertops and walls, backsplashes, and sinks results from normal material shrinkage. Separation can also occur in exterior walls due to temperature differences between the exterior and the interior of the home.

If needed, we will re-caulk these areas one time during the materials and workmanship warranty. Subsequently, caulking will be one of your home maintenance responsibilities.

## **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. Properly installed landscaping helps prevent excessive water from entering crawl spaces. Report standing water for inspection.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your homeowner orientation, we will check the condition of the soil around the outside of the crawl space. Soil around the outside of the crawl space should have positive drainage. Provided that you have not altered the drainage nor caused excessive moisture to accumulate and remain in this area with incorrect landscaping, Capstone Homes will correct the conditions that result in persistent standing water.

## **Damp Proofing**

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

We spray your foundation walls with damp-proofing material. Although we make every effort to ensure a dry basement, during periods of excessive moisture, you may notice damp or wet blocks/walls. Over time, natural compaction of soils in the backfill areas will usually eliminate this condition. Careful maintenance of positive drainage will also protect your basement from this condition.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We will correct conditions that allow water to enter the basement, unless the cause is improper landscaping installation or inadequate drainage maintenance.

## **Decks**

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

Wood decks add to the style and function of your home and are a high-maintenance part of your home's exterior.

#### **Effects of Exposure**

Wood decks are subject to shrinkage, cracking, splitting, cupping, and twisting. Nails or screws may work loose and will need routine maintenance. Inspect your decks at least once a year and provide any needed attention promptly to maintain an attractive appearance and prevent costly repairs. We recommend that you treat or re-stain your decks annually to keep them looking their best.

#### **Foot Traffic**

As you use your decks, abrasives, and grit on shoes can scratch or dent the wood surface. Regular sweeping and mats can mitigate this, but will not completely prevent it.

#### **Outdoor Furniture**

Moving grills, furniture, or other items can damage the decking surface. Use caution when moving such items to prevent scratches, gouges, and similar damage.

#### **Sealing or Water Repellent**

To prolong the life and beauty of your deck, treat it periodically with a water repellent or wood preservative. Local home centers or hardware stores offer a variety of products suitable for this purpose. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.

#### **Snow and Ice**

Heavy snow or ice that stays on the deck for a long time can cause more wear and tear. Removing it quickly can help lessen these negative effects. Use caution in shoveling to avoid needless scratching of the deck boards.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Stain**

Exposed wood decks that have been stained will show readily noticeable color variation. Each board responds differently to stain, and over time, exposure to weather and use will cause further color variations.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Exposed wood decks are constructed to meet structural and functional design. During your homeowner orientation, we will confirm that the wood decks are in satisfactory condition. Your deck has a one-year limited warranty from the time of closing or from the time of construction (whichever is later).

### **Color Variation**

Color variations are a natural result of how wood accepts stain and are excluded from limited warranty coverage.

### **Replacement Boards or Rails**

Some shrinkage, cracking, splitting, cupping, and twisting are natural occurrences in wood decks and are excluded from limited warranty coverage. In extreme situations where personal safety is involved, if we provide replacement of boards or rails, the new material will vary in color from pieces that have been exposed to elements and use. Corrections needed due to a lack of routine maintenance are the homeowner's responsibility.

## **Doors and Locks**

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

Doors installed in your home are made of various materials and come in several styles. Minor maintenance is sometimes needed, and with just routine care, they will serve you well for many years.

### **Exterior Paint Finish**

Your exterior doors will be painted according to the exterior color chart and the manufacturer's recommendations. The frequency of maintenance needed for painted finishes on exterior doors will be influenced by your home's exposure to the sun or orientation on the home site.

### **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.

### **Locks**

If required, lubricate exterior 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 loosens the hardware and causes the door to sag.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Sticking**

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

Before planing a door because of sticking, try two other steps: first, apply either a paste wax, light coat of paraffin, or candle wax to the sticking surface; or second, tighten the screws that hold the door jamb or door frame. If planing is necessary even after these measures, use sandpaper to smooth the door and paint the sanded area to seal against moisture.

### **Warping**

Some minor warping of interior doors is normal due to natural fluctuations in humidity caused by forced air furnaces, showers, dishwashers, and so on. Interior doors may occasionally require minor adjustments. If a door warps slightly, keeping it closed as much as possible often returns it to normal.

The exterior doors installed in your home are made of metal or fiberglass and have interior wood frames. These products can also be subject to shrinkage and warping due to temperature differential between the inside and outside surfaces.

### **Weather Stripping**

Weather stripping wears out over time. We recommend that each fall you inspect the weatherstripping, striker plates, and swipes around the perimeter of the entry doors. Adjust or replace as necessary. Exterior door thresholds occasionally require adjustment or replacement.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your homeowner's orientation, we confirm that all doors are in acceptable condition and correctly adjusted. We will repair construction damage to doors noted on your homeowner orientation documents.

### **Adjustments**

Because of normal settling of the home, doors may require adjustment for proper fit. We will make such adjustments during the one-year warranty period.

### **Failure to Latch**

If a door does not latch due to minor settling during the first year of occupancy, please notify the warranty office.

### **Warping**

Doors should operate with relative ease to engage and release the latch. We will repair doors that warp in excess of 1/4 inch beyond the door jamb when the door is closed. For double doors, if either side permanently warps more than 1/4 inch beyond the face of the adjacent door, we will repair it.

# Drywall

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Slight cracking, nail pops, or seams may become visible from 6' away, looking straight on, under natural lighting conditions 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.

Apart from the one-time repair service we offer, drywall maintenance is the homeowner's responsibility. Most drywall repairs can be easily made. This work is best done when you redecorate the room.

With all drywall repairs completed by Capstone Homes or subcontracted through a trade partner, the paint touch-up will be the homeowner's responsibility.

After the one-time repair by Capstone Homes, you can repair hairline cracks with a coat of paint and slightly larger cracks with spackle. 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.

## One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your homeowner orientation, we confirm that drywall surfaces are in acceptable condition.

### Lighting Conditions

We do not repair drywall flaws that are only visible under electric lights.

### Related Warranty Repairs

If drywall repairs are required due to poor workmanship, such as blisters in the tape, or for other warranty-related reasons, such as a plumbing leak, we complete the repair by touching it up with the original paint used when the home was finished.

You are responsible for performing paint touch-ups after closing. The effects of time on paint mean touch-ups can vary from the surrounding area.

### Separations and Nail Pops: One-Time Repair

One time during the materials and workmanship warranty, generally as part of your anniversary visit, we will repair drywall shrinkage cracks and nail pops.

The repaired area will appear white and will need to be painted. This touch-up painting will be the homeowner's responsibility. Remember that touch-ups may be visible. Repainting the entire wall or the entire room to correct this is the homeowner's choice and responsibility.

You are also responsible for custom paint colors or wallpaper applied after closing. Because of the effects of time on paint and wallpaper, as well as possible dye lot variations, touch-ups are unlikely to match the surrounding area.

### Truss Uplift

Truss uplift can occur when outside temperatures are significantly colder than inside temperatures. The result appears as a minor crack along the joint of the ceiling and the wall. We will repair separations in excess of 1/4 inch one time.

## Easements

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Easements are zones on your property where utility supply lines and similar infrastructure can pass through. They permit service to your home site and adjacent lots, now and in the future. Your home site will also include drainage easements: the runoff from adjacent lots may pass across your property. Likewise, water from your property may run across a neighboring lot. Easements are recorded and are permanent.

Trees, shrubs, gardens, play equipment, storage sheds, fences, or other items that you install in or across these easements may be disturbed if service entities—such as the gas, electric, or phone companies—need access to lines for repairs or to connect service to nearby properties.

Utility companies and others have the right to install equipment in easements. These might include streetlights, mailboxes, or junction boxes. Neither you, as the homeowner, nor we, as your builder, have the authority to prevent, interfere with, or alter these installations. Plans for the location of such items are subject to change by the various entities involved. Because they have no obligation to keep us informed of such changes, we cannot predict which sites will include this equipment.

See also Grading and Drainage, and Property Boundaries.

## Electrical System

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Know where the breaker panel is located, which features a main shut-off that controls the entire electrical supply to your home, and 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 services. Should a failure occur in any part of your home, always check the breakers in the main panel box.

### **ARC Fault Circuit Interrupter (AFCI) (2022 code added GFI to the arc fault breaker)**

Designed as a safety feature, ARC fault circuit interrupters are required for all bedroom outlets. They protect you from injury or damage due to appliances with damaged cords, loose connections, or nicked or pinched wires inside the walls. If an AFCI breaker trips, check any cords used in the affected outlet first before resetting the AFCI breaker at the breaker panel. Turn the breaker “off,” then “on,” to reset it.

### **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.

### **Breakers Tripping**

Breakers trip due to overloads caused by plugging too many appliances into the circuit, a worn cord or a defective appliance, or operating an appliance with a voltage requirement (such as a power tool) that exceeds the circuit's rating. The starting of an electric motor can also trip a breaker.

If any circuit trips repeatedly, unplug all items connected to it and reset the breaker. 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.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Dimmable Fixtures/Dimmers with LED Bulbs**

Dimmers have changed a lot in recent years. The old dimmers were a buzzing heat source that didn't save any power at all. Today's dimmers are much improved and actually save power. Dimmers can come with a rotary knob or a slider (either is effectively the same) and are used to control some of our larger light sources. Please note that if you are using LED bulbs for lighting, use dimmable bulbs. A little buzzing with LED bulbs is normal.

### **Fixture Location**

We install light fixtures to ensure they are well-suited to the home's layout. Structural elements (framing) sometimes require location changes. Moving fixtures to accommodate specific furniture arrangements or room use is the homeowner's responsibility.

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

GFCI receptacles have a built-in element that detects power fluctuations. Quite simply, the GFCI is a circuit breaker that offers personal protection against electric shock. Building codes require the installation of these receptacles in bathrooms, kitchens, and outdoor areas.

Each GFCI receptacle has a test and reset button. This will trip the circuit. To return to 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 multiple outlets.

### **Grounded System**

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

### **Light Bulbs**

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

### **Modifications**

If you wish to make any modifications, contact the electrician listed on the Emergency Phone Numbers you received at your homeowner orientation. Having another electrician modify your electrical system during the warranty period will void that portion of your limited warranty.

### **Outlets**

If an outlet fails to work, first check whether it is controlled by a wall switch or a GFCI. Next, check the breaker.

If you have small children in your home, install safety plugs to cover unused outlets. The education of children about electrical safety is important—they need to know how to use electrical outlets, sockets, or fixtures. This also minimizes the air infiltration that sometimes occurs with these outlets.

### **Troubleshooting Tips: No Electrical Service**

#### **No Electrical Service Anywhere in the Home**

Before calling warranty or the electrician, check to confirm:

- Service is not out in the entire area. If so, contact the utility company.
- Main breaker and individual breakers are all in the on position.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **No Electrical Service to One or More Outlets**

Before calling warranty or the electrician, check to confirm:

- Main breaker and individual breakers are all in the on position.
- Applicable wall switch is on
- GFCI is set (see details on GFCIs, earlier in this entry)
- The item you want to use is plugged in
- Item you want to use works in other outlets
- The bulb in the lamp is good

Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.

### **Underground Cables**

Before digging, check the location of buried service leads by contacting utility locators. Maintain positive drainage around the foundation to protect electrical service connections.

### **Under or Over-Cabinet Lights**

The selection of optional under- or over-cabinet lighting provides either task lighting or atmosphere to your kitchen. We suggest you note the bulb size and type for these fixtures and keep replacements on hand.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your homeowner's orientation, we confirm that light fixtures are in acceptable condition and that all bulbs are working. Our limited warranty excludes any fixture you supplied.

### **Designed Load**

We will fix any electrical wiring that doesn't meet its specified load requirements. If outlets, switches, or fixtures are not working properly, we will repair or replace them as needed.

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

We are not responsible for food spoilage resulting from a breaker or a GFCI outlet.

### **Power Surge**

Power surges result from local conditions beyond our control and are excluded from limited warranty coverage. They can cause burned-out bulbs or damage to sensitive electronic equipment such as TVs, alarm systems, and computers. Damage caused by lightning strikes is also excluded from limited warranty coverage.

## **Energy and Water Conservation**

A home built with respect for the environment is even more effective at achieving its goals when you are well informed about how to use its features and products. By conserving resources, you not only help the planet but also save money. Keep these tips in mind as you utilize your home's features.

### Heating and Cooling

- Maintain your home's heating and cooling systems in clean and good working order to prevent inconvenience and maximize efficiency. Arrange for a professional to service the heat and air conditioning systems at least once every two years.
- Keep filters clean or replace them regularly.
- If you have a zoned system (more than one furnace and separate controls), think through operating schedules and temperature settings to maximize comfort and minimize energy consumption.
- Plan landscaping elements that support efficient energy use:
  - Deciduous trees provide shade during the summer and permit solar warming in winter.
  - Evergreen trees and shrubs can create a windbreak and reduce heating costs.
  - Position trees to shade the roof and still allow good air flow around the home.
  - Plant shrubs/trees to shade the air conditioner without obstructing air flow around it.
- Keep the garage overhead doors closed.
- If you expect a house full of dinner guests, you can turn the heat down a few degrees, as body heat will make up the difference.

### Winter

- In the winter, adding moisture to the air in your home can help it retain heat and provide health benefits. However, if you notice condensation forming on your windows, it means you've increased the humidity too much and should lower the humidifier setting. Keep in mind that the ideal humidity level varies with the outside temperature, so refer to your manufacturer's owner's manual for a table that outlines the appropriate settings.
- During cold days, open window coverings to allow the sun to warm your home. Close them when the sun begins to set.
- Avoid use of the humidifier when you are using your air conditioner.

### Summer

- If you include them in your home, ceiling fans use only one-tenth as much electricity as air conditioners, and the moving air allows you to feel comfortable at temperatures several degrees higher.
- On hot days, close all windows and the window coverings on windows facing the sun to minimize solar heating.

### Water and Water Heater

- If you have a traditional tank-style water heater, set it at "normal" or 120° Fahrenheit if your dishwasher has a water booster heater. If not, set the water heater to 140° Fahrenheit.
- Follow the steps outlined in the manufacturer's directions for draining water from your water heater to remove accumulated hard-water scale that builds up inside the tank. Timing will depend on the nature of your water supply.
- Correct plumbing leaks, running toilets, or dripping faucets as soon as possible.
- Keep faucet aerators clean
- Front-loading washing machines require less than half the water of top-loaders. They also cause less wear and tear on clothing, and because they wring out more water during the spin cycle, laundry dries faster.

## Appliances

- In selecting your home’s appliances, compare the information on the Energy Guide sticker. Sometimes, spending a bit more up front can reduce operating costs over the life of the appliance while conserving energy.
- Use cold water when operating your disposal. This not only saves the hot water you pay to heat, but it also preserves the disposal motor.
- When baking, preheat your oven to reach the desired temperature per the recipe. When possible, bake several items at the same time or at least consecutively. Turn the oven off a few minutes before the baking time is done.
- If your oven includes a convection setting, use it regularly—it can save both time and energy, allowing you to set the temperature 25° lower for most recipes.
- If you will be running the dishwasher immediately, scrape rather than rinse the dishes.
- Run the dishwasher when it has a full load and allow the dishes to air-dry. A full dishwasher uses one-half of the energy and one-sixth the water of washing dishes by hand.
- Avoid regular use of the rinse and hold cycle.
- Avoid putting containers of hot food into the refrigerator; allow them to cool a bit first.
- Refrigerator shelves are warmer near the door, and the coolest parts are near the bottom and toward the back. If possible, keep your meats and dairy products in those cooler places.
- A fuller refrigerator works less to keep cool, but do not pack it too tightly; good air circulation is important for efficient operation. Likewise, keep your freezer full.
- Regularly check refrigerator seals to ensure they are working correctly: if a dollar bill slides out without a tug, you may need to replace them.
- Keep dust off the condenser by cleaning every 6-12 months or as needed.

## Electrical

- The light bulbs used in your home are LED bulbs.
- Unplug small appliances when they are not in use. Small items such as hair dryers and MP3 players draw electricity even when they are not in use. Unplug them or plug them into power strips that you can conveniently turn off when they are not in use.

## Additional Reminders and Notes

---

---

---

---

---

## Extended Absences

Whether it's for a vacation, business trip, or other reasons, most of us occasionally leave our homes for days or weeks at a time. With some preparation, these absences can be managed smoothly. Keep these guidelines in mind and add any reminders that fit your specific situation.

## Plan in Advance

- Ask a neighbor to keep an eye on the property. If possible, provide them with a way to reach you while you are away

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

- If you will be gone an especially long time (over two weeks), consider arranging for a house sitter.
- If applicable, arrange for someone to mow the lawn or shovel snow.
- Notify local security personnel or police of the dates you will be away.
- Stop mail, newspapers, and other deliveries.
- Consider the use of lighting timers (available at hardware stores for \$10 to \$20).
- Confirm that all insurance policies that cover your property and belongings are current and provide sufficient coverage.
- Some insurance policies stipulate how often your home should be checked when you are away; contact your insurance carrier to make certain you understand and comply with these requirements.
- Mark valuable items with identifying information. Consider whether you have irreplaceable items that should be stored in a bank vault or security box

### As You Leave

- Unplug computers and other electronic devices that might be harmed in an electric storm.
- Leave window coverings in their most typical positions.
- Confirm that all doors and windows are locked, and the deadbolts are engaged.
- Shut off the main water supply and drain your water lines. See Plumbing/Extended Absence for additional details.
- Set the thermostat on the water heater to “vacation” to save energy or shut off the water heater. Check the manufacturer’s directions for instructions on the steps involved.
- Store items such as your lawn mower, bicycles, or ladders in the garage
- Disengage the garage door opener (pull on the rope that hangs from the mechanism). See Garage Overhead Door for additional details.
- Some manufacturers suggest snapping a vise grip onto the track above the roller or using the locking mechanism on the inside of the door when you will be absent for an extended period. Upon your return, remove the vise grip, then re-engage the motor (press the button to operate the opener; it will reconnect) to restore normal operation.
- Be energy conscious—change the settings on your thermostat for both summer and winter usage. Leaving the temperature in the home at a minimum of 55° in cold weather and 75° in warm weather will help to eliminate any problems in the home. In winter months, leave room doors open and open doors on cabinets that contain plumbing, allowing heat to circulate.
- Arm your security system, if applicable.

### Additional Reminders and Notes

---

---

---

---

---

## 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 a 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. Caulking maintenance is the homeowner's responsibility.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We provide one-time repairs to many of the effects of expansion and contraction. See the individual categories, such as drywall and caulk, for details.

## Fencing

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Depending on the community in which your home is located, we may provide fencing; it may be an optional item you select, the developer may provide it, or you may consider adding fencing after your closing. When we install fencing as part of our responsibility, we do so in conjunction with the landscaping. All types of fencing require some routine attention.

### Drainage

Fencing should be installed only after the final grade has been established and approved. In planning, installing, and maintaining fencing, ensure that existing drainage patterns function unimpeded. When installing a fence, use caution in distributing the soil you removed to set posts to avoid blocking drainage swales. Leave enough space at the bottom of the fence for water to pass through.

### Developer/Homeowner Association Architectural Guidelines

If you choose to add fencing after moving into your new home, keep in mind that your subdivision's architectural requirements may dictate the type and style of fence allowed, if fencing is permitted.

Specific community requirements about style, height, and position on your home site are described in the current architectural guidelines, which you receive as part of your purchase documents or can obtain from the association or developer's office. Type, style, and color of fencing are addressed in these guidelines.

Special requirements apply to homes on corner lots where drivers must have adequate visibility. Additionally, in some communities, zoning laws may impact private fencing. It is the homeowners' responsibility to check on such details. We recommend hiring professionals to install your fence. Be sure to inform any fence installer of your architectural requirements.

See also Property Boundaries

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Variation**

Height and location of installed fences will vary with home site size, topography, and shape.

### **Weather Damage**

Damage to fencing caused by severe weather should be referred to your homeowner's insurance company and is specifically excluded from warranty coverage.

### **Wood Fences**

The lumber used to construct wood fences is All Weather Wood, or rough cedar or spruce. Over time, it will crack, warp, and split. Unless extreme, these conditions require no action on your part. As the wood ages and shrinks, nails may come loose and require attention. Also, check the posts and any gates twice a year, and tighten the hardware or make any needed adjustments.

### **Wrought Iron Fencing**

Wrought iron is prone to rust unless it receives regular maintenance. Use touch-up paint on any scratches or chips. Inspect the fence twice a year and touch up as needed, then plan to repaint the entire fence every one to two years to keep it looking its best.

As with wood fencing, prevent sprinklers from spraying your wrought iron fence or rails. Check monthly to confirm that water does not stand around the fence posts. Make drainage corrections as needed to prevent this.

See also Utility Locates

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

If fencing is part of your home purchase, we will confirm the fence's acceptable condition during your new home orientation. Although developer-installed fencing falls outside our limited warranty, we may be able to assist in communicating any concerns you have and obtaining a response. If we installed your fence, we would correct fence posts that become loose during the warranty period.

## **Fireplace**

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

A fireplace is an excellent way to create a warm, cozy atmosphere. However, without sufficient information, using the fireplace can waste heat and money. To help prevent that, consider the following points.

We offer direct-vent gas fireplaces. If you ordered a fireplace, we will demonstrate it during your homeowner orientation.

### **Read and follow all the fireplace manufacturer's 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 or a gas odor, immediately shut off the switch and report it to the gas company.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

Materials found on the exterior surfaces of either wood or gas fireplaces (paints, sealants, lubricating oils, and gasket adhesives) can produce odors and small amounts of carbon monoxide during the first few uses of the fireplace. This is called curing or burning in. It may take up to 24 hours of use for the fireplace to cure. The fireplace should be burned for at least 5 to 6 hours at a time with a high flame. If the fireplace system is equipped with a fan, do not run it during the curing period.

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

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

Fireplaces are not intended to be the sole heat source in the home. The fireplace should function properly when the manufacturer's directions are followed.

#### 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 very strong winds may cause a downdraft, this situation should be brief and infrequent. We will determine and correct continuous malfunctions caused by a construction or design defect.

#### Glass Doors

During your homeowner's orientation, we confirm that glass fireplace doors, when included with the home, are in acceptable condition. Use the manufacturer-recommended cleaning product to clean these doors. Cleaning fireplace doors with glass cleaner will damage the glass; this damage is excluded from warranty coverage.

#### Water Infiltration

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

See also Fire Prevention.

## Fire Prevention

All family members should practice fire safety. Being aware of potential dangers and taking preventive measures is better than responding quickly afterward. Keep these hints in mind and add your own reminders in the space provided on the next page. For additional tips, contact your local fire department.

### Train Family Members

- Ensure that all family members know what escape routes exist in your home.
- Conduct a fire drill with family members.
- Test the smoke detectors to confirm that they function and so that everyone recognizes the sound.
- Follow the manufacturer's directions for cleaning and servicing your smoke detectors.
- As soon as possible, teach young children how and why to dial 911.
- Have a general-use fire extinguisher and instruct all family members in its location and use
- Teach children the safe use of appliances such as irons and toasters.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

- If you smell gas, leave and call for help from another location. Do not use a phone or cell phone, and do not turn on any lights.

### Practice Prevention

- Store matches away from children and heat sources.
- Avoid smoking in bed and always use a fire-safe receptacle to extinguish smoking materials. Keep lighters and matches out of reach of children.
- Avoid leaving small children home alone, even for a short time.
- Maintain appliances in clean and safe working condition.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets.
- Ensure that all electrical cords are in good repair.
- Avoid having any flammable objects or materials near the stove or leaving anything that you are cooking unattended.
- Keep the range hood filter clean to prevent a build-up of grease.
- Allow space for cooling around electrical equipment. Maintain a clear space of at least three feet around furnaces.
- Unplug the iron when it is not in use. Never leave a hot iron unattended.
- Use electric blankets with care, following manufacturer directions.
- Use the correct wattage of bulbs in all light fixtures.
- Use candles safely. Never leave a burning candle unattended. Keep them out of reach of children and pets. Wicks should be cut to 1/4 inch.
- Store volatile materials (paint, gasoline for the lawn mower, and so on) in appropriate containers, away from flames (such as pilot lights) or heat sources. Many trash collection services offer a way to dispose of hazardous items. Check with your service provider for details.
- Gas Grills: Keep the barbecue clean and soap test the lines of a gas grill for leaks regularly. A quarter- to half-turn provides enough propane; do not turn the valve all the way on. When lighting your barbecue, have the match or lighter already burning with the lid open before you turn on the gas.
- Charcoal Grill: Wait for at least a full minute before lighting fluid-soaked coals. Before you light the coals, move the lighter fluid to a safe distance. Never use gasoline to start a charcoal barbecue, and never spray more fluid on hot coals. When you are finished barbecuing, wear an oven mitt and use tongs to submerge the spent coals in a metal pail of water.
- All Grills: Use the barbecue outdoors, at least 10 feet from the house. Grilling in the garage with the door open does not allow enough ventilation and could result in carbon monoxide poisoning. Never leave a lit barbecue unattended. Keep children and pets away from all grills.
- If your home includes a gas fireplace, follow all directions and do not leave the fireplace unattended when it is on.
- If you have a wood-burning fireplace:
  - Arrange for professional cleaning of the chimney at appropriate intervals.
  - Maintain the spark arrester on the chimney.
  - Never use liquid fire starters (such as for a charcoal barbecue) in an indoor fireplace.
  - Use a screen or glass doors when a fire is burning.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

- Confirm the fire is out before closing the flue.
- Do not leave the fireplace unattended while a fire is burning.
- During holidays, ensure that all cords and connections are in good condition and of appropriate capacity for electrical decorations.
- If you decide to remodel, finish the basement, or add onto your home, obtain a building permit and work with professionals. Ensure that all building department inspections occur and that the work complies with all applicable codes. This also applies to installing a gas line for an outdoor barbecue, a gas fireplace, a clothes dryer, and so on.
- Do not leave any house lights on for long periods of time. If you are leaving for an extended period, you may want to use a timer to simulate occupancy.

### Additional Reminders and Notes

---

---

---

---

---

## Fixtures

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Manufacturers typically treat fixtures with a clear, electrostatically applied protective coating to enhance beauty and durability. Even this coating will show 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 for these products requires only periodic cleaning with a mild, nonabrasive soap and buffing with a soft cloth.

### Corrosion

Water with a high mineral content can be corrosive to fixtures.

### Polish

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

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your homeowner orientation, we will confirm that fixtures are in acceptable condition. Corrosion damage to the external surfaces or internal workings of plumbing fixtures is excluded from warranty coverage.

## Flooring

### Carpet

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Refer to the manufacturer's recommendations for additional information on caring for your carpet.

#### Burns

Take care of any burns immediately. First, snip off the darkened fibers, then use a soapless cleaner and sponge with water. If the burn is extensive, talk with a professional about replacing the damaged area.

#### Cleaning

You can extend the life of your carpet with regular care. Carpet wears out from foot traffic and dirt particles that get trampled deep into the pile, beyond the vacuum's suction. The dirt particles wear down the fibers like sandpaper, dulling the carpet. The most important thing you can do to protect your carpet is to vacuum it frequently.

Vacuum lightly twice each week and thoroughly once a week. Heavy traffic areas may require more frequent cleaning. Light vacuuming is three passes; a thorough job may require seven passes. Vacuuming high-traffic areas daily helps keep them clean and maintains the upright position of the nap. A vacuum cleaner with a beater bar agitates the pile, making dirt easier to bring to the surface for removal. Although the beater bar will cause more wear, so does the dirt trapped in the carpet. Please note that beater bar vacuum attachments should not be used on any Berber carpet. This may result in permanent damage to the carpet and void the warranty.

Wipe spills and clean stains immediately. For best results, blot or dab any spill or stain; avoid rubbing. Have your carpet professionally cleaned regularly, and follow the manufacturer's guidelines for care and maintenance.

#### 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.

#### Fading

Science has yet to develop a color that will not fade with time. All carpets will gradually lose some color due to environmental factors, both natural and artificial. 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 or furnace is operating, air from the closed room flows through the small space at the bottom of the door or around the return air vent. 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 or vicinity of the return air vent.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Fuzzing**

In loop carpets, fibers may break. 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 level 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**

Carpets usually come in 12-foot widths, making seams necessary in many rooms. Visible seams are not a defect unless they have been improperly made or the material has a defect that makes the seam appear more pronounced than normal. The denser and more uniform the carpet texture, the more visible the seams will be.

Carpet styles with low, tight naps tend to show the most visible seams. Seams are never more visible than when the carpet is first installed. Usually, over time, with use and vacuuming, the seams become less visible. You can see examples in the showhomes of how carpet seams diminish after repeated vacuuming and traffic.

### **Shading**

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

### **Shedding**

New carpeting sheds bits of fiber for a period. 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 the carpet surface. Use scissors to cut off the sprout. Do not attempt to pull it; 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 manufacturer's website for recommended cleaning procedures for your particular fiber. Pretest any spot-removal solution in an inconspicuous location 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.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### Static

Cooler outside temperatures and the resulting dry air often contribute to static electricity inside. Confirm that your humidifier is set appropriately to help control static build-up.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your new home 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 are not responsible for dye lot variations if replacements are made. Concerns arising from inadequate cleaning and maintenance are excluded from warranty coverage. The use of beater bar-type vacuum attachments on Berber-type carpet will void warranty coverage.

### Edges

Carpet edges along moldings and stairs should be secured properly. In some instances, metal or other edging materials may be used where the carpet meets different types of flooring.

### Seams

Carpet seams will be visible. We will repair any gaps or fraying within the one-year warranty period.

## LVT (Luxury Vinyl Tile) & LVP (Luxury Vinyl Plank)

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Although LVT and LVP floors are durable, all floor coverings require some care to look their best, and many problems can be prevented before they occur. Your floor is water-resistant, not waterproof.

The type and frequency of traffic on your floor will determine the maintenance frequency.

The type of floor and even the color will also have some bearing on how much care may be necessary. For example, solid-color floors will show scuffs, scratches, dirt, and general wear more visibly than multicolored chips or patterns. Of course, white or light colors will show staining more visibly than darker colors. For this reason, solid-color and white floors should receive special attention to preventative maintenance and the level of care provided.

### Protecting the Floor

- To help prevent indentations and scratches, provide glass, plastic, or other non-staining cups with flat under surfaces not less than 2" in width for the legs of heavy furniture or appliances. Equip swiveled-type office chairs and other rolling furniture with broad surface non-staining casters at least 2" in diameter. Remove small diameter buttons from the legs of chairs and replace with 2" protective pads.
- Protect your floor against burns. Burns from the glowing end of a cigarette, matches, or other extremely hot items can damage your floors.
- Avoid exposure to direct sunlight for prolonged periods. During peak sunlight hours, it is recommended to use drapes or blinds. Prolonged direct sunlight can cause discoloration, and excessive temperatures might cause tile expansion.
- Proper humidity in your home is important for your flooring.

### Cleaning the Floor

- Do not use a wet mop. Clean with a damp cloth; a microfiber cloth works well.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

- Protect your floor from tracked-in dirt and grit particles by using non-staining mats at all outside entrances. Take time to remove any embedded grit particles from the shoe soles before entering the room. Avoid using rubber-backed mats, as certain rubber compounds can permanently stain vinyl. Avoid tracking tar or asphalt from driveways into the vinyl, as this can also discolor it. Avoid using stiletto heels on your floor; do not roll or drag heavy objects across it, as they can cause permanent damage. Do not use vinegar, one-step cleaners/polishes, or oil soaps on LVT or LVP products.
- All LVT or LVP floors have good resistance to stains. They are not affected by most common household spills; however, any spill should be cleaned up immediately with a damp cloth.
- Do not use cleaning agents on LVT or LVP Products.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your homeowner orientation, we will confirm your LVP & LVT floors are in acceptable condition. We will correct cosmetic details listed during your homeowner orientation when they are readily noticeable under normal lighting conditions from a standing position.

#### Separations

Shrinkage, rubber-soled shoes, and even bare feet can cause separation between LVT or LVP floor planks. Gaps exceeding 1/8 inch at the baseline trim in a standing position above the gap will be repaired or filled. Boards can expand and contract as your home's humidity changes. Gaps will be repaired one time during the first year.

## Foundation

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

We install the foundation for your home in accordance with our consulting engineer's recommendations. The walls of the foundation are poured concrete with steel reinforcing rods or pre-cast concrete. To protect your home's foundation, follow guidelines for installation and maintenance of landscaping and drainage in this homeowner's guide.

#### Cracks

Surface cracks can develop in foundation walls. 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 request.

#### Dampness

Due to the water content in concrete, basements may be damp.

#### Future Construction in Basement

If you decide to perform additional construction in the basement, obtain guidelines from a licensed engineer, obtain a building permit, and comply with all codes and safety requirements. We do not warrant that you will be able to obtain such a permit because of the possibility that building codes may change.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

The foundation walls are a structural element of your home, and therefore, they carry an additional limited structural warranty, which is described at the end of this chapter.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Cosmetic Imperfections**

Slight cosmetic imperfections in the foundation walls, such as a visible seam where two pours meet or slight visible aggregate (known as honeycombing), are possible and require no repair unless they permit water to enter.

### **Cracks**

Shrinkage or surface cracks are common in foundation walls, especially at the corners of basement windows. We will seal cracks that exceed 1/4 inch in width.

### **Leaks**

We will correct conditions that permit water to enter the basement, provided you have complied with the drainage, landscaping, and maintenance guidelines.

## **Framing**

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

#### **Floor Deflection**

Floors will deflect (bend) when walked on. This will be more noticeable next to hutches, bookcases, pianos, chairs, and other heavy furniture. This is not a structural deficiency, and we will take no action for this occurrence.

#### **Floor Level**

Within a room, the floor should appear level when seen from a normal viewing position. Where a floor is sloped, a maximum ratio of 1 inch per 10 feet applies when measured between opposite walls or the defined limits of the room area.

#### **Party Wall Items**

In attached home or condominium communities, you may have a common shared wall (party wall) with your neighbor on one or both sides of your home. You may also have a shared ceiling/floor assembly with your neighbor. These walls and ceilings/floors are built to meet or exceed noise and fire protection requirements.

Care should be taken to avoid any damage or changes to these building components, as this will increase the potential for noise transmission and reduce fire resistance. When you have a shared wall, floor, or ceiling, some sound transmission will still be audible. Loud music or high-impact noise is quite common and is excluded from warranty.

#### **Plumb Walls**

We will correct walls that are out of plumb by more than 1 inch over an 8-foot distance along the wall. The variation of a bowed wall may not be more or less than 3/4 inch over the length of the wall.

#### **Squeaks: One-Time Repair**

Some floor and stair squeaks are unavoidable. Although we do not warrant against floor squeaks, we will make a reasonable effort to correct them one time during your warranty period.

## Garage Overhead Door

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

#### Keyless Entry

Each brand uses a different programming method, so please refer to your manufacturer's guide for reprogramming instructions.

#### Light Visible

Garage overhead doors cannot be airtight. Some light will be visible around the edges and across the top of the door. Weather conditions may cause some precipitation to enter around the door. Likewise, dust may enter, especially until most homes in the community have landscaping installed. When freezing temperatures occur, the rubber may not seal at the bottom of the door; this unavoidable condition is a natural result of the weather and is excluded from warranty coverage.

#### Lubrication

Regularly apply a lubricant such as silicone spray to all moving metal parts: rollers, hinges, pulleys, bearings, movable lock parts, and springs. Lubrication is not required on plastic/neoprene rollers and plastic idler bearings. Refer to the door manufacturer's manual or Website for recommendations. Avoid over-lubricating to prevent drips on vehicles or the concrete floor. Also, ensure that all fasteners are tight on the hardware and the overhead door is operating as intended, without binding or scraping.

#### Opener

To prevent damage to a garage door opener, be sure the door is completely unlocked, and the rope pull has been removed before operating the opener.

**Caution: Operating an opener when the manufacturer's lock is engaged in the track could cause the opener to fail. In fact, garage door companies recommend against even leaving a lock installed once an opener has been added. Side locks can stick or get caught in the track, causing the cables to come off, creating a major inconvenience and requiring repair. If a manual lock is required due to a power outage or when leaving for an extended period, we suggest snapping a vise grip onto the track above a roller. Either way, upon your return, unlock the garage door first, or remove the vise grip, then re-engage the motor (push the button to operate the opener; it will reconnect) to restore normal operation.**

If you have an opener installed on your home after closing, we suggest ordering it from the company that provided and installed the garage door to ensure uninterrupted warranty coverage. Be familiar with the steps for manually operating the door in the event of a power failure. If a door opener is installed, familiarize yourself with the electric (photo) eyes, which provide a safety stop if 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.

Expect to replace the battery in the garage opener remote controls about once a year. The battery is usually a 9-volt battery; however, check your manufacturer's manual for the correct battery size and other maintenance needs of your remote controls.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Painting**

Garage doors are metal. Repaint the garage door when you repaint your home or more often if needed to maintain a satisfactory appearance. The color of your overhead garage door may be required by the architectural controls in your area. Therefore, the door's color may be predetermined and cannot be changed.

### **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 your 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 one-year warranty expires, have any necessary adjustments made by a qualified specialist. Garage door springs are under considerable tension and require specialized tools and knowledge for safe, accurate servicing. Have a professional garage door technician inspect the door after any major impact.

### **Sag**

The garage door may sag slightly due to its weight and span. This is a normal condition and does not require attention.

### **One-Year 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 after the home's closing.

## **Gas Shut-Offs**

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

You will find shut-offs on gas lines near their connections to each gas-powered item. In addition, there is a main shut-off at the meter. We point these out during your homeowner orientation.

### **Gas Leak**

If you suspect a gas leak, leave the home immediately and call the gas company for emergency service from another location.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

The gas company is responsible for leaks up to the meter. We correct leaks from the meter into the home.

## **Ghosting**

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

Recent feedback from homeowners (in both old and new homes) regarding black, sooty stains that develop on surfaces (carpet, walls, ceilings, appliances, mirrors, and around area rugs, to name a few) has prompted extensive investigation and research.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

The research and laboratory tests conclude that much of this staining, or “ghosting” (also known as “carbon black”), results from air pollution in the home caused by burning scented candles. The incomplete combustion of hydrocarbons, as these candles burn, contributes a considerable amount of soot to the air. This sooty substance then settles or accumulates on the surfaces of the home. The sooty deposits are extremely difficult to remove; on some surfaces (light-colored carpet, for instance), they are impossible to remove completely.

The popularity of scented candles has increased manyfold in recent years. If this activity is part of your lifestyle, we caution you about the potential damage it can cause to your home. When this condition results from burning candles or other lifestyle choices, the resulting damage is not covered under our limited warranty.

See also Carpet/Filtration.

## Grading and Drainage

Early in land development, the community plat is approved by the city and federal, state, and local government entities. The general drainage patterns are established in principle with the city and government entities. You and your neighbors share an overall drainage plan for the community.

We are responsible for completing the final grade and for obtaining municipal approval where required. Once our contractual commitment is met, you are responsible for maintaining the final grade, as applicable.

If you alter the drainage pattern later, or if drainage changes occur due to lack of maintenance, the limited structural warranty will be affected.

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

You share in an overall drainage plan for the community that was predetermined before the homes were built. The final grade around your home has been inspected and approved for proper drainage of your lot. Where required by municipal regulations, our surveyor completes a grading certification, and then the local municipality inspects the site for approval. Yards drain from one to another. Yards may drain from front to back, back to front, or have split drainage. Use caution when installing landscaping, fencing, or additions to your home to prevent causing water problems on adjacent lots.

## Backfill Settlement

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

## Drainage

The grade around your home should slope away from the house. Drainage swales may or may not follow property boundaries. Maintain the slopes around your home to allow water to drain away as quickly as possible. This is essential to protect your foundation. Failure to do so can result in major structural damage and void your structural warranty.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Easements**

Most lots have an easement, which is a section of land in front, on the sides, and/or in the back of your home site where public utilities are installed. In some areas, an easement or right-of-way is required for grass or concrete drainage swales. Easements are shown on the approved plot plan.

### **Erosion**

Until your yard is established and stable, erosion will be a potential concern. Heavy rains or roof runoff can erode soil. The sooner you restore the grade to its original condition, the less damage will occur. Erosion is of special concern in drainage swales. If swales become filled with soil runoff, they may not drain the rest of the yard, causing further problems. Correcting erosion is the homeowner's responsibility.

### **Main Water Line**

The main water line to your new home is typically located in the front yard and encased in a PVC pipe (in some subdivisions, it may be in the backyard). Governing municipalities require that this be visible.

### **Roof Water**

Downspout extensions are installed and sloped so the water drains away from your home quickly. They should be in the down position during spring, summer, and fall. During the winter months, they can be put into the up position to minimize damage.

Ensure that downspout extensions are not directed alongside the driveway/sidewalk slabs, as this could erode the soil under the concrete and result in unwarranted settlement.

Rainwater leaders or stormwater connections are home-site specific, predetermined, and should remain unchanged. Maintain any caps or connections of these products.

### **Rototilling**

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

### **Subsurface Drains**

Occasionally, the developer will install a subsurface drain to ensure that surface water drains adequately from a yard. Keep this area, especially the drain cover, clear of debris so the drain can function as intended.

### **Swales**

Drainage swales are shallow-sided, sloped ditches designed to convey surface run-off away from your home toward the nearest street, land, dry pond, or storm water management pond. These swales are usually located along common property lines and sometimes at the back of a lot. After heavy rain or snow, water may stand in swales for up to 48 hours.

See also Landscaping and Utility Locates.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We established the final grade to ensure adequate drainage away from the home. Once we have fulfilled our commitment as described in your purchase agreement documents, maintaining this drainage is the homeowner's responsibility. If you alter the drainage pattern after grade approval, or if drainage changes occur due to lack of maintenance, the limited structural warranty may be impacted.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **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 more than six inches around the perimeter of the home during the first year after grade completion approval, we will provide you with fill dirt to maintain positive drainage. Placing this material will be the homeowner's responsibility.

### **New Landscaping**

New landscaping and the extra watering that accompanies it can cause temporary drainage problems, as can unusually severe weather conditions. If sod, trees, or shrubs are part of your purchase agreement, proper watering and care of these items are the homeowner's responsibility.

### **Recommendations**

To complete grading after closing (when necessary), concrete must be poured, and the ground must be dry and free of frost. Your property must be free of personal property or structures.

### **Swales**

We do not alter drainage patterns to suit individual landscape plans. Typically, a home site receives water from neighboring home sites and passes water on to other home sites, so changes in grade often affect adjacent or nearby lots. We advise against making such changes. After heavy rain or snow, water may stand in swales for up to 48 hours.

### **Under Concrete: One-Time Repair**

We will fill visible sunken areas under concrete as we complete your grading, and once during your first-year warranty. Following that, any further settlement is the homeowner's responsibility to correct.

### **Winter Grading**

Due to weather conditions, especially during winter and early spring, the grade may not have been established at the time of closing. We document the status of your grading at the time of delivery. When conditions permit, grading work will continue.

## **Gutters and Downspouts**

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

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 downspouts. The accumulation of natural debris (pine needles or leaves) or gravel from the roofing materials is a home maintenance concern. Removing such material is the homeowner's responsibility.

Surface drainage is far more efficient than drain tile at keeping water away from your basement. Rainwater should be directed away from the perimeter of the home to reduce the opportunity for water to enter the home along basement walls.

### **Downspout Extensions or Splash Pads**

Extensions should discharge outside of rock or bark beds so that water is not dammed behind the edging materials that might be used. The downspouts that end on sod should have an extension or splash pad on the ground to direct water away from the home's perimeter. The extensions must be in place and lowered to move water away from the foundation. Always return downspout extensions to their lowered position after mowing lawns.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### Ladders

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

### Leaks

If gutter seams leak, use a commercial gutter caulking compound available at hardware stores to caulk the inside joint.

### Snow and Ice

Clear excess snow from downspouts as soon as possible to allow the gutter to drain and to prevent damage. Severe ice or snow build-up can damage gutters and/or cause ice damming and potential water leakage.

See also Roof/Ice Damming

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

Gutters over three 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 1 inch) will stand in gutters for short periods immediately after rain. No correction is required for this condition.

## Hardware

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We confirm that all hardware is in acceptable condition during your homeowner orientation. The limited warranty excludes repairs for cosmetic damage after closing.

We will repair hardware items that fail to function as intended.

## Heating System

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Proper maintenance of your 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 only general information.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### 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.

During cold weather in particular, ensure that warm air from the heat registers located near windows can flow unobstructed. This helps minimize condensation. Also, ensure that window coverings are open at least slightly for the same reason.

### Air Quality (Indoor)

It is important to maintain good indoor air quality to prevent mold growth and structural damage. As temperatures drop and heating systems are activated, the air inside homes can become stale. Use the furnace fan to bring in fresh outside air, ensuring proper air circulation and overall indoor air quality. Monitoring your humidity levels is essential to prevent dryness or excessive moisture accumulation. A hygrometer is a cost-effective and useful tool for tracking indoor humidity levels.

### Avoid Overheating

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

### Combustion and Fresh Air Ducts

The furnaces we install include combustion and fresh-air ducts. The outer ends of these ducts are covered with a screen to minimize the entry of insects or animals into the ducts. Cold air coming in through these ducts means they are functioning as they should.

**Caution: Never block exhaust, combustion, or fresh air vents. In periods of heavy snow, regularly check that the exterior vent is free of snow so it can draw in combustion air and the furnace can function. If this vent is covered and air cannot circulate, the system will shut down.**

### Duct Cleaning

The furnace vents had a construction clean prior to closing. Detailed cleaning of the ducts is the homeowner's responsibility.

### Ductwork Noise

Some popping, ping-pong, or rubbing sounds are the natural result of ductwork heating and cooling in response to airflow as the system operates. Noises may also result from the location of the heat ducts relative to plumbing lines.

### Electronic Ignition

Your furnace does not have a standing pilot light; this saves gas. Instead, the manufacturer has installed a silicon nitride hot surface igniter. This igniter will glow as it heats up to ignite the natural gas and is designed for many years of use. There are no maintenance requirements for this item. Should replacement be required, contact a professional.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Filter**

A clean filter will help to keep your home clean and reduce dusting chores. Remember to change or clean the filter monthly. 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 bulk for convenience. You will find the size and type printed along the edge of the filter that is in your furnace. Buy the cheapest or second-cheapest furnace filters to allow proper airflow.

### **Furnace Fan Cover**

You need to position the blower panel cover correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. Like a clothes dryer door, this panel pushes a button that lets the fan motor know it is safe to come on. If that button is not pushed in, the furnace will not operate. The furnace blower will typically cycle on and off more frequently and for shorter periods during severe cold spells.

### **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 your draperies and furnishings, the home may seem cooler than you would expect.

### **Gas Odor**

If you smell gas, leave the home immediately and call the gas company from another location.

### **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). This is caused by dust that has settled in the ducts and should pass quickly.

### **On-Off Switch**

The furnace has an on-off blower switch. This switch looks like a regular light switch. When turned off, this switch overrides all furnace commands and shuts down the blower. This is usually done only during maintenance service.

### **Registers**

Heat register covers are removable and adjustable. Keeping registers open improves comfort and moisture management, especially during winter months. You can adjust the dampers in these covers to regulate heat flow in your home. Registers in rooms farther away from the furnace will usually need to be opened wider. Educate your children that these registers are not playthings—they should not be removed; neither toys nor debris should be thrown into them.

### **Return Air Vents**

For maximum comfort and efficient energy use, arrange furniture and draperies to allow unobstructed airflow from registers and to cold air returns. If cold air is unable to return to the furnace, the flow of heated air to that area of your home becomes restricted.

### **Temperature**

Depending on factors such as the home's style, room orientation, the number and size of windows, the type and use of window coverings, and whether doors are open or closed, temperatures can vary from floor to floor, especially on extremely cold days. Room temperatures can also be affected by whether a room is situated over an unheated area of the home. The temperature from one floor to the next, or from one end of the home to the other, can vary by 6-8° Fahrenheit.

### Thermostat

The furnace will come on automatically when the thermostat registers a temperature 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  $\pm 2$  degrees Fahrenheit.

### 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 is underway and service personnel become extremely busy.

### Troubleshooting Tips: No Heat

Before calling for service, check to confirm:

- Thermostat is set to “heat,” and the temperature is set above the room temperature.
- The furnace fan cover is installed correctly for the furnace fan to operate. This panel compresses a button that tells the blower it is safe to operate. Similar to how a clothes dryer door operates, this panel presses a button that signals to the fan motor that it is safe to come on. If that button is not pushed in, the furnace will not operate.
- Breaker on the main electrical panel is on. (Remember, if a breaker trips, you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.)
- Furnace switch is on.
- Gas line is open at the main meter and at the side of the furnace.
- Filter is clean to allow airflow.
- Vents in individual rooms are open.
- Air returns are unobstructed.
- Exhaust vents are not blocked by snow or ice.

Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will install heating systems in accordance with national and local building codes and the designs of the particular home. Building codes specify that heating systems should be capable of maintaining an indoor air temperature of 70° in the center of the room, five feet above the floor. In extremely cold temperatures (10° below or colder), the system should be able to maintain a temperature differential of 80° 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 it as needed.

### Furnace Sounds

Expansion or contraction of metal ductwork results in ticking or popping sounds. While eliminating all these sounds is impossible, we will correct oil canning. (Oil canning occurs when a large area of sheet metal, like that found in air ducts, makes a loud noise as it moves up and down in response to temperature changes.)

## Humidifier

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Operate a humidifier only with the furnace, not with the air conditioner. If you notice condensation on windows, the humidifier should be adjusted to a lower setting. Clean the moisture dispenser according to the manufacturer's instructions and suggested timetable.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

## Insulation

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The effectiveness of blown insulation is diminished if it is uneven. As the last step in any work you do in your attic (for example, installing speaker wire), you should confirm that the insulation lies smoothly and evenly. Do not step on drywall ceilings, as this can cause personal injury or damage to the drywall.

Attic insulation will settle over time; this natural occurrence is taken into account when planning the amount of insulation originally installed.

Electrical outlets may emit detectable amounts of cold air when outside temperatures are low. This will happen due to convection in the wall. There are polyhats on the boxes to minimize this.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will install insulation to meet or exceed the building codes applicable at the time of construction, as outlined in your purchase agreement.

## Landscaping

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Providing complete details on landscape design is beyond the scope of this homeowner's guide. Many excellent books, videos, and computer software programs are available that offer you this information. Local nurseries and landscape professionals can also assist you.

In planning your landscaping, think of proportion, texture, color, mature size, maintenance needs, soft and hard surfaces, lighting, fencing, edging, and water requirements. A beautiful yard requires considerable planning and regular attention. Most homeowners take years to achieve the yard they want. Planning to install items in stages can spread the cost and work over several seasons.

Well-designed landscaping prevents erosion and protects your home's foundation.

### Architectural Requirements

Where landscaping is included with a home, the sod, shrub beds, shrubbery, and trees are chosen to adhere to the architectural requirements set by the developer for your community and the local building authority. Where applicable, when you sign your purchase agreement, you agree to maintain the landscaping in accordance with these requirements.

### **Additions**

Before installing patio additions or other permanent improvements, consider soil conditions when designing and engineering your addition.

### **Backfill Settlement**

We lay the foundation for your home, beginning with excavation. 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 the backfill area and reach the lower areas of your foundation. This can cause potentially severe problems such as wet basements, cracks in foundation walls, and floor slab movement. Avoid this through proper landscaping installation and good drainage maintenance.

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 direct roof runoff away from your home's foundation. 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 edging around decorative rock or bark beds to dam the free flow of water away from the home. You can use a non-woven landscape fabric between the soil and rock or bark to restrict weed growth while still permitting normal evaporation of ground moisture. Ensure that you leave a hole in the fabric large enough to provide good aeration around the base of trees or shrubs.

### **Erosion**

Until your yard is established and stable, erosion will be a potential concern. Heavy rains or roof runoff can erode soil. The sooner you restore the grade to its original condition, the less damage will occur.

Erosion is of special concern in drainage swales. If swales become filled with soil runoff, they may not drain the rest of the yard, causing further problems. Correcting erosion is the homeowner's responsibility. You may need to protect newly planted seed with erosion matting or reseed to establish grass in swales. Establishing a lawn in such challenging areas can take several years.

### **Hired Contractors**

You are responsible for any changes to the drainage pattern caused by landscape, concrete, decking, or pool contractors. Before hiring any company for work in your yard, be sure to discuss drainage issues with them. Additionally, do not allow them to connect to existing drainage pipes without obtaining municipal approval.

### **Main Water Line**

The main water line to your new home is typically located in the front yard with a shut-off valve at surface grade level (in some cases, according to subdivision design, it may be located in the back yard). Governing municipalities require that this shut-off valve be visible.

### **Natural Areas**

During construction, we take care to prevent construction debris from accumulating in natural areas. Removing dead wood, tree limbs, fallen trees, or other natural items is the homeowner's responsibility.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### 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 healthy growth. Group plants with similar water, sun, and space requirements together.

### Plant Selection

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

See also Property Boundaries.

### Requirements

In addition to complying with applicable developer 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.

### Sod

Sod is laid after the final grade elevations have been established. Lawn care is one of the homeowner's maintenance responsibilities. Keep the following points in mind regarding watering:

- The first 12 hours after new sod has been laid down is when it is most vulnerable to drying out. If gaps start to appear between rows of new sod, it indicates that your sod is drying out. Sod installed against your foundation, especially along the south and west sides, is subject to drying out.
- Stay off your new sod as much as possible except to water it.
- Be prepared by having enough hose to reach all corners of your yard.
- A good sprinkler is also necessary to ensure proper watering of the entire yard. Avoid watering by hand, as doing so distributes water unevenly.
- Water on grass acts like a magnifying glass and will burn your new sod. Therefore, early morning or late evening is best. Avoid watering after 8:00 am or before 6:00 pm.
- New sod should be watered to the point that the soil is soft when you step on it.
- Water every day for seven days, then cut back to once every other day. If temperatures are hot and dry, water more often; if precipitation occurs, water less.
- Keep in mind that you can't overwater sod, but you can underwater sod.

Be aware that new sod and the extra watering it requires can sometimes create drainage concerns (in your yard or your neighbor's) that will disappear when the yard is established and requires normal watering.

### Stones

The soil in your area may have stones and rocks. Removing these naturally occurring elements is a maintenance activity. If we install seed or sod, large rocks will be picked up and surface raking performed. You will need to provide continued attention to this condition as you care for your yard.

### Trees and Shrubs

We respect and value trees as one of the features that make a community attractive and add value to the homes we build. We take steps to protect and preserve existing trees in the area of your home. Despite our efforts, existing trees on construction sites can suffer damage from construction activities, which manifests months after construction is complete.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

Damage to existing trees can be caused by factors such as soil compaction in the root zone, changes in water flow on the home site, disturbance of the root system, and the removal of other trees to make room for the home. The newly exposed tree may react to conditions it is unaccustomed to. Caring for existing trees, including pruning dead branches or removing them altogether, is the homeowner's responsibility.

Trees are planted in conjunction with the sod placement and are warranted for the growing season for which they are planted. As with sod, watering newly planted trees and shrubs is crucial.

- Trees and shrubs should begin on the same watering schedule as the sod. However, unlike sod, trees and shrubs can be overwatered. Therefore, attention is needed throughout the landscape season to determine how much and when to water.
- The leaves on trees and shrubs will turn yellow from overwatering; they will turn brown if watering is insufficient.
- Landscape fabric holds moisture in the ground and can cause root rot. Avoid installing landscape fabric and rock around trees and shrubs unless you leave a hole in the fabric large enough to provide good aeration around the base of the tree or shrub.
- Avoid piling excess soil around the base of your trees and shrubs because this can also cause root rot.
- Avoid tilling or planting flowerbeds around trees. This is especially important while trees are recovering from construction.
- To encourage budding in the spring, water your trees and shrubs thoroughly in the late fall.
- Freeze/thaw cycles may result in vertical tearing of tree bark; this usually repairs itself over time.
- Trees and shrubs require regular inspection for insect infestation. Early detection and prompt treatment may prevent further damage.

### Utility Lines

A slight depression may develop on the front lawn along the utility trench. To correct this, roll back the sod, spread topsoil underneath to level the area, and then relay the sod. Before any significant digging, check the location of buried service leads by contacting utility locators.

See also Easements and Utility Locates

### Waiting to Landscape

If the ground remains unlandscaped, it is likely to erode. Correcting erosion that occurs after grading is approved is the homeowner's responsibility.

### Weeds

Weeds will appear in your new lawn, whether seed or sod is used. Left unlandscaped, your yard will quickly begin to show weeds. When soil is disturbed, dormant seeds come to the surface and germinate. The best control is a healthy lawn, achieved through regular care and attention.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm the healthy condition of all plant materials during your homeowner orientation. With the exception of seed or sod, which has no warranty upon inspection after installation, the landscape materials we install are warranted for one growing season. Proper care is the homeowner's responsibility.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

Trees and other plant materials that exist on the home site when construction begins, damage from freeze/thaw cycles, and insect damage are all excluded from warranty coverage.

The developer plans for the placement of trees and shrubs on the boulevards and common areas within a community. Developer-installed trees are also excluded from our warranty coverage.

## 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 the 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 used to remove mildew can be harmful to humans.

## 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. Acidic cleaners usually contain ammonia or vinegar. Avoid getting glass cleaners on plumbing fixtures, as some formulas can deteriorate the finish.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm that all mirrors are in acceptable condition during your homeowner orientation. We will correct scratches, chips, or other damage to mirrors noted on your homeowner orientation.

## Mold Prevention

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Mold is a type of fungus that spreads through the air in microscopic spores. Mold occurs naturally and is found everywhere that life can be supported.

To grow, mold requires food, air, water, and a temperature between 40 and 100°F. While not all molds are harmful, the growth of mold in a home is undesirable and may cause adverse effects for occupants, such as allergic reactions and infections, and damage the materials on which it grows. Experts are studying whether more serious side effects are possible. At this point, no agency has been able to set guidelines on how much exposure is harmful because each of us reacts to mold differently.

Designing or constructing homes that completely eliminate mold spores is impossible. If the right conditions are present, mold can grow in any home. Common materials found in most households, such as wood, carpet, drywall, fabric, and insulation, provide ample food sources for mold. Additionally, the air temperature in most homes typically supports the growth of mold spores. If moisture is present and remains on these food sources, mold can develop. Moisture is the only mold-growth factor that can be controlled in a home. By minimizing moisture, you reduce or eliminate mold growth.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

Moisture in your home comes from many sources. Spills, leaks, overflows, condensation, and high humidity are examples. During the winter months, run your bath fan regularly and monitor your home's humidity. Good housekeeping and maintenance are essential in your effort to prevent or eliminate mold growth.

### **Caulking**

Maintain all caulking around such areas as windows, doors, sinks, and tubs.

### **Cleaning**

Mold grows well on dust and dirt. Therefore, vacuum and dust regularly. Clean or replace filters as recommended by the manufacturer. Keep weep holes for brick and on windows clear. Most bath tile cleaning products contain chemicals that remove and help protect against mold growth. Check the refrigerator pan and air conditioning condensate line, coils, and condenser pan for signs of mold growth. Wipe up any spills immediately.

### **Condensation**

Condensation on surfaces inside your home indicates high humidity. If you notice condensation, wipe it up and take steps to reduce the humidity level in your home.

See also Condensation and Ventilation

### **Humidifier**

If your home includes a humidifier, operate it in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and clean it as recommended in the manufacturer's literature. If condensation develops, turn the humidifier down or off.

See also Condensation and Ventilation

### **Inspections**

Check your home regularly for signs of water intrusion. These might include a musty odor, staining, or actual standing moisture. Remember to check inside cabinets under all sinks and behind toilets, as well as in seldom-used closets. Confirm that your sump pump functions correctly, and check weatherstripping, caulking, grout, weep holes, and so on around doors, windows, and pipe or vent penetrations.

### **Landscaping and Drainage**

Maintain positive drainage around your home. Avoid changes to the grade or installing exterior additions that interfere with drainage away from the home; this includes edging or borders that dam water near the home.

Regularly inspect any sprinkler system for correct function. Adjust the heads to avoid spraying the home and correct any leaks immediately.

Keep splash blocks or downspout extensions in place to channel roof water away from your home. Clean gutters as needed to prevent overflow.

### **Leaks**

Immediately report any leak to the warranty office. This includes roof, window, or plumbing leaks. Failure to report leaks promptly increases your risk and responsibility for repairs that might otherwise have been addressed by warranty.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Purchases or Stored Items**

Carefully inspect items you bring into your home, such as boxes that have been in storage or new houseplants, for any signs of mold, including musty odors.

### **Tile Grout**

Inspect and maintain grout as a seal to keep moisture from reaching the wall behind the tile.

### **Valves**

Be familiar with the shut-off valves for all water supply lines in your home. In the event of a leak, immediately shut off the water at the appropriate valve to minimize the amount of water that is released. Clean up the water immediately.

### **Vehicle Run-Off**

Water, ice, and moisture can accumulate from vehicles parked in the garage. This can increase humidity and potential for mold in garages.

### **Ventilation**

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.
- Also run bath fans when bathrooms are in use.
- Connect your clothes dryer exhaust to the vent pipe. Clean the exhaust tube as needed to keep it clear and functioning efficiently.
- Air your house by opening windows for a time when the weather permits.

### **Weather Stripping**

Weatherstripping on doors may need occasional adjustment to prevent moisture from getting in around the door and to reduce air infiltration.

See also Plumbing, Ventilation, and Condensation

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We will respond to any reported leaks as described under the individual categories, such as plumbing and roof.

## **Multi-Family Lifestyle**

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

Attached housing offers many advantages. The close proximity makes a collection of appealing services possible. Depending on the features of your particular community, you might enjoy access to shopping, restaurants, entertainment, and fitness facilities. At the same time, each owner, their family, and their guests take on responsibilities for awareness and consideration of neighbors and common areas inherent to the multi-family lifestyle.

### **Exterior and Common Area Maintenance**

Exterior and common-area maintenance responsibilities vary based on the services provided by the management company retained by the homeowners' association. They may change from time to time at the direction of your board of directors. We suggest that you remain engaged and up to date on the details of the scheduled maintenance. Direct any questions you have to the management company or your board. Your report of concerns is always welcome; be sure to include contact information for <management company>.

### **Proximity Realities: Sound, Odor, Light**

This lifestyle also comes with several realities typical of close-proximity living. Each owner takes on some responsibility for their neighbor's peaceful enjoyment of their home. Normal daily activities, such as sounds, lighting, cooking, and smoking odors, may be noticed by neighbors from time to time.

Your association creates building policies to ensure a balance between individual privacy and the protection of neighbors' comfort. From time to time, these policies may be adjusted. Stay informed about such matters, and remember that your family or guests, workmen, vendors, and other service providers you hire are expected to be aware of and adhere to the same policies. Again, direct any questions you have to the management company or your board.

### **Capstone Homes Home Warranty Guidelines**

Depending on your lifestyle and that of your neighbors, expect to hear sounds from daily activities, such as opening and closing doors, operating appliances, and so on. Some vibrations may also be noticed. Construction planning took this into account, and steps were taken to mitigate sound transfer between homes. However, no reasonable method exists that completely eliminates sound transfer and other factors such as those listed above.

Because lifestyles and schedules are outside Capstone Homes' control, sound transfer and your awareness of light and odors are excluded from warranty coverage.

## **Paint and Stain**

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

Because of changes in paint formulas (such as the elimination of lead to make paints safer), painted surfaces must be washed gently with mild soap and as little water as possible. Avoid abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, or scrub brushes. Flat paints show washing marks more easily than gloss paints do. Often, better results come from touching up rather than washing a painted surface.

### **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.

As it ages, exterior wood trim will develop minor cracks and raised grain. Much of this will occur during the first year. Raised grain allows moisture to get under the paint and can cause peeling. This is a natural occurrence rather than a defect in materials or workmanship. Paint maintenance of wood trim and gutters is the homeowner's responsibility.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

Plan to refinish any painted exterior surface of your home approximately every two to three years, or as often as your paint manufacturer recommends 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. Depending on each surface's exposure to weather, the paint on some parts of your home may begin to show signs of deterioration sooner than on others.

When you repaint the exterior of your home, begin by resetting popped nails. Remove blistered or peeling portions of paint with a wire brush or putty knife. Sand, spot with primer, and then paint the entire area. Use 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 your home after such weather. Promptly report damage caused by severe weather to your insurance company.

Storm damage repairs are not covered by warranty and are the responsibility of the homeowner or your insurer.

### **Stain**

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

### **Touch-Up**

When doing paint touch-ups, use a small brush and apply paint only to the damaged spot. The appearance and color will vary from the surrounding area, 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 mild soap and water mixture or a reliable cleaning product.

If applicable, we will leave any leftover paint at your home when your home is finished. Store these with the lids tightly sealed and in a location not subjected to extreme temperatures.

### **Wall Cracks**

We suggest waiting until after the first heating season to repair cracks or other separations in the drywall caused by shrinkage.

See also Drywall

## **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your new home orientation, we will confirm that all painted or stained surfaces are in acceptable condition by examining them in natural daylight (not direct sunlight) and following the 6-foot rule. We will perform touch-ups as indicated on your homeowner orientation list. Please note that homeowners are responsible for all future touch-ups.

### **Fading**

Exterior paint or stain may fade due to the sun and weather. This occurrence is not covered under our limited warranty.

### **Touch-Up Visible**

Paint touch-up is visible under certain lighting conditions.

### **Wood Grain**

Due to the natural characteristics of wood, applying stain can lead to color variations. This is a normal occurrence and does not require any repairs. Additionally, many modern water-based paints allow the wood grain to remain visible on painted trim. Please note that we do not offer corrections for this condition.

## **Pests and Wildlife**

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

Insects like ants, spiders, wasps, flies, and bees, as well as animals such as woodpeckers, squirrels, and mice, may not recognize that your home belongs to you. As a homeowner, it is important to address concerns related to these pests and wildlife. Helpful resources for this include animal control authorities, pest control professionals, the internet, and the public library.

## **Plumbing**

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

Your plumbing system consists of many components, most of which require minimal maintenance. Regular cleaning, occasional minor repairs, and preventive care will ensure many years of reliable service.

### **Aerators**

In most cases, the plumbing lines are a closed system and should contain minimal dirt or construction debris. However, foreign matter and small amounts of minerals may enter the lines. Aerators on the faucets strain much of this from your water. Minerals trapped in these aerators may cause distortion in the stream of water from the faucets; this is a sign that the aerator needs cleaning.

See also Dripping Faucet

### **Basement Construction**

If you perform any construction in your basement, to prevent freezing of plumbing lines, ensure that they are not isolated from the heating source without adding insulation.

### **Cleaning**

Follow the manufacturer's directions for cleaning fixtures. Avoid abrasive cleansers. They remove the shiny finish, leaving a porous surface that is difficult to keep clean. Clean plumbing fixtures with a soft sponge and soapy water (manufacturers usually recommend a nonabrasive cleaner or liquid detergent). 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. You can usually clear clogged traps with a plunger. If you use chemical agents, follow directions carefully to avoid personal injury or damage to the fixtures.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

Improper use of the garbage disposal can lead to numerous plumbing clogs. Always run plenty of cold water when using the disposal; it helps cool the ball bearings and extends the motor's lifespan. After turning off the disposal, let the water run for an additional 10 to 15 seconds. It's also a good idea to consult the manufacturer's literature to find out which food items are safe to put in the disposal and which ones should be avoided.

To clean a plugged drain stopper, typically found in bathroom sinks, loosen the nut located under the sink at the back. Pull out the rod attached to the plunger, then lift out the stopper. Clean the stopper and the surrounding area. Return the mechanism to its original position, making sure everything is secured before finishing.

### **Dripping Faucet**

Your faucets are equipped with ceramic disc valves. If you have a single-handle style, begin by lifting the handle after pushing the spout to one side. Use an Allen wrench to remove the set screw and the decorative cap. You will find two screws; loosen these to lift out the disc assembly. Inside, you will see three inlet seals.

Replace all these seals and align the holes with the faucet base. If this does not resolve the leak, you will need to replace the cartridge that holds the discs. Replacement kits are available at home repair stores.

For double-handle faucets, if the leak is at the handle, you will need to replace the O-ring or the stem unit assembly. If the leak is at the spout, use long-nose pliers to pull out the spring and seal.

### **Extended Absence**

If you will 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 prefer to leave the tank full, set the temperature to its lowest setting or to "vacation." Check the manufacturer's directions for additional hints and instructions.

See also the Extended Absence Checklist

### **Fiberglass Fixtures**

For routine cleaning, use a nonabrasive bathroom cleanser with a sponge or a nylon-cleaning pad. Avoid steel wool, scrapers, and scouring pads.

### **Freezing Pipes**

To prevent your pipes from freezing, make sure your home is heated to a normal temperature. Close the garage doors to protect any plumbing lines located in that area from cold temperatures. If you plan to be away during the winter months, set the thermostat to a minimum of 55°F.

During extremely cold weather or if you will be away for more than a day or two, open cabinet doors to allow warm air to circulate around the pipes. If you discover frozen pipes, you can use a regular hair dryer to thaw them, but never use an open flame.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### Leaks

If a plumbing leak occurs, the first step is to turn off the water supply to the affected area to minimize damage to your home and belongings. This may require shutting off the water to the entire house. After that, contact the warranty office or, if the leak happens after hours, call the emergency number for the appropriate trade contractor.

### Low Pressure

Occasional cleaning of the aerators on your faucets (typically every 3 to 4 months) will ensure proper water flow. The city or municipality water department controls the overall water pressure.

### Outside Faucets

**You must remove hoses during cold weather, even if the faucet is located in your garage.** Also shut off the water valve located in the utility room in your home (it is the one marked hose bibb, outside spigot, or hydrant). 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. Repairing a broken line that feeds an exterior faucet is a maintenance item. We recommend always removing any hoses from exterior or garage faucets after use.

### 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, causing water to run.

### Shut-Offs

In single-family homes, the water supply can be shut off entirely in two locations. The first is at the street and the second is at the meter. Use the shut-off at the meter for major water emergencies, such as a water line break or when you install a sprinkler system. Each toilet has a shut-off on the water line under the tank, and hot and cold shut-offs for each sink are located on the water lines under the sink.

### Stainless Steel

Clean stainless-steel sinks with soap and water to preserve their luster. Avoid using abrasive cleaners or steel wool pads; these will damage the finish. Prevent bleach from coming into prolonged contact with the sink, as it can pit the surface. An occasional cleaning with a good stainless-steel cleaner will enhance the finish. Rub in the direction of the polish or grain lines and dry the sink to prevent water spots.

Avoid leaving produce on a stainless-steel surface. Prolonged contact with produce can stain the finish. Also, avoid using the sink as a cutting board; sharp knives will gouge the finish.

Local water conditions affect the appearance of stainless steel. A white film can develop on the sink if you have over-softened water or water with a high mineral content. In hard water areas, a brown surface stain resembling rust can form.

### Temperature Variation

Expect temperatures to vary if water is used simultaneously in more than one location in the home.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### Toilet Tank Care

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

### Troubleshooting Shooting Tips: Plumbing

#### No Water Anywhere in the Home

Before calling for service, check to confirm:

- The main shut-off on the meter inside your home is open.
- The main shut-off at the street is open.
- Individual items shut-off is open.

#### No Hot Water: See Water Heater

#### Leak Involving One Sink, Tub, or Toilet

Before calling for service, check to confirm:

- Caulking and grout are in good condition.
- Shower door or tub enclosure was properly closed.

If these items do not resolve the issue, turn off the water supply to the affected item. Use other facilities in your home and report any problems on the next business day. If there is a leak in the main line, turn off the water at the meter in your home and call the emergency service number for assistance.

#### Back Up at One Toilet

If only one toilet is affected, corrections are made during normal business hours (Not warrantable)

- Shut off the water supply to the toilet involved.
- Use a plunger to clear the blockage.
- Use a snake to clear the blockage.

#### Sewer Back Up Affecting Entire Home

- Contact the plumber listed on your Emergency Phone Numbers sheet and notify our warranty office.
- Remove personal belongings to a safe location. If items are soiled, contact your homeowner's insurance company.

Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your homeowner orientation, we will confirm that all plumbing fixtures are in acceptable condition, are functioning properly, and that all faucets and drains operate freely.

#### Clogged Drain

We will fix any clogged drains caused by construction debris that occur within the first 30 days after closing. However, if a household item is removed from a clogged drain, the homeowner will be charged for the drain service.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Cosmetic Damage**

We will correct any fixture damage noted during your homeowner orientation. Repairing chips, scratches, or other surface damage noted after your homeowner orientation is the homeowner's responsibility.

### **Outside Faucets**

We will repair leaks at exterior faucets (hose bibs) noted on your homeowner orientation list. Following new home orientation, the repair of a broken line to an exterior faucet is the homeowner's responsibility. Damage caused by freezing when a hose is left on the faucet is specifically excluded from warranty coverage.

### **Freezing Pipes**

Provided the home is heated to a normal level, pipes should not freeze.

### **Leaks**

We will repair leaks in the plumbing system. If a plumbing leak caused by a warranted item results in damage to drywall or floor covering, we will repair or replace items that were part of the home as originally purchased. Please note that payments or adjustments for secondary damages (for example, damage to wallpaper, drapes, and personal belongings) may be covered by your homeowner's insurance but are excluded from warranty coverage.

### **Noise**

Changes in temperature or the flow of the water itself will cause some noise in the pipes. This is normal and requires no repair. We will repair persistent water hammer (a noise heard throughout the home, caused by the rapid closing of a valve, high water pressure, or a missing strap).

### **Supply**

We will correct construction conditions that disrupt the supply of water to your home if they involve service from the main water supply to your home, provided that no action of yours has caused the problem. Disruption of service due to failure of the water department system is the responsibility of the municipality to correct.

## **Property Boundaries**

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

To construct the home, we established the property boundaries and corners. However, during construction, some property line markers may be affected or obscured by grading, excavation, installation of utility lines, and other typical construction activities. Therefore, if you wish to install a fence, swimming pool, a deck, or patio to your home, or otherwise establish a permanent structure, you are responsible for retaining professional surveyors to locate and mark property boundaries to be certain they are accurate and that you have found all corners.

See also Easement

## **Railings**

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

Stained or wrought iron railings in your home require little maintenance beyond occasional dusting or polishing. Protect railings from sharp objects or moisture. Cover them during move-in to avoid dents or scratches.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

Stained railings will show variation in the way the wood grain absorbed the stain. Some designs show seams where pieces of wood came together to form the railing.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your homeowner's orientation, we will confirm that all railings are in good condition. We install railings in accordance with applicable building codes. Railings should remain securely attached with normal use.

## Roof

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The shingles on your roof do not require any treatment or sealer. The less activity your roof experiences, the less likely it is that problems will occur.

#### Clean Gutters

Maintain the gutters and downspouts so they are free of debris and can quickly drain precipitation runoff from the roof.

#### Frozen Attic Condensation

Frozen condensation is a condition that can develop in an attic space. Despite superior construction techniques, homes can experience attic condensation if the weather conditions are right.

A condition that can increase condensation levels in the attic is air infiltration from the home's warm finished areas. This can occur due to small openings in the air barrier through which required equipment must penetrate the attic (such as attic access weatherstripping, plumbing stacks, and electrical wiring). These openings are sealed at construction, but no home is 100 percent airtight.

During extended periods of extremely cold temperatures, moisture in the attic air can freeze on the roof sheathing and/or roof trusses and may continue to accumulate. The result can be a substantial amount of frost or ice (sometimes referred to as attic frosting).

Normally, the spring temperatures gradually melt the frost, allowing the moisture to evaporate. However, because our climate can have drastic temperature increases, if the temperature rises to above zero very rapidly, this frost or ice may melt so quickly that water collects in your attic.

When this occurs, moisture or water can infiltrate into the interior of your home. Evidence of this can appear as staining on the ceiling or walls, or as water dripping from the bath fan or a light fixture.

This natural phenomenon is outside the control of any builder and, therefore, is excluded from warranty coverage. If you observe any of these conditions, follow the troubleshooting tips below.

### Troubleshooting Tips: Frozen Attic Condensation

- If you notice water in a light fixture, do NOT turn the light on. Turn off the breaker to the light and call for service.
- Wipe up water off floors, carpet, and furniture.
- Run your bathroom exhaust fans, ventilation fans, and range hood fans to help remove extra moisture.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

- Turn down your humidifier.
- Allow for adequate air movement in your attic by ensuring that roof vents are clear of ice, snow, or debris.
- Keep your attic hatch closed and sealed with caulk. When open, it allows warm, moist air to escape from your home into the attic.
- Take steps to mitigate damage to your home and furnishings.
- If damage occurs, contact your homeowner's insurance company.

Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.

See also Attic, Condensation, and Ventilation

### Ice Damming

On occasion, depending on your home's orientation and surroundings, as rising heat from inside your home melts snow on the roof, the water runs down, and when it reaches the cold eaves, it may freeze. An accumulation of this type of ice dams the subsequent runoff, and the water begins to back up, sometimes working its way up and under shingles, ultimately leading into your home through windows or ceilings. Ice damming is a weather-related condition and is therefore excluded from warranty coverage.

### 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.

See also Frozen Attic Condensation

### 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. Please refer to local safety codes regarding walking or completing repairs to your roof.

### Severe Weather

After severe storms, do a visual inspection of the roof for damage. When extremely windy conditions occur, if you find pieces of shingle in the yard or shingle edges are lifted on the roof, notify your insurance company. However, be aware that repairs are often less than the deductible.

See also Tabbing

### Troubleshooting Tips: Roof Leak

Please keep in mind that roof leaks cannot be repaired while the roof is wet. However, you should report the condition immediately so repairs can be made as soon as conditions dry out.

- Confirm the source of the water is the roof rather than from a:
  - Plumbing leak
  - Open window on a higher floor
  - Ice damming
  - Attic condensation
  - Clogged eavestrough or downspout

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

- Blowing rain or snow coming in through (code required) roof vents
- Gap in caulking
- Where practical, place a container under dripping water.
- If a ceiling is involved, use a screwdriver to poke a small hole in the drywall to release the water.
- Remove personal belongings to prevent damage to them. If damage occurs to your personal belongings, contact your homeowner's insurance company to submit a claim.
- Report the leak to us during the first available business hours.

Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will repair roof leaks that are not caused by severe weather, hail damage, or actions you have taken, such as walking on the roof. Roof repairs are made only when the roof is dry.

#### Frozen Attic Condensation

If a construction defect allows excessive warm, moist air from the home to enter the attic, we will correct it.

#### Ice Damming

We will repair damage caused by ice damming if it results from a demonstrated defect in the work or materials we supplied. However, most of the time, ice damming occurs naturally and is excluded from warranty coverage; any resulting damage may be covered by your homeowner's insurance.

#### Severe Weather

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

#### Tabbing

Tabbing (or sealing) of your shingles occurs during the first extended warm period after installation. Heat from the sun shining on the roof causes the glue on shingle tabs to adhere to the surface below, forming a bond. Until this has occurred, high winds can more easily lift the edges of the shingles and may cause some shingles to blow off. If this occurs and your home was shingled during fall or winter (or if you do not know when your roof was shingled), contact the warranty office and request a review of your circumstances.

## Shower Doors or Tub Enclosures

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Shower doors and tub enclosures require minimal care. We recommend Gel Coat for shower enclosures and commercially available cleaners (nonabrasive) for the shower door.

#### Caulk

Check caulking and touch up as needed.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Cleaning**

Use the cleaning products recommended by the manufacturer to avoid damage to the trim and hardware. Using a squeegee to remove water after a bath or shower will keep mineral residue and soap film to a minimum.

### **Towels**

Avoid hanging wet towels on the corners of doors; the weight can pull the door out of alignment and cause it to leak.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your new home orientation, we will confirm that all shower doors and tub enclosures are in good condition. We warranty that shower doors and tub enclosures will function according to manufacturer specifications.

## **Siding**

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

Siding expands and contracts in response to changes in weather. Slight waves are visible in siding under moist weather conditions; shrinkage and separations will be more noticeable under hot or dry conditions. Typically, the south and west sides of a home show more weathering. Dark or intense colors may fade more rapidly than lighter colors. These behaviors cannot be eliminated. Avoid excessive overspray from sprinklers on any type of siding.

### **Cement-Based Products**

Cement-based siding may require repainting and caulking just as wood products do.

### **Hardboard**

Use nonabrasive household cleaners. Test the cleaner on a small area prior to large-scale use. Rinse the surface thoroughly after cleaning. If power washers are used, be certain the pressure is set to a low setting. Touch-up paint is sold through most manufacturers. Paint touch-up is best applied only to the immediate area using a small artist's brush or Q-tip. Hardboard siding can be repainted a different color, but the surface must be cleaned and primed.

### **Vinyl**

Vinyl siding expands in hot weather and contracts in cold weather; a popping noise may occur during these changes. Vinyl siding will occasionally require cleaning. Start at the top to avoid streaking, and use a brush like the one you would use on a car, along with a cleaning product recommended by your siding manufacturer. Follow directions carefully. Do not use a power washer on vinyl siding, as it can cause water to leak into the wall.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We will verify the condition of the siding during your new home orientation. Any subsequent damage to the siding will be the homeowner's responsibility to repair.

### **Joints**

We will correct any separation at joints or where siding meets another material if the separation allows water to enter the home.

### **Loose Siding**

If siding becomes detached from the home due to an installation error, we will correct it.

## 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.

#### Insurance

You are responsible for obtaining fire insurance.

#### Locations

Smoke detectors are installed in accordance with building codes, which dictate locations. Building codes prohibit omitting any smoke detector, nor should you remove or disable any smoke detector.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We do not represent that the smoke detectors will provide the protection for which they are installed or intended. Smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors are inspected by the building official at the final inspection.

## Stairs

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

No known installation method prevents all vibration or squeaks in a staircase. When wood trim is included, a shrinkage separation can develop at the point where the stairs meet the wall. When this occurs, apply a thin bead of latex caulk and, when dry, touch up with paint.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

Squeaks: One-time repair. Stair vibration or squeaks are excluded from warranty coverage. However, once during the warranty period, we will make a reasonable effort to correct them.

## Sump Pump

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The foundation design may include drain tile and/or a sump pump. The drain tile runs around the foundation to gather water and channel it to the sump pit or storm sewer. When the water reaches a certain level, the pump comes on and pumps the water away from your home.

#### Continuous Operation

The pump may run frequently or even continuously during heavy storms, prolonged rain, or in some soils. This is normal under such conditions.

#### Discharge

Know where the discharge for your sump pump system is located and keep the end of this drain clear of debris so that water can flow out easily. To avoid recirculating water through this system, maintain the discharge pipe's distance as originally installed.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### **Power Supply**

The sump pump runs on electricity. If the power goes off, the pump cannot operate. Stormwater (not sewage) could then enter your basement. You may wish to install a backup system to guard against this possibility. Homeowner insurance usually excludes damage to your property from this source; you may want to obtain a rider to cover this.

### **Roof Water**

Ensure that the roof water drains quickly away from the home to prevent it from circulating through your sump pump. Keep downspout extensions or splash blocks in place to channel water away from your home.

### **Routine Check**

Periodically check to confirm the pump is plugged in, the circuit breaker is on, and that the pump operates. To check the operation of your sump pump, pour five gallons of water into the sump pump crock (hole). The pump should come on and pump the water out. Follow this procedure once a year.

### **Trees and Shrubs**

Avoid planting trees or shrubs with aggressive root growth patterns near your home's foundation. The roots can enter the perimeter drain and eventually clog the system.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your new home orientation, we will discuss the sump pump (if one is in your home) and confirm that it is operational.

## **Telephone and Cable Outlets**

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

Your home is equipped with telephone and cable connections. Initiating phone and/or cable/satellite service, additions to these services, and moving outlets for decorating purposes or convenience are the homeowner's responsibilities.

### **Structured Wiring**

Structured wiring is a term used to describe many different types of residential wiring products that share the same basic purpose: to effectively distribute a variety of data signals throughout your home. Supported signal types range from cable television and telephone to Ethernet computer networks.

Structured wiring allows you to play a DVD in one room and watch it on any other TV in your home, listen to your stereo in any room, and connect multiple computers to a single Internet connection.

With a structured wiring system, wires are installed in a "home run" or "star topology" configuration. This means that each set of wires runs from the main panel to only one outlet, providing you with more reliable and consistent service for all uses. The exact type of wiring used is listed in your home's specifications.

### **One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We will repair wiring that does not perform as intended from the phone or cable service box into the home. From the service box outward, care of the wiring is the responsibility of the local service provider.

## Utility Locations

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Work that includes digging, auguring, driving materials into the ground (for instance, fence posts or stakes for concrete forms), or mechanical excavation requires that you arrange to have utility lines located and marked before work begins.

**NEVER assume that a gas line is deeper than your planned ground disturbance.** The gas company responds to hundreds of calls about damaged natural gas lines each year.

Safety should be your first priority when working around natural gas pipelines. Contact with buried natural gas pipelines can result in serious injury or death. Property damage can occur, as well as interruptions in natural gas delivery service to others. This can be costly to repair.

Hand expose the natural gas line if you are digging within three feet on either side of the location marks. Dig carefully. Some gas lines are made of polyethylene and can easily be cut with a shovel.

If you damage a gas line—even if there is no odor or hissing sound—contact the gas company immediately.

- Clear all people from the vicinity and cordon off the site.
- Do not attempt to repair the leak or bend over the line to stop the escaping gas.
- Shut off all equipment and vehicles.
- Remove other sources of ignition.
- Do not use a cell phone in the vicinity.
- Extinguish all smoking materials and open flames.
- Allow gas to vent to the atmosphere.

## Ventilation

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Homes today are built more tightly than ever. This saves energy dollars but raises concerns. If the ventilation system is not maintained and used regularly, condensation, cooking odors, indoor pollutants, and carbon monoxide may accumulate. We provide mechanical and passive methods for ventilating homes. Your attention to ventilation is important to health and safety.

#### Attic and Roof Vents

Building codes require attic and roof vents to minimize moisture accumulation. Attic ventilation occurs through soffit vents (the underside of the overhangs) and roof vents. Driving rain or snow sometimes enters the attic through these vents. Do not cover them to prevent rain or snow from entering. When proper ventilation is maintained, precipitation that blows in safely evaporates.

If you are finishing the interior of your garage (attached or detached), remember to install roof vents to maintain proper ventilation.

#### Frozen Attic Condensation

Frozen condensation is a condition that can develop in an attic space. Despite superior construction techniques, homes can experience attic condensation if the weather conditions are right.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

A condition that can increase condensation levels in the attic is air infiltration from the home's warm finished areas. This can occur due to small openings in the air barrier through which required equipment must penetrate the attic (such as attic access weatherstripping, plumbing stacks, and electrical wiring). These openings are sealed at construction, but no home is 100 percent air-tight.

During extended periods of extremely cold temperatures, moisture in the attic air can freeze on the roof sheathing and/or roof trusses and may continue to accumulate. The result can be a substantial amount of frost or ice (sometimes referred to as attic frosting).

Normally, the spring temperatures gradually melt the frost, allowing the moisture to evaporate. However, because our climate can have drastic temperature increases, if the temperature rises to above zero very rapidly, this frost or ice may melt so quickly that water collects in your attic.

When this occurs, moisture or water can infiltrate into the interior of your home. Evidence of this can appear as staining on the ceiling or walls, or as water dripping from the bath fan or a light fixture. This natural phenomenon is outside the control of any builder and, therefore, is excluded from warranty coverage. If you observe any of these conditions, follow the troubleshooting tips below.

### **Troubleshooting Tips: Frozen Attic Condensation**

- If you notice water in a light fixture, do NOT turn the light on. Turn off the breaker to the light and call for service.
- Wipe up water off of floors, carpet, and furniture.
- Run your bathroom exhaust fans, ventilation fans, and range hood fans to help remove extra moisture.
- Turn down your humidifier.
- Allow for adequate air movement in your attic by ensuring that roof vents are clear of ice, snow, or debris.
- Keep your attic hatch closed and sealed with caulk. When open, it allows warm, moist air to escape from your home into the attic.
- Take steps to mitigate damage to your home and furnishings.
- If damage occurs, contact your homeowner's insurance company.

See also Attic, Condensation, and Roof

### **Daily Habits**

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.
- Run your bath fans for a minimum of 30 minutes after bathing or showering.

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

See also Condensation

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

The warranty guidelines for active components (for example, exhaust fans) are discussed under the appropriate headings (such as electrical systems, heating systems, and so on).

#### Frozen Attic Condensation

If a construction defect allows excessive warm, moist air from the home to enter the attic, we will correct it.

## Water Heater-Electric

### Homeowner Care and Maintenance Guidelines

Carefully read the manufacturer's literature and warranty for your specific water heater model, as well as the maintenance 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

Refer to the manufacturer's specifications for temperature settings to allow optimal usage.

Hot water will take longer to reach sinks, tubs, and showers farther from the water heater. The cool water in the lines must be purged before hot water reaches the fixture.

### Troubleshooting Tips: No Hot Water

Before calling for service, check to confirm:

- The water heater breaker on your main electric panel is in the on position. (Remember, if a breaker trips, you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.)
- Temperature setting is not on "vacation" or too low.
- Water supply valve is open.

Refer to the manufacturer's literature for specific locations of these items and possibly other troubleshooting tips.

Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

## Water Heater-Gas

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Carefully read and follow the manufacturer's literature for your specific water heater model and maintenance instructions.

#### Safety

Avoid using the top of a heater as a storage shelf. Maintain a clear area around the tank.

#### Temperature

Temperature settings on a gas water heater will produce approximately the temperatures listed below:

Hot	120 degrees F
A	130 degrees F
B	140 degrees F
C	150 degrees F
Very Hot	160 degrees F

The recommended setting for operating a dishwasher is B, or 140°. Higher settings can waste energy dollars and increase the risk of scalding injuries. Hot water will take longer to reach sinks, tubs, and showers farther from the water heater.

A manufacturer-recommended thermostat setting for everyday use is "normal," or 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Higher settings can waste energy dollars and increase the risk of scalding injuries. Hot water will take longer to reach sinks, tubs, and showers farther from the water heater. Unless your home includes a re-circulating pump, the cool water in the lines must be purged before hot water reaches the fixture.

### Troubleshooting Tips: No Hot Water

Before calling for service, check to confirm:

- Temperature setting is not on "vacation" or too low.
- Scald protection is not set too low on the shower tap.
- Water supply valve is open.
- Exhaust and intake ducts are clear of ice and debris.
- Fumes from painting or other activities have not disabled the system. Strong odors can prevent the water heater from functioning. A sensor may need to be removed when cleaning or painting basement floors. Consult your manufacturer's literature for specific details and possibly other troubleshooting tips.

Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.

#### Draining

Follow the manufacturer's directions for timing and steps to drain your specific water heater model.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

See also Plumbing

# Windows, Screens, Sliding Glass Doors

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Contact a glass company to reglaze any broken windows. Glass is difficult to install without special tools.

### Condensation

Condensation on the interior surfaces of the window and frame results from high indoor humidity and low outdoor temperatures. Your family's lifestyle controls the humidity level within your home. If your home has a humidifier, follow the manufacturer's instructions for use. Cleaning and repairing damage caused by condensation is the homeowner's responsibility.

During cold weather in particular, ensure that warm air from the heat registers located near windows can flow unobstructed. This helps minimize condensation. Also, ensure that window coverings are open at least slightly for the same reason.

### Screen Storage and Maintenance

Many homeowners remove and store screens for the winter to allow more light into the home. To make reinstallation more convenient, label each screen as you remove it. Use caution: Screens can be easily pierced, and frames can bend if not handled with care. Before re-installing the screens, clean them with a gentle spray of water.

### Sliding Glass Doors

Sliding glass doors are made with tempered glass, which is more difficult to break than ordinary glass. If broken, tempered glass breaks into small circular pieces rather than large splinters, which can easily cause injury.

Keep sliding door tracks clean to ensure smooth operation and prevent damage to the doorframe. Pledge works well for these tracks. Acquaint yourself with the operation of sliding-door hardware to maximize security.

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. You may want to apply a decal to the glass door to make it readily visible.

### Sticking Windows

If sticking occurs or excessive pressure is required to open or close a window, refer to the manufacturer's information.

### Tinting

Applying tinting or foil lining to dual-pane windows can cause the windows to break due to heat buildup. Some manufacturers void their warranty on the windows if you apply tinting or foil lining. Contact the manufacturer to check their current policy before applying such coatings.

### Weep Holes

In heavy rain, 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.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm that all windows, screens, and sliding glass doors are in acceptable condition during your homeowner orientation. We will repair or replace broken windows or damaged screens noted on your homeowner orientation. Windows should operate with reasonable ease, and locks should perform as designed. If they do not, we will provide adjustments.

#### Condensation

Condensation on the interior surfaces of the window and frame results from high humidity in the home and low outside temperatures. You influence the humidity level within your home, and warranty coverage excludes this condition.

Condensation that accumulates between the panes of glass in multiple-glazed windows indicates a broken seal. We will replace the window if this occurs during the warranty period. Beyond the one-year warranty period, check with your window manufacturer for possible extended coverage for this condition.

#### Infiltration

Some air and dust will infiltrate around windows, especially before landscaping is installed in the general area. Our warranty excludes this occurrence.

#### Scratches

We will confirm that all window glass is in acceptable condition at your homeowner orientation. Minor scratches on windows can result from delivery, handling, and other construction activities. Refer to the manufacturer's warranty for information on allowable flaws in window glass.

## Wood Trim

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Wood trim will behave differently inside your home than it does outside. Heating and air conditioning, traffic patterns, and other living activities readily affect some interior trim elements. On your home's exterior, sun exposure and weather will have an impact. Further, the materials used for interior trim are specifically selected for interior use and differ from those used for the exterior.

#### Interior

Shrinkage of interior wood trim occurs during the first two years or longer, depending on temperature and humidity. All interior 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 cause separation at trim joints. This condition can usually be corrected by caulking or touching up paint.

#### Cleaning

Occasional dusting is usually all the maintenance needed for casing and baseboards. Wiping with a slightly damp cloth may be necessary from time to time.

#### Touch Up

Chips or scratches that occur can often be corrected with careful paint or stain touch-up. In case of severe damage, wood filler may be needed. The appearance is likely to vary from the surrounding trim.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### Exterior

As with interior wood components, most shrinkage will occur during the first two years, depending on climate conditions and exposure.

### Separations

Shrinkage of exterior trim pieces can result in separation at joints—especially during hot summer temperatures. Correct this with caulking and touch-up paint. If a piece of trim pulls away from the house, re-nail and touch up with putty and paint.

### Splits

Fluctuation in humidity and temperature can cause wood trim to split or cup.

### One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your homeowner's orientation, we will confirm that wood trim is in acceptable condition. Minor imperfections in wood materials will be visible and will require no action. We will correct readily noticeable construction damage, such as chips and gouges, listed during your homeowner orientation.

### Interior

#### Exposed Nail Heads

In finished areas of your home, we will correct exposed nail heads by filling and touching up the original finish. Such repairs may be visible under certain lighting conditions.

#### Gaps

We will correct gaps in excess of 1/8 inch that appear between a wall and baseboard or gaps in excess of 1/8 inch between a baseboard and uniform hard surface floor. Gaps between baseboards and non-uniform hard-surface floors (slate, some ceramic tiles, and so on) are unavoidable and excluded from this repair.

#### Hammer Marks

We will correct hammer marks visible from six feet away in normal lighting conditions.

#### Separation/Misalignment

Hairline separations are acceptable between two pieces of the same material (for instance, at a casing corner) or between two pieces of dissimilar materials (such as casing and drywall).

We will correct separation or misalignment between pieces of the same material that exceeds 1/8 inch. Where trim is painted, pieces should be flush, with no raw wood showing. Separations between two dissimilar materials exceeding 1/8 inch will be corrected. In most cases, the repair provided is caulking and touch-up with the original stain or paint.

#### Splits

Wood trim pieces that split will be corrected, typically using filler. Such repairs will be visible under certain lighting conditions.

#### Surface Roughness

Wood surfaces that are touched or grasped during normal use should be uniformly smooth. Surfaces not touched during normal use shall appear smooth when viewed without magnification from a minimum distance of six feet under normal lighting conditions and from a normal viewing position.

## HOMEOWNER GUIDE

### Exterior

#### **Raised Grain**

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

#### **Resins**

We will touch up exterior trim where resin bleeds through the painted finish.

#### **Separations**

We will correct any separation at joints that allows water to enter the home.



## Maintenance Schedule

Begin caring for your home with organized records, including information about all its components and your furnishings. This information will make caring for your home easier; the records may be useful for completing tax returns and will be valuable when you sell your home. Another worthwhile step is to inventory all equipment, appliances, furnishings, and personal belongings. A photo album or jump drive containing pictures of each room is an excellent supplemental item.

In addition to normal daily and weekly care, develop a schedule of preventative routines based on the information in this homeowner's guide and the manufacturer's literature you receive. A change of season creates special maintenance needs, so plan for winterizing and summarizing your home.

Task	Frequency	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

## Appliance Service

This sheet is for your convenience. For warranty service on an appliance, contact the appropriate manufacturer directly at the service number provided in the appliance literature. They will ask you for 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).

Appliance	Manufacturer	Model #	Serial #	Service Phone #
Air Conditioner				
Cooktop				
Dishwasher				
Disposal				
Dryer				
Furnace				
Humidifier				
Microwave				
Oven				
Range				
Range Hood				
Refrigerator				
Washer				



**Thank you for being an amazing customer!**

Know that many prayers were said for your new home to provide comfort and safety through everything life has in store for you.

We would love to see how you make your new home your own.

Tag us using **@capstonehomesmn** on Instagram or **@CapstoneHomesMinnesota** on Facebook so we can see it.

**Capstone Homes MN**

14015 Sunfish Lake Blvd, Suite 400  
Ramsey, MN 55303

**(763) 427-3090**

[www.capstonehomes-mn.com](http://www.capstonehomes-mn.com)

**CAPSTONE**  
— H O M E S —