

RNL Homes

Client Care Manual &
Limited Warranty

February 2022





Chapter 7

Caring for Your Home

- 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 Visit Details—we plan to inspect your home on your behalf, to confirm that it is performing to the standards we promised
- Sample Warranty Visit Agenda—although each community is slightly different, the sample agenda illustrates the level of detail we will check in your home
- 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 manufacturer service phone numbers



Caring for Your Home

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

Similar to 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 in to assist you in that effort.

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 because of normal wear and tear, the inherent characteristics of the materials used in your home, and normal service required by the mechanical systems. Natural fluctuations in temperature and humidity also affect your home, resulting in maintenance items.

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 finding answers to your questions convenient. Because we offer a variety of floor plans and optional features, this homeowner guide may discuss components that are not present in your home.

Checklists

You will find several checklists included in this homeowner 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 we've allowed space for you to add your own notes to our checklists.

Prompt Attention

Many times, minor maintenance attention provided immediately saves you 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 as well as your enjoyment of your home for years. 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 guide current. However, if any detail in our discussion conflicts with the manufacturer's recommendations, you should follow the manufacturer's recommendations.



Some manufacturer's 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 assures that in the event of a recall the company can contact you and arrange to provide the needed correction.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

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

See also Additional Warranty Coverage at the end of this chapter.

Warranty Service Requests

Providing warranty service for a new home is more complicated than for other products. When you purchased your home, you actually 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 service. If you are ever in doubt as to which applies to your situation, contact our office at 979-704-6455. To submit an online warranty request online, please visit rnlhomes.com

- Emergency service (the only service requests we accept by phone)
- Appliance service (direct from the manufacturer)
- Primary visit (typically 30 to 60 days after your closing depending on the community)
- Anniversary visit (typically 10-11 months after closing)
- Interim warranty service (for your protection between the two planned visits, put all non-emergency service requests in writing at rnlhomes.com)

Emergency Service

While emergency warranty situations are rare, when they occur, prompt response is essential. Begin by checking items you can check. TROUBLESHOOTING tips appear in this homeowner guide for several of your home's components: plumbing, heating, electrical, roofing, and water heater.

Please refer to the individual categories to review these hints. An action by you may solve the problem immediately or mitigate the situation until a technician arrives. If your efforts do not cure the problem, the information you gather will be useful to the service person you contact.

During business hours, call our office. After hours, or on weekends or holidays, use the contact information provided on the emergency list you received during the closing meetings (new home orientation or



confirmation tour). Our trade contractors or local utility companies provide emergency responses to the following conditions:

- Total loss of heat during winter months
- Total loss of cooling during summer months
- Total loss of electricity
- 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 one of the mechanical trades directly outside our normal business hours, please inform our warranty office on the next business day so that we can document the situation and follow up as appropriate.

Roof Leak

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

Other Emergencies

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

Appliance Warranty Service

The manufacturers of kitchen appliances have asked to work directly with you if any repairs are needed for their products. They may be able to resolve the issue by talking with you by phone and if they cannot, they prefer to set an appointment directly with you. *Please alert us as well* so that we can document the item for your file and follow up with you.

Appliance service phone numbers are listed in the use and care materials for each appliance. The manufacturer or their service provider will ask for the model and serial number of the item and the closing date on your home. A form is included at the end of this homeowner guide so you can 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.

Primary Visit (typically between 30 and 60 days)

We will call to schedule our primary visit. These appointments are scheduled according to our normal warranty hours: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. You will receive a reminder of this



appointment by email or phone. During this appointment we intend to accomplish three purposes:

- Review key maintenance points and answer any questions you have about the care and operation of your home's features.
- Inspect your home, using our checklist as a guide (a sample warranty visit agenda appears at the end of this chapter), to confirm all of the components are performing as we intend them to.
- Review any items you believe require warranty attention to determine appropriate action.

If you have questions or find warranty concerns in your home prior to this visit please make note of them so we can get you needed information. Please ensure that the person at home for the warranty visit is over the age of 18 and is familiar with any concerns or questions you have.

Anniversary Visit (between 10 and 11 months)

We will offer to repeat this process near the end of your one-year limited warranty.

You will be contacted regarding scheduling your anniversary visit appointments. In any case, by the end of the eleventh month of your warranty, you should submit a year-end report if you have any items to report.

As with the primary visit, the anniversary visit typically takes less than an hour. Our purposes and procedures are the same with the addition of potential year end or one-time repair items described in the next entry. Please keep notes about items you wish us to review with you.

One-Time, Year End Repairs

If needed, we will provide several "one-time repairs." Please refer to individual headings listed below for details on measurements that suggest 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.

- Brick and Stone: masonry cracks
- Caulking: separations or cracks
- Ceramic Tile: grout cracks
- Countertops: separation from wall or backsplash
- Drywall: separation and nail pops
- Grading and Drainage: settlement of soil under concrete
- Wood Trim: exterior trim cracks

Interim Warranty Items

If you need to initiate non-emergency warranty service between the primary and anniversary visits, you are welcome to do so by submitting a **detailed warranty request online**. Please include your name, address, phone numbers, and a list of your concerns.

Homeowners due for primary or anniversary visits receive priority scheduling. 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 in one of our two routine visits.



Help Us to Serve You

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

- Your name, address, and preferred method of contact during business hours.
- **A complete description of the problem**, for example, “guest bath—cold water line leaks under sink,” rather than “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. RNL Homes understands the desire for appointments outside normal 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 require daylight for proper execution. These include drywall, paint, and exterior work of almost any type.
- We also found that most of the 35 to 50 independent trade contractors who helped us build your home—many of whom operate as small companies—were unable to work all week and also be available for extended hours. Therefore, the few repairs that could be performed in off-hours failed to eliminate the need for repair appointments during normal business hours.
- Administrative staff and supervisors would need to be available to answer questions. Having some personnel work extended hours meant being short-staffed during normal business hours.

Until we discover satisfactory solutions to these challenges, we appreciate your understanding and cooperation with our warranty hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 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 first concern.

We conduct warranty visits when an adult is available to accompany our representative and point out the items you have listed. Our in-house service technicians and those of our trades or suppliers will perform repairs only when an adult is available to admit them to your home. An adult is a person 18 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 to arrange for this.

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 such authorization, we are able to accept requests for warranty service only 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 situation that needs 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 needed work orders and notify you that we have done so.

Warranty Decisions

In addition to the information contained in the limited warranty document itself, this homeowner guide includes details about the criteria we will use to evaluate concerns you report. The purpose is to let you know what our warranty commitment is for the typical concerns that can come up in a new home. Descriptions include the corrective action we will take in many common situations.

If a warranty question arises other than those discussed here, we will assess them according to regional practices.

We Sometimes Break Our Own Rules—in Your Favor

Our criteria for qualifying warranty repairs meet or exceed established guidelines as defined 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 that appropriate, without being obligated to exceed all guidelines to a similar degree or for other homeowners whose circumstances are different.

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. If you request warranty service on a maintenance item, we will explain the steps you should take to care for the item. We are available to answer your home-care questions during and after your warranty period. Providing normal maintenance for your home is your responsibility.

Trade Day Appointment

Depending on the number and nature of items that need attention, we may ask you to designate a Trade Day Appointment—a date a minimum of 10 days from the inspection date—for repairs to be made. This time frame allows us to notify appropriate trades people, order any needed materials or parts, and arrange for the majority of repairs to occur on the same day.

Although on occasion work must occur in sequence and more than one appointment may be needed, this system works well in the majority of situations.



Please be sure that you are available the entire time that the trades are working in your home. This creates an opportunity to have as many trades as possible attend your home to complete their warranty work. If a particular trade is unavailable or if the work needs to be completed in sequence, other arrangements will be made with you.

Exterior Items

Exterior items can usually be inspected or repaired without an adult present provided access is available (for instance, 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 possible injury and to allow repair personnel an uninterrupted opportunity to work, we ask that youngsters be cared for away from ongoing work. This policy is for the protection of your children and our employees and 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 about tools and materials used for repairs, we ask that you restrict all pets to a comfortable location during any warranty visit, whether for inspection or warranty work. This policy is also for the protection of our employees and trades personnel. Again, we have instructed all personnel to reschedule the appointment if pets have access to the work area.

Your Belongings

In all work that we perform we are concerned that your furnishings and personal items are protected. When warranty work is needed in your home, we will ask that you remove vulnerable items or items that might make performing the repair difficult. This includes furniture, jewelry, medications, or other 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.

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

Completion Time



Regular review of outstanding work orders is part of our office routine. Checking with trades and homeowners alike, we strive to get warranty work completed within an appropriate and reasonable amount of time or to identify and address the cause for a delay.

We intend to complete warranty work orders within 15 workdays of the inspection unless you are unavailable for access. If a back-ordered part or similar circumstance causes a delay, we will let you know. Likewise, when weather conditions prevent the timely completion of exterior items, we track those items and follow up to ensure that they are addressed when conditions are right. This can mean a wait of several months.

Missed Appointments

Good communication is one key to successful completion of warranty items. We strive to keep homeowners informed and to protect them from inconvenience. One of our challenges in this regard is when unexpected events sometimes result in missed appointments. If an employee or a trade person will be late, he or she should contact you as soon as the delay is recognized, offering you a choice of a later time the same day or a completely different appointment.

If you must miss an appointment, we appreciate being alerted as soon as you realize your schedule has changed. We can put work orders on hold for 10 to 30 days and re-activate them when your schedule offers a better opportunity to arrange access to the home.

Weather might affect the completion of some exterior items.

Warranty Visit

Meeting Details

Appointment Set by	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RNL Homes office
Appointments Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Where	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your new home
Attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homeowner(s)• Warranty Rep
Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 minutes to an hour, depending on your questions
Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review our warranty inspection agenda and/or your list of items• Discuss any questions you have
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note items or maintenance questions you want to discuss



Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

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

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

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

For example, if you come home at 6:00 pm when the temperature has reached 85 degrees and set your thermostat to 65 degrees, the air conditioning unit will begin cooling, but will take much longer to reach the desired temperature. During the whole day, the sun has been heating not only the air in the house, but the walls, the carpet, and the furniture. At 6:00 pm the air conditioning unit starts cooling the air, but the walls, carpet, and furniture release heat and nullify this cooling. By the time the air conditioning unit has cooled the walls, carpet, and furniture, you may well have lost patience.

If evening cooling is your primary goal, set the thermostat at a moderate temperature in the morning while the house is cooler, allowing the system to maintain the cooler temperature. The temperature setting may then be lowered slightly when you arrive home, with better results. Once the system is operating, setting the thermostat at 65 degrees will *not* cool the home any faster and can result in the unit freezing up and not performing at all. Extended use under these conditions can damage the unit.

Adjust Vents

Maximize air flow to occupied parts of your home by adjusting the vents. Likewise, when the seasons change, readjust them for comfortable heating.

Compressor Level

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

See also Grading and Drainage



Manufacturer's Instructions

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.

Modifications or Additions

If you wish to make any modifications or addition to your air conditioning system, contact the heating and air conditioning company (HVAC) listed on the Emergency Phone Numbers you receive at your homeowner orientation. Having another firm modify your air conditioning system during the warranty period will void that portion of your limited warranty.

Temperature Variations

Temperatures may vary from room to room by several degrees. This is due to such variables as floor plan, orientation of the home on the home site, 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 that the—

- 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 the way a clothes dryer door operates, this panel pushes in 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.
- 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.)
- 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.



Alarm System

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

If your home selections included an alarm system, you will arrange for the final connection and activation after you move in. The alarm company will demonstrate the system, instruct you in its use, and provide identification codes for your family. We recommend that you test the system according to their instructions.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will correct wiring that does not perform as intended for the alarm system. We make no representation that the alarm system will provide the protection for which it is installed or intended.

Appliances

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Please read and follow the manufacturer instructions for the use and care of your appliances. The Appliance Service sheet at the end of this chapter offers a convenient location for details about appliances whether they are part of your original home purchase or you have them delivered subsequent to closing. By gathering these details as part of getting settled into your new home you will have them readily available in the event 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. We assign all appliance warranties to you, effective on the date of closing. The appliance manufacturers warrant their products directly to you according to the terms and conditions of these written warranties.

Attic

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

Attic Access

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



Brick and Stone

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

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 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 manufacturer 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. (This will be done once during the first year, if necessary)

Weep Holes

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

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

Cracks: One-Time Repair

One time during the warranty period, we repair masonry cracks.

Cabinets

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Your selection selections packet is your record of the style, and color of cabinets in your home. If you selected wood or wood veneer cabinets, expect differences in grain and color between and within the cabinet components due to natural variations in wood grain and the way each piece takes stain.

Consult your manufacturer's recommendations regarding product to use in caring for your cabinets. Follow container directions. Use such products a maximum of once every three to six months to avoid excessive build-up. 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 vary 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 orientation, we will confirm that all cabinet parts are installed and that their surfaces are in acceptable condition.

Alignment

Doors, drawer fronts, and handles should 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 cabinets and the 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 in excess of 1/8 inch against 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.

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 a false alarm or lack of response when needed. After cleaning, push the test button to confirm the alarm is working.



We will test carbon monoxide detectors during the orientation to confirm that they are working and to familiarize you with the alarm. RNL Homes does not represent that the carbon monoxide detectors will provide the protection for which they are installed or intended.

Carpet

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

Burns

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

Cleaning

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

Vacuum twice each week lightly and once a week thoroughly. Heavy traffic areas may require more frequent cleaning. A light vacuuming is three passes; a thorough job may need seven passes. 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 and is more effective in bringing dirt to the surface for easy removal. Although the beater bar will cause more wear, so does the dirt trapped in the carpet.

Please note however, that beater bar vacuum attachments should not be used on any type of Berber carpeting. This may result in permanent damage to the carpet and voids 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, usually after 12 to 18 months in your home and then once a year after that.

See also Stains

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 slowly lose some color due to natural and artificial forces in the environment. You can delay this process by frequently removing soil with vacuuming, regularly changing air filters in heating and air conditioning systems, keeping humidity and room temperature from getting too high, and reducing sunlight exposure with window coverings.

Filtration

If interior doors are kept closed while the air conditioning or furnace is operating, air circulation from the closed room flows through the small space at the bottom of the door or in the area of 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.

See also Ghosting

Fuzzing

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

Pilling

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

Rippling

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

Seams

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

Carpet styles with low, tight naps result in the most visible seams. Seams are never more visible than when the carpet is first installed. Usually with time, use, and vacuuming the seams become less visible. You can see examples in the showhomes of how carpet seams diminish after they have been vacuumed repeatedly and have experienced traffic.

Shading

Shading is an inherent quality of fine-cut pile carpets. Household traffic causes pile fibers to assume different angles; as a result, the carpet appears darker 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, especially pile, sheds bits of fiber for a period of time. Eventually these loose fibers are removed by vacuuming. Shedding usually occurs more with wool carpeting than with nylon or other synthetics.

Snags

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

Sprouting



Occasionally you may find small tufts of fiber sprouting above carpet surface. Simply use scissors to cut off the sprout. Do not attempt to pull it because other fibers will come out in the process.

Stains

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

Refer to your 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.

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 resulting from lack of cleaning and maintenance are excluded from warranty coverage. The use of beater bar type of vacuum attachments on berber type carpet will void warranty coverage.

Edges

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

Seams

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

Caulking

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

Colored Caulk

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

Latex Caulk

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

Silicone Caulk



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

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

Separations: One-Time Repair

We will touch up caulking one time 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

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

Cleaning

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

The ceramic tile installed on walls or 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 grout surface that becomes yellowed or stained cleanser and water. Grout cleansers and whiteners are available at most hardware stores.

Sealing Grout

Sealing grout is your decision and responsibility. Once grout has been sealed, ongoing maintenance of that seal is necessary to maintain protection 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 flooring or hardware stores. Follow package directions.

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

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines



During your homeowner 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 grouting of ceramic tiles at joints or junctions with other materials are commonly due to shrinkage. We will repair cracks in grout joints in excess of 1/16 inch one time 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 your responsibility. If you adjusted or replaced any of the original grout, the warranty becomes void.

Concrete Flatwork

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The constant expansion and contraction of the soil under the concrete and the concrete itself causes shifting and movement that can result in cracks. By maintaining good drainage, you protect your home's foundation and the concrete flatwork: patio, driveway, garage floor, and sidewalks.

Reinforcing concrete using wire mesh or reinforcing bar 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 change in temperature can damage the surface bond of the concrete. We recommend sweeping for keeping concrete clean. If washing is necessary, do this when temperatures are moderate. Repeated cleaning of the garage floor by hosing can increase soil movement by allowing water to penetrate any existing cracks. We recommend sweeping to clean the garage floor.

Control Joints

Control joints are grooves tooled or sawed into concrete flatwork in an effort to keep cracks in those locations rather than having them occur randomly.

Cracks

Because concrete is a water-based product, shrinkage, movement, and cracking will occur. Concrete flatwork also results from temperature changes that cause expansion and contraction.

As cracks occur, it is recommended that you seal them with a waterproof concrete caulk (available at hardware or home improvement stores) to prevent more moisture from penetrating to the soil beneath. In areas with high clay soils, constant moisture levels must be maintained to help prevent heaving and cracking that is caused by drastic changes in moisture level.

Expansion (Isolation) Joints

We sometimes install expansion joints to isolate a concrete slab from other parts of the home such as foundation walls, garage floor, and so on. They permit movement of the slab in response to soil expansion and can help reduce cracking. However, as the concrete settles during the curing process, moisture can penetrate under the concrete and cause separation or displacement. When this occurs, fill the resulting gap with a gray silicone sealant which you can purchase 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.

Color

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

Separation

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

GARAGE FLOOR

Garage Floor Cracks

We will repair cracks in garage floors in excess of 1/8 inch in width. When repairs are necessary the color and texture of the repair materials will vary from the original concrete. Repair will consist of sealing the cracks with gray silicone sealant.

DRIVEWAY

Driveway Cracks: One-Time Repair

We will repair cracks in excess of 1/4 inch, excluding chips, in width or vertical displacement one-time. As mentioned above, repaired areas will vary in color from the original concrete.

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 comes from high humidity within the home combined with low outside temperatures and inadequate ventilation. Family lifestyle significantly influences two out of three of these 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.
- Develop the habit of running the hood fan while you are cooking.
- Run your bath fans for 20-30 minutes after bathing or showering.
- Air your house by opening windows for a time when weather permits.



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.

Countertops

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Caulking

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

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 that will damage the luster of the surface.

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 exactly the same color. The granite installed in your home will vary in color and pattern from the sample you selected.

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.

See also Ceramic Tile

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 *noted on your homeowner orientation agenda. Repair of surface damage noted subsequent to this is one of your home maintenance responsibilities.*

Separation from Wall: One-Time Repair

Separation of countertops from walls, backsplash, and around sinks results from normal shrinkage of materials. Separation can also be caused on exterior walls by 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.

GRANITE

Edges should be smooth and even. Where backsplash joints occur at corners, the top edges should be even.

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. Plan to inspect your decks regularly—a minimum of once each year—and provide needed attention promptly to maintain an attractive appearance and forestall 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 surface of the decking. Use caution when moving such items to prevent scratches, gouges, and so on.

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 several products to consider for this purpose. Always follow manufacturer directions carefully.

Snow and Ice

Heavy snow or ice that remains on the deck over long periods increases wear and tear on the deck. Prompt removal can reduce adverse effects. Use caution in shoveling to avoid needless scratching of the deck boards.

Stain

Exposed wood decks that have been stained will show readily noticeable variation in color. Each board takes the same stain differently at installation and over time, with exposure to weather and use, further variations in color will occur.



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 the building of the deck (which ever is the later).

Color Variation

Color variations are a natural result of the way in which 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 for concerns that result from lack of normal maintenance are your responsibility.

Doors and Locks

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Doors installed in your home are made of a variety of materials and 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 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 works loose the hardware and causes the door to sag.

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 fiberglass materials with interior wood frames. These products can also be subject to shrinkage and warping due to temperature differential between inside and outside surfaces.

Weather Stripping

Weather stripping wears out over time. We recommend that each fall you inspect the weather stripping, 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 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 will not latch because of 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 doorjamb when the door is closed. In the case of 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 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.

With the exception of the one-time repair service that we provide, care of drywall is one of your maintenance responsibilities. Most drywall repairs can be easily made. This work is best done when you redecorate the room. We recommend that you wait through one complete seasonal cycle to do so.



Repair hairline cracks with a coat of paint. You can repair 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 particular lighting conditions.

Related Warranty Repairs

If a drywall repair is needed as a result of poor workmanship (such as blisters in tape) or other warranty-based repair (such as a plumbing leak), we complete the repair by touching up the repaired area with the same paint that was on the surface when the home was delivered. If more than one-third of the wall is involved, we will repaint the wall corner to corner.

You are responsible for custom paint colors or wallpaper that has been applied subsequent to closing. The effects of time on paint and wallpaper, as well as possible dye lot variations, mean touch-up 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 your responsibility. Remember that touch-ups may be visible.

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

Easements

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Easements are areas where such things as utility supply lines can pass through your property. 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 which 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 to name a few. 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 are unable to predict which sites will include such equipment.

See also Grading and Drainage, and Property Boundaries

Electrical System

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

ARC Fault Circuit Interrupter (AFCI)

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 effected outlet first before re-setting the AFCI break at the breaker panel. Turn the breaker “off” then to “on” to reset it.

If you find no explanation with an item you had plugged in, call for service.

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 because of overloads caused by plugging too many appliances into the circuit, a worn cord or defective appliance, or operating an appliance with too high a voltage requirement (such as a power tool) for the circuit. The starting of an electric motor can also trip a breaker.

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

Buzzing

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

Dimmable Fixtures/Dimmers with CFL 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 compact florescent lights (CFLs) for lighting, use dimmable bulbs. A little buzzing with CFLs is normal.

Fixture Location

We install light fixtures as near as possible to the locations indicated on the plans. Structural elements (framing) sometimes require location changes. Moving fixtures to accommodate specific furniture arrangements or room use is your responsibility.



GFCI (Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupters)

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

Caution: Never plug a refrigerator or food freezer into a GFCI-controlled outlet. The likelihood of the contents being ruined is high and the limited warranty excludes such damage.

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

If you wish to make any modifications or addition to your electrical system, contact the electrician listed on the Emergency Phone Numbers you receive 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, check first to see if it is controlled by a wall switch or GFCI. Next, check the breaker.

If you have small children in your home, install safety plugs to cover unused outlets. Education of children to 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 that the—

- 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.

No Electrical Service to One or More Outlets

Before calling warranty or the electrician, check to confirm that the—

- 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)



- Item you want to use is plugged in
- Item you want to use works in other outlets
- 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 size and type of bulbs in these fixtures and keep replacements on hand.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your homeowner 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 repair any electrical wiring that fails to carry its designed load to meet specifications. If electrical outlets, switches, or fixtures do not function as intended, we will repair or replace them.

GFCI (Ground-Fault Interrupters)

We are not responsible for food spoilage that results from your plugging refrigerators or freezers into a GFCI outlet.

Power Surge

Power surges are the result of local conditions beyond 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 resulting from lightning strikes is also excluded from limited warranty coverage.

Energy and Water Conservation

A home built with respect for our environment is even more effective in achieving that goal when your daily use of features and products is well-informed. In the process of conserving, you also save money as an additional benefit. Keep these hints in mind as you use 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 heat and air conditioning systems a minimum of once every two years.
- Keep filters clean or replace them regularly. Replace media filters ever 3-4 months and 1" filters every 30 days.
- Learn how to use your programmable thermostat for comfort and efficient energy use.



- 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.
- 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

- During cold days, open window coverings to allow the sun to warm your home. Close them when the sun begins to set.
- Where applicable, limit use of a wood burning fireplace in extremely cold or windy weather when the chimney draft will draw room air out at an extreme rate.
- During the winter, humidifying the air in your home allows the air to retain more heat and is a general health benefit. Note: If condensation develops on your windows, you have taken a good thing too far and need to lower the setting on the humidifier. The setting requirements change with the outside temperature; your manufacturer owner's manual contains a table defining these.
- 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 degrees Fahrenheit if your dishwasher has a water booster heater. If not, set the water heater at 140 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Follow the steps outlined in the manufacturer's directions for draining water from your water heater in order to remove accumulated hard-water scale that builds up inside the tank. Timing will depend on the nature of your water supply. It is recommended to flush your system once per year.
- If you have a tankless or heat pump water heater, follow manufacturer instructions for the timing and steps to clean the unit.

- Correct plumbing leaks, running toilets, or dripping faucets as soon as possible.
- Keep aerators clean.
- Use the dual flush feature on low flush toilets whenever possible.
- 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 more water out in the spin cycle, laundry dries faster.

www.H2ouse.org

This site offers tips for saving water in every area of your home, reports on how much each type of water using device consumes in typical homes, and includes basic directions for minor home repairs involving water using items.

Appliances

- In selecting your home's appliances, compare the information on the (black and white) *EnerGuide* sticker. Sometimes spending a bit more up front can reduce operating costs over the life of the appliance, conserving energy at the same time.
- Use cold water when operating your disposal. This not only saves hot water you pay to heat, it preserves the disposal motor.
- When baking, preheat your oven just five minutes before you use it. When possible, bake several items at the same time or at least consecutively. Turn the oven off a few minutes before 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 degrees 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.
- Use a phosphate free detergent.
- Select an appropriate size refrigerator for your needs; two small refrigerators use more energy than one large one.
- Refrigerators with the freezer on top generally use significantly less energy than side-by-side models. Bottom freezer models are the most energy efficient models available.
- Refrigerators 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 to efficient operation. Likewise, keep your freezer full.



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- Avoid putting containers of hot food into the refrigerator; allow them to cool a bit first.
 - 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 of the condenser by cleaning every three months or as needed.

Electrical

- Light emitting diode (LED) bulbs, while expensive, last for 50,000 hours (5 times longer than CFL and 65 times longer than incandescent bulbs) and they do not contain mercury. They work best for task lighting such as desk lamps and under counter lights.
- 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.

Your Additional Reminders and Notes

Extended Absences

Whether for a vacation, business travel, or other reasons, nearly all of us occasionally leave our homes for days or weeks at a time. With some preparation, such absences can be managed uneventfully. Keep these guidelines in mind and add additional reminders that are appropriate to your 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.
- 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.
- 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.



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- 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 manufacturer's directions for instructions on the steps involved in this process.
- Store items such as your lawn mower, bicycles, or ladders in the garage.
- Be energy conscious—change the settings on your thermostat for both summer and winter usage. Leaving the temperature in the home at a minimum 55 degrees 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 also open doors on cabinets that contain plumbing allowing heat to circulate.
- Arm your security system, if applicable.

Your 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. Maintenance of caulking is your responsibility.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We provide one-time repairs to many of the effects of expansion and contraction. See 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, fencing may be provided by us, it may be an optional item you select, the developer may provide it, or fencing may be an item you consider adding after your closing. When we install fencing as our responsibility, we install it 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. Plan enough space under the bottom of a wood 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 the architectural requirements of your subdivision may dictate the type and style of fence allowed.

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, 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. Your responsibilities include checking on such details.

We recommend that you engage the services of professionals to install your fence. Be certain to inform any fence installer of your architectural requirements.

See also Property Boundaries

Variation

Height and location of installed fences will vary with home site size, topography, and shape (1-4" off of ground). Having the 1" to 4" gap between your grass and the bottom of your fence is normal and the purpose is to keep your fence elevated in order for the bottom of the pickets being consistently affected by humidity, as this would cause damage overtime.

Weather Damage



Damage to fencing caused by severe weather should be referred to your homeowner 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 hardware or make needed adjustments.

Wrought Iron Fencing

Wrought iron is subject to rusting unless regular maintenance is provided. 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 corrections to drainage as needed to prevent this.

See also Utility Locates

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

If fencing is part of your home purchase, the workmanship and materials will be reviewed during your new home orientation which takes place 7 to 10 days prior to closing. Although developer-installed fencing (Ex. Oakmont Community) falls outside our limited warranty, we may be able to assist in communicating any concerns you have and obtaining a response.

If we did install your fence, we are not responsible for correcting warped pickets and/or fence posts, as well as fence posts that become loose during the warranty period. Such instances are non-warrantable conditions as fences are heavily affected by weather conditions such as humidity, rain, heavy storms, etc. Be aware the fences we feature in our communities are “privacy fences” and are not meant to keep your pets from crawling outside your yard from underneath the fence. The gap between the bottom of the fence and the grass is normal and if it were to become larger than it was when you initially moved in due to erosion caused by rains, it is recommended that you fill the spots with soil.

Fireplace

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

See also Fire Prevention.

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

WOOD BURNING FIREPLACE

Look upon burning a wood fire as a luxury that adds much to the atmosphere but just a little to the heat in a home. About ten percent of the heat produced by a fire is radiated into the house. In many older homes, the air used by the fireplace for combustion is replaced with cold outside air drawn in through cracks



around doors and windows. However, your home is constructed so tightly that this does not happen. We install a fresh air vent to supply the fireplace with combustion air and reduce the amount of heated air the fire draws from your house.

Close the damper when the fireplace is not in use. Leaving this open is equivalent to having an open window in the house. If the fire is still burning, but you are finished enjoying it, use glass doors to prevent heated air from being drawn up the chimney until your damper can be closed.

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

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

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

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

Chimney Cleaning

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

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

GAS FIREPLACE

Read and follow all of your 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 and any gas smell, immediately shut off the switch and report it to the gas company.

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 for the first few times the fireplace is used. This is called curing or burning in. It may take as much as 24 hours of use before the fireplace is cured. The fireplace should be burned for periods no less than 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 extremely high winds can result in a downdraft, this condition should be temporary and occasional. We will determine and correct continuous malfunction if caused by a construction or design defect.

Glass Doors

During your homeowner orientation we confirm that glass fireplace doors, when included with the home, are in acceptable condition. Use the cleaning product recommended by the manufacturer 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.

Fire Prevention

All family members should practice fire safety. Awareness of potential dangers and preventive actions are preferable to even the fastest response. 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 all of 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.
- 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.



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- 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. Do not leave an iron that is on 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 means for you to dispose of hazardous items. Check with your service provider for details.
 - Gas Grills: Keep the barbeque clean and soap test the lines of a gas grill for leaks regularly. A quarter to a half turn provides enough propane; do not turn the valve on all the way. When lighting your barbeque, 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 a safe distance away. Never use gasoline to start a charcoal barbeque and never spray more fluid on hot coals. When you are finished barbequing, wear an oven mitt and use tongs to submerge spent coals in a metal pail of water.
 - All Grills: Use the barbeque 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 barbeque 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 barbeque) in an indoor fireplace.
 - Use a screen or glass doors when a fire is burning.
 - 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.



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- If you decide to remodel, 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 barbeque, a gas fireplace, 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.

Your Additional Reminders and Notes

Fixtures

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Manufacturers typically treat fixtures with a clear protective coating, electrostatically applied, to provide 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 of these products requires only periodic cleaning with a mild, nonabrasive soap and buffing with a soft cloth.

Corrosion

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

Polish

When peeling, spotting, or discoloration occurs, you can sometimes restore the beauty of the metal by completely removing the remaining coating and hand polishing the item with a suitable 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. An example is calcium stains around the fixture or discoloration due to the type of water in the community. We have no control over the type of water in the communities where we build, therefore these are excluded as are not considered a fixture defect but rather a consequence of external sources.

During your homeowner's orientation, your plumbing fixtures will be tested. Unless it is noted that a plumbing fixture needs to be tightened or is loose, a fixture that comes loose is not a warrantable condition. We recommend cautious care as you use your fixtures on a daily basis, and special care with fixtures that aren't easily accessible to tighten such as the ones in tubs. When going inside or leaving the



tub, we strongly encourage you to not pull the fixture to support yourself as this is likely to cause the fixture to come loose.

Foundation

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

The foundation is a structural element of your home and therefore it carries an additional limited structural warranty which is described at the end of this chapter.

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 1/8 inch in width.

Framing

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

Floor Deflection on two-story homes

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 one inch over 10 feet applies when measured between the opposite walls or defined limits of the room area.

Plumb Walls

We will correct walls that are out of plumb more than one inch in an eight foot distance of 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 has a different method for programming so please refer to your manufacturers 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 result in some precipitation entering 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 along the bottom of the door; this unavoidable condition is a natural result of weather conditions and is excluded from warranty coverage.

Lubrication

Regularly apply a lubricant such as silicone spray to all moving metal parts: rollers, hinges, pulleys, bearings, moveable 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 recommendation. 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 and cause the cables to come off which creates a major inconvenience and repair. If a manual lock is required due to power outage or leaving for an extended period of time, we suggest snapping a vise grip on to 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 (simply push the button to operate the opener and it will reconnect) to restore normal operation.

If you have an opener installed on your home after closing, we suggest that you order it from the company that provided and installed the garage door to assure uninterrupted warranty coverage. Be familiar with the steps for manual operation of the door in the event of a power failure.

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

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 correct battery size and other maintenance needs of your remote controls.

Painting



Garage doors are insulated 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 a requirement of the architectural controls in your area. Therefore, the color of the door may be pre-determined and cannot be changed. Please refer to your exterior color selections for further information regarding your architectural controls.

Safety

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

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

Sag

The garage door may sag slightly due to its weight and span. This 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 subsequent to closing of the home.

Gas Shut-Offs

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

You will find shut-offs on gas lines near their connection to each item that operates on gas. In addition, there is a main shut-off at the meter. We point these out during 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 which develop on surfaces in homes (on carpet, walls, ceilings, appliances, mirrors, and around area rugs—to list a few examples) have caused much investigation and research.

The conclusion of the research and laboratory tests has been that the majority of this staining or "ghosting" (also known as "carbon black") results from pollution of the air in the home caused by burning scented candles. 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 surfaces of the home. The sooty deposits are extremely difficult to remove; on some surfaces (light-colored carpet, for instance), they are impossible to clean completely away.

The popularity of scented candles has increased many-fold in recent years. If this is an activity that is part of your lifestyle, we caution you about the potential damage to your home. When this condition results from burning candles or other lifestyle choices, the resulting damage is excluded from our limited warranty coverage.

See also Carpet/Filtration

Grading and Drainage

We are responsible for completion of final grade and for obtaining approval from the municipality where required. You are responsible for maintaining the final grade, as applicable. If you alter the drainage pattern later or if changes in drainage occur due to lack of maintenance, the limited structural warranty will be impacted.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The final grades 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 to allow room to work. In addition, some trenching is necessary for installation of 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 settled areas as needed to maintain positive 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 permit the water to drain away from the home as rapidly as possible. This is essential to protect your foundation. Failure to do so can result in major structural damage and void your structural warranty.



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 your responsibility.

Main Water Line

The main water line to your new home is typically located in the front yard.

Roof Water

Downspout extensions are installed and sloped so the water drains away from your home quickly.

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

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

Subsurface Drains

Occasionally the developer will install a subsurface drain to ensure that surface water drains from a yard adequately. Keep this area and especially the drain cover clear of debris so that 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 up to 48 hours.

See also Landscaping and Utility Locates

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

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 your 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 your responsibility.

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 up to 48 hours.

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, landscape, and fence work will continue.

Green Home Care

In addition to saving water and energy, numerous lifestyle details can have a significant impact on the environment. The suggestions that follow will get you started and you will find many more ideas by consulting the sources listed in individual entries or under “Additional Information” at the end of this list.

Cleaning

- Look for products whose manufacturers spell out all ingredients. A long list of ingredients you cannot pronounce is usually an indication that the product contains chemicals you and the environment are better off without.
- You might also want to consider replacing expensive chemically laden products with an all purpose cleaner you mix yourself. Frequently used ingredients include baking soda, white vinegar, salt, corn starch, cream of tartar, and borax all of which are safer for the environment than many of the chemicals found in commercial cleaning products. Experiment to see which recipes work best for your needs.
- For products you purchase, look for concentrated formulas in containers made from recycled materials; powders contain fewer chemicals and use less energy to transport.
- Whichever cleaner you are using, use just the amount you need to complete the job and not one drop more.
- Micro-fiber cleaning cloths are effective for almost all cleaning tasks, replacing paper towels. Just wash and reuse.

For more information visit—

www.turi.com

Toxics Use Reduction Institute comes from the University of Massachusetts Lowell. It includes a library of over 14,000 environmental abstracts with links to full text on the Web. Equally interesting, it provides



safety details on ingredients used in do-it-yourself cleaning products, recipes, and test results on a variety of those recipes.

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 your responsibility.

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 along the ground to move water away from the perimeter of the home. The extensions must be in place and in their lowered position to move water away from the foundation. Always return downspout extensions to their lowered position after mowing lawns.

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.

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 one-year warranty period.

Overflow

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

Standing Water

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

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

Hardwood Floors

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

In daily care of hardwood floor, preventive maintenance is the primary goal. Please see your flooring manufacturer's instructions or Website.

Appliances

Delivery, installation, and moving appliances for cleaning purposes may damage the hardwood floor surface. Use extreme caution when moving appliances; repair of such damage is your responsibility.

Cleaning

Sweep on a daily basis or as needed. Never wet-mop a hardwood floor. We recommend you avoid the use of floor steamers on hardwood flooring. Excessive water causes wood to expand and can possibly damage the floor. When damp-mopping, remove all excess water from the mop. Check with the hardwood company if your floor has a water-based finish.

Dimples

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

Filmy Appearance

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

Furniture Legs

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

Humidity

Wood floors respond noticeably to changes in humidity in your home. Especially during winter months the individual planks or pieces expand and contract (sometimes causing gaps) as moisture content changes. A humidifier helps but does not eliminate this reaction. The first two years are especially critical for fine woods in a home to normalize to climatic conditions.

Mats and Area Rugs

Use protective mats at the exterior doors to help prevent sand and grit from getting on the floor, however if sand and grit are left to accumulate under these mats further damage to the flooring surface may occur. Gritty sand is wood flooring's worst enemy. However, be aware that rubber backing on area rugs or mats can cause yellowing and warping of the floor surface.

Separation

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



See also Warping

Shoes

Stiletto shoes can focus the weight of a 125 pound person to more than 2000 pounds per square inch—that is enough weight to damage hardened concrete; it will mark your wood floor.

Spills

Clean up food spills immediately with a dry cloth.

Sun Exposure

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

Traffic Paths

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

Warping

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

Wax

Waxing and the use of products like oil soap are neither necessary nor recommended.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your homeowner orientation we will confirm that hardwood 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.



Heating System: Gas Forced Air

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Good 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 general information only.

Adjust Vents

Experiment with the adjustable registers in your home to establish the best heat flow for your lifestyle. Generally, you can reduce the heat in seldom-used or interior rooms. This is an individual matter and you will need to balance the system for your own family's needs.

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.

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

Furnaces we install include combustion and fresh air ducts. The outside end of these duct are covered with a screen to minimize insects or animals entering the duct. Cold air coming in through these ducts means they are functioning as they should.

Filter

A clean filter will help to keep your home clean and reduce dusting chores. Remember to change or clean the filter monthly during winter and summer. A clogged filter can slow airflow and cause cold spots in your home. Although it takes less than one minute to change the filter, this is one of the most frequently overlooked details of normal furnace care.

Buy filters in large quantity for the sake of convenience. You will find the size and type printed along the edge of the filter that is in your furnace.

Gas Odor

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

Modifications or Additions

If you wish to make any modifications or addition to your heating system, contact the heating and air conditioning company (HVAC) listed on the Emergency Phone Numbers you receive at your homeowner orientation. Having another firm modify your heating system during the warranty period will void that portion of your limited warranty.

Odor

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



Programmable Thermostat

A programmable thermostat is a great way to save energy dollars. Your thermostat can be programmed to keep temperatures lower while you're away and increase them in anticipation of your return. You can program the thermostat for up to a seven day cycle. Refer to the manufacturer literature for details.

Registers

Register covers are removable and adjustable. Keeping registers open improves comfort and moisture management, especially during winter months. You have the choice of adjusting the dampers in these covers to regulate the heat flow within your home. Registers in the 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 such details as the style of home, room orientation, number and size of windows, type and use of window coverings, whether doors are open or closed, the temperature will 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.

Thermostat

Thermostats are calibrated to within plus or minus two 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. We recommend to have an AC contractor check the system twice a year.

TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: NO HEAT/NO COOL

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the—

- Thermostat is set to “heat” or “cool” and the temperature is set above the room temperature for heat and below room temperature for cool.
- 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.)
- 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 vent is not blocked.

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/cooling systems according to national and local building codes, as well as to designs of the home. Building codes specify that heating/cooling systems should be capable of maintaining an indoor air temperature of 72 degrees in the center of the room, five feet above the floor

Heating System: Heat Pump

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

Air Circulation across Coils

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

Air Conditioning and Heating

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

Air Temperature at Vents

Do not expect dramatic temperature differences in the air coming from the vents as is common with other kinds of systems. The coils used in a heat pump system operate at lower temperatures than those common in a gas forced-air system.

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.

Auxiliary Heat System

At lower outside temperatures, less heat is available for the heat pump to draw from the exterior air. Therefore, from time to time the auxiliary heat system will need to be turned on at the thermostat to maintain the temperature you set at the thermostat. The auxiliary system will also come on whenever the temperature at the thermostat is moved .5 degree or more at one time. If the light stays on when the outside temperature is more than 30 degrees Fahrenheit, contact a service person.

Defrost Cycle



When the heat pump is operating in the heat mode, the coils outside may reach below freezing temperatures. Moisture in the air will condense into frost and accumulate on the coils under these circumstances. From time to time, the system will go into defrost mode to clear accumulated frost from the coils. This is a normal part of the operation of the system and will occur automatically.

During the defrost cycle the outside fan will stop temporarily. The temperature of airflow into the home will be a bit lower during the defrost cycle. The defrost cycle can only occur once every 90 minutes and lasts no longer than 10 minutes.

Modifications or Additions

If you wish to make any modifications or addition to your heating system, contact the company listed on the Emergency Phone Numbers you receive at your homeowner orientation. Having another firm modify your heat pump system during the warranty period will void that portion of your limited warranty.

Register Adjustment

Registers will require adjustment from time to time to maximize your family's comfort. Do not completely close off more than one supply register at a time. This can restrict the airflow too much and reduce the efficiency of the system.

A good technique is to completely open all the vents, and then gradually move the temperature setting up until the coolest room is comfortable. Once the coolest room is comfortable, gradually close the vents in the warmer rooms until all rooms are comfortable as well. Reverse the process for air conditioning.

Return Air Vents

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

TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: NO HEAT OR AUXILIARY HEAT STAYS ON WHEN OUTSIDE TEMPERATURE IS 30 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT OR ABOVE

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the

- Thermostat is set to "heat" and the temperature is set above the room temperature.
- 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.)
- Filter is clean to allow airflow.
- Vents in individual rooms are open.
- Air returns are unobstructed.
- Outside coil is not clogged with 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

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, the installation of speaker wire), you should confirm that the insulation lays smooth and even. Do not step on drywall ceilings, because this can result in personal injury or damage to the drywall.

Attic insulation will settle over time; this natural occurrence is taken into account in 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 and as outlined in your purchase agreement.

Landscaping

Providing complete details on landscape design is beyond the scope of this homeowner 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. These entries will provide many of the most common points.

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.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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 according to these requirements.

Additions

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

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 your responsibility. You may need to protect newly planted seed with erosion matting or reseed to establish grass in swales. It can take several years to fully establish your lawn in such challenging areas.

Hired Contractors

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

Main Water Line

The main water line to your new home is typically located in the front yard and encased in a PVC pipe. Governing municipalities require that this 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 your responsibility.

Requirements

In addition to complying with applicable developer requirements, check with your local building department and homeowner's 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 your 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, this is an indication your sod is drying out. Sod installed against your foundation, especially along the south and west sides, is subject to drying out.
- Stay off of 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.
- 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 over water sod, but you can under water 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 up an attractive community and add value to the homes we build. We take steps to protect and preserve existing trees in the area of your home. In spite of our efforts, existing trees located on construction sites can suffer damage from construction activities, which manifest months after the completion of construction.

Damage to existing trees can be caused by such things as compaction of soil in the root zone, changing patterns of water flow on the home site, disturbing the root system, and removing 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 these trees altogether is your responsibility.

Trees are planted in conjunction with the sod placement. 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 over watered. Therefore, attention is needed through the landscape season to determine how much and when to water.
- The leaves on trees and shrubs will turn yellow from over watering; they will turn brown if watering is insufficient.
- 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 the construction process.
- To encourage budding in the spring, water your trees and shrubs thoroughly in the late fall.
- If the weather turns warm during the winter, we recommend watering your trees and shrubs to help premature thawing.
- Trees and shrubs require regular inspection for insect infestation. Early detection and prompt treatment may prevent further damage.

Utility Lines & Irrigation Systems

A slight depression may develop in the front lawn along the line of 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

Weeds



Weeds will appear in your new lawn whether seed or sod is used. 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. **Landscape and sod are non-warrantable items in your home.**

Mildew

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Mildew is a fungus that spreads through the air in microscopic spores. They love moisture and feed on surfaces or dirt. On siding, they look like a layer of dirt.

Cleaning mildew from your home is your responsibility. Solutions that remove mildew are available from local paint or home improvement stores. Wear protective eyewear and rubber gloves for this task; the chemicals that remove mildew are unfriendly to humans.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will remove any mildew noted during your homeowner orientation. Our warranty excludes mildew.

Mirrors

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

To clean your mirrors use any reliable liquid glass cleaner or polisher available at most hardware or grocery stores. Avoid acidic cleaners and splashing water under the mirror; either can cause the silvering to deteriorate. Acidic cleaners are usually those that 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 agenda.

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—over 100,000 kinds exist in the world and about 1000 of these are found in the North America.

In order to grow, mold requires food, air, water, and a temperature between 40 and 100 degrees Fahrenheit. While not all molds are harmful, growth of mold within a home is inappropriate and may have

side effects for the occupants, such as allergic reactions and infections, in addition to damaging the material 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 building homes that exclude mold spores is impossible. If conditions are right, mold will grow in your home. Items commonly found in all homes such as wood, carpet, drywall, fabric, and insulations to name a few, can supply a food source. Likewise, air and temperature in most homes meet the needs of mold spores. If moisture is present and remains on a mold food source, mold can develop within 24 to 48 hours.

Moisture is the only mold growth factor that can be controlled in a home. By minimizing moisture, you reduce or eliminate mold growth.

Moisture in your home comes from many sources. Spills, leaks, overflows, condensation, and high humidity are examples. 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 minimally in accordance to the manufacturer's recommendations. 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 is a sign of 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

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 their spraying the home and correct any leaks immediately.

Keep splashblocks 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.



Tile Grout

Another vulnerable area is tile grout around showers and tubs. 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.
- Develop the habit of running the hood fan when you are cooking.
- Also run bath fans when bathrooms are in use and leave on for 5-10 minutes after you shower.
- Connect your clothes dryer exhaust to the vent pipe. Clean the exhaust pipe as needed to keep it clear and functioning efficiently. We recommend it twice a year, when AC contractor is checking the system.
- Air your house by opening windows for a time when weather permits.

Weather Stripping

Weather stripping on doors may need occasional adjustment to prevent moisture from getting in around the door as well as to reduce air infiltration.

See also Plumbing, Ventilation, and Condensation

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

Paint and Stain

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Because of changes in the formulas for paint (such as the elimination of lead to make paints safer), painted surfaces must be washed gently using 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.

Colors

Your selections packet is your record of the paint and stain color names or numbers used in your home.



Exterior

Regular attention will preserve the beauty and value of your home. Check the painted and stained surfaces of your home's exterior annually. Repaint before much chipping or wearing away of the original finish occurs; this will save the cost of extensive surface preparation.

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

Plan on refinishing any painted exterior surface of your home approximately every two to three years or as often as your paint manufacturer suggests for your area and climate. Climatic conditions control the chemical structure of the paint used on the exterior. Over time, this finish will fade and dull a bit. Depending on the exposure to weather of each surface, the paint on some parts of your home may begin to show signs of deterioration sooner than 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 a quality exterior paint formulated for local climate conditions.

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

Severe Weather

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

Severe Weather

Repair of storm damage falls outside the warranty coverage and is either your responsibility or that of your insurer.

Stain

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

Touch-Up

When doing paint touch-ups, use a small brush, applying 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 leave any paint that is left when your home is finished. Store these with the lids tightly in place and in a location where they are not subjected to extreme temperatures.

Wall Cracks

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

See also Drywall

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines



During your new home orientation, we will confirm that all painted or stained surfaces are in acceptable condition. We will touch up paint as indicated on your homeowner orientation list. You are responsible for all subsequent touch-up after you move in, except painting we perform as part of another warranty repair. For example: if there is a drywall patch that is required, we will re-paint the area where the patch was made.

Fading

Expect fading of exterior paint or stain caused by the effects of sun and weather. Our limited warranty excludes this occurrence.

Touch-Up Visible

Paint touch-up is visible under certain lighting conditions, especially with glossy paints.

Wood Grain

Because of wood characteristics, color variations will result when stain is applied to wood. This is natural and requires no repair. Today's water-based paints often make wood grain visible on painted trim. We do not provide corrections for this condition.

Pests and Wildlife

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Insects such as ants, spiders, wasps, and bees, and animal life such as woodpeckers, squirrels, mice, and so on, may fail to recognize that your home belongs to you. Addressing concerns involving these pests and wildlife goes with being a homeowner. Informational resources include, among others, animal control authorities, the Bylaw Service (consult your local directory service for the number of the nearest office), pest control professionals, the Internet, and the public library.

See also Termites

Plumbing

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Your plumbing system has many parts, most of which require little maintenance. Proper cleaning, occasional minor attention, and preventive care will assure many years of good service from this system.

Aerators

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

See also Dripping Faucet

Cleaning

Follow manufacturer's directions for cleaning fixtures. Avoid abrasive cleansers. They remove the shiny finish and leave behind a porous surface that is difficult to keep clean. Clean plumbing fixtures with a soft sponge and soapy water (a nonabrasive cleaner or a liquid detergent is usually recommended by

manufacturers). Then polish the fixtures with a dry cloth to prevent water spots. Care for brass fixtures with a good-quality brass cleaner, available at most hardware stores.

Clogs

The main causes of toilet clogs are domestic items such as disposable diapers, excessive amounts of toilet paper, sanitary supplies, Q-tips, dental floss, and children's toys. 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.

Improper garbage disposal use also causes many plumbing clogs. Always use plenty of cold water when running the disposal. Cold water also cools the ball bearings which helps the motor last longer. Allow the water to run 10 to 15 seconds after shutting off the disposal. Review the manufacturer's literature to learn which food items can be put in the disposal and which should be avoided.

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

Dripping Faucet

Your faucets include ceramic disc valves. If the style is a single handle, lift the handle after pushing the spout to one side. Use an Allen wrench to remove the set screw and decorative cap. You will see two screws, loosen these to lift out the disc assemble.

You will see three inlet seals. Replace all of these and line up the holes with the faucet base. If this does not solve the problem you will need to replace the cartridge that holds the discs. Kits are available at home repair stores.

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

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 or "vacation" setting. Check manufacturer's directions for additional hints and instructions.

See also Extended Absence Checklist

Fiberglass Fixtures

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

Freezing Pipes

During winter months, cover all exterior hose bibs.

Leaks

If a plumbing leak occurs, the first step is to turn off the supply of water to the area involved and minimize damage to your home and personal property. This may mean shutting off the water to the entire home.



Then contact the warranty office or, if the leak occurs after hours, the appropriate trade contractor's emergency number.

Low Pressure

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

Modifications or Additions

If you wish to make any modifications or addition to your plumbing system, contact the plumbing company listed on the Emergency Phone Numbers you receive at your homeowner orientation. Having another firm modify your plumbing system during the warranty period will void that portion of your limited warranty.

Outside Faucets

Outside faucets (hosebibs) are freeze-proof, but in order for this feature to be effective, you must remove hoses during cold weather, even if the faucet is located in your garage. If a hose is left attached during cold weather, the water that remains in the hose can freeze and expand back into the pipe, causing a break in the line. Repair of a broken line that feeds an exterior faucet is a maintenance item. We recommend that you get in the habit of always removing any hose you use from any exterior or garage faucet. Make sure to cover all hose bibs during the winter months.

Porcelain

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

Running Toilet

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

Shut-Offs

In single family homes the water supply can be shut-off entirely in two locations. The first is at the meter and the second is in the garage. Each toilet has a shut-off on the water line under the tank and hot and cold shut-offs for each sink are included on the water lines under the sink.

Tankless Water Heaters

Tankless water heaters need to be flushed out once a year. Tankless water heaters provide endless hot water, not instant hot water.

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 concentration of minerals. In hard water areas, a brown surface stain can form appearing like rust.

Temperature Variation

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

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 TIPS: PLUMBING

No Water Anywhere in the Home

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the—

- Main shut off on the meter outside your home is open.
- Main shut off at the street is open at the garage.
- Individual item shut-off is open.

No Hot Water: See Water Heater

Leak Involving One Sink, Tub, or Toilet

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the—

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

If these items do not resolve the issue, turn the water supply off to the item. Use other facilities in your home and report problem on the next business day.

If a leak involves a main line, turn water off at the meter outside your home and call the emergency number for service.

Back Up at One Toilet

If only one toilet is affected, corrections occur during normal business hours.

- 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 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 correct clogged drains that occur during the first 30 days from closing if caused by construction debris. However, if a household item is removed from a clogged drain, we will bill you for the drain service.

Cosmetic Damage

We will correct any fixture damage noted during your homeowner orientation agenda. Repairing chips, scratches, or other surface damage noted subsequent to your homeowner orientation is your responsibility.

Outside Faucets

We will repair leaks at exterior faucets (hosebibs) noted on your homeowner orientation list. Subsequent to new home orientation, repair of a broken line to an exterior faucet is your responsibility. Damage caused by freezing when a hose is left on the faucet is specifically excluded from warranty coverage. Refer to *Outside Faucets* above for more information.

Freezing Pipes

Provided the home is heated at 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 drywall or floor covering damage, 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 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 thump or bang that can be heard throughout the home, resulting from the rapid closing of a valve, high water pressure, or 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

At closing you will receive a drawing that shows your home site and the location of your home on it.

To construct the home we established the property boundaries and corners. However, during construction, some of the property line markers may be affected or covered up 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.

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.

It is important to note that while another home in the neighborhood has railings, that does not necessarily mean railings are an included feature. Railings are typically installed in order to comply with building code. Seeing a different home in the community featuring railings does not entail that your home will have them as well. Unless specifically listed as an included feature in the features lists included in your purchase agreement, railings are not an included feature in an RNL Home.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your homeowner orientation we will confirm that all railings are in good condition. We install railings in positions and locations to comply 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 that they are free of debris and able to quickly drain precipitation runoff from the roof.

Leaks

If a leak occurs, try to detect the exact location. This will greatly simplify finding the area that requires repair when the roof is dry. It is recommended to check that all vents are sealed correctly once a year.

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 damages. 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. Check for driving rains and high winds – not under warranty.

See also Tapping

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, so do call in your roof leak.

- 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
 - 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 insurance company to submit a claim.
- Report the leak to us during 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 other than those caused by severe weather, such as hail damage, storms with winds up to 64 MPH or some action you have taken, such as walking on the roof. Roof repairs are made only when the roof is dry.

Severe Weather

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

Shower Doors or Tub Enclosures

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Caulk

Check caulking and touch-up as needed.

Cleaning

Use cleaning products suggested by the manufacturer to avoid any 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. Use a soft brush with a glass cleaner.

Towels

Avoid hanging wet towels on 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 the good condition of all shower doors and tub enclosures. 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. 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.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm the good condition of the siding during your new home orientation. Repair of subsequent damage to the siding will be your 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 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 our 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. We will test smoke detectors during your homeowner orientation to confirm that they are working and to familiarize you with the alarm.

Stairs

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

No known method of installation prevents all vibration or squeaks in a staircase. Where wood trim is included, a shrinkage separation can develop 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

We will confirm that stairs are in acceptable condition during your homeowner orientation. Normal wear and tear is non-warrantable (See floor coverings)

Stucco

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines



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

Drainage

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

Efflorescence

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

Sprinklers

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

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm that stucco is in acceptable condition during your homeowner orientation.

Cracks: One-time repair

One time during the warranty period, we will repair stucco cracks that exceed 1/16 inch. The appearance of the repair will vary from the surrounding area due to natural fading and dye lot differences.

Swimming Pools

All swimming pools need to be completed after move-in

Low-Voltage (Video/Audio)

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Your home is equipped with cable connections as shown on the blueprints and selection sheets. Initiating phone and/or cable/satellite service, additions to these services, and moving outlets for decorating purposes or convenience are your responsibilities. During home orientation, we make sure all window/door sensors are working.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will repair wiring that does not perform as intended from the cable service box into the home. From the service box outward, care of the wiring is the responsibility of the local service provider. Unless proof of wiring not performing properly via testing it in front of our trade contactor, we will not perform additional wiring work. It is rather common for security providers to say “your wiring does not work and I will have to reinstall the entire system in order for my alarm to work”.



Termites

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

We treat the foundation of your home for termites and provide you with a certificate confirming that treatment at closing. Plan to renew this treatment annually or as directed by the literature that accompanies the certificate. Treatment for other types of insects or animal infestations is your responsibility. Regularly inspect your home for signs of termites or conditions that would allow their attack.

- Check for wrinkles or waves in wood trim.
- Tap wood to see if it sounds or feels hollow.
- Watch for tubes of dirt, called mud tubes, which extend from the soil up to your home.
- Keep soil away from any wood parts of your home.
- Be certain all roof water and precipitation moves quickly away from your home's foundation.
- Avoid storing wood on the ground and against your home.
- Before installing stepping stones, river rock, concrete, or so on, against the home, chemically treat the area that will be underneath the new material.
- If you add onto or change the exterior of your home, be sure to have the areas treated first.

If you believe you see signs of termites or if you have any questions, contact your termite treatment company for guidance.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We certify treatment of your foundation for termites at closing. This is our final action for termites. Our warranty excludes treatment for any other insect (such as ants) or animal (such as mice) infestations. We suggest you have a pest control company spray quarterly.

See also Pests and Wildlife

Utility Locations

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Work that includes digging, augering, driving materials into the ground (for instance fence posts or stakes for concrete forms) or mechanical excavation, all require 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 damaged natural gas line calls 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 will be 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 creates a potential concern. 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 accumulation of moisture. Attic ventilation occurs through vents in the soffits (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 the entry of rain or snow. When proper ventilation is maintained, precipitation that blows in safely evaporates.

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

Water Heater-Electric

Homeowner Care and Maintenance Guidelines

Carefully read the manufacturer's literature and warranty for your specific model of water heater. We recommend hiring a professional plumber to drain and check your water heater once a year.

Drain Tank

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



Element Cleaning or Replacement

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

Pressure Relief Valve

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

Safety

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

Temperature

Temperature settings on an electric water heater will produce approximately the temperatures listed below:

Hot	120 degrees F
-----	---------------

We recommend temperature settings at 120 degrees F.

TROUBLE SHOOTING TIPS: NO HOT WATER

Before calling for service, check to confirm that 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 trouble shooting 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 model of water heater.

Safety

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



Temperature

A manufacturer recommended thermostat setting for everyday use is “normal,” or 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Higher settings can result in wasted energy dollars and increase the danger of injury from scalding.

Hot water will take longer to arrive at sinks, tubs, and showers that are farther from the water heater. 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 that the—

- 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 stop the function of the water heater. 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.

TRADITIONAL WATER HEATER

Drain Tank

Review and follow manufacturer's timetable and instructions for draining several gallons of water from the bottom of the water heater. This reduces the build-up of mineral deposits from the water, prolonging the life of the tank and saving energy dollars.

TANKLESS WATER HEATER

Cleaning

Turn the unit off and disconnect the electrical power supply. Wait for the water and equipment to cool down. Wipe the outside with a wet cloth; use a non-abrasive cleanser to remove any surface stains. Clean the remote controller with a damp cloth using just water. See manufacturer instructions for details on cleaning the cold water inlet filter and the air intake filter on your particular model.

Draining

Follow the manufacturer directions for timing and steps to draining your specific model of water heater.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

See also Plumbing



Windows, Screens, Sliding Glass Doors

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

Condensation

Condensation on interior surfaces of the window and frame is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures. Your family's lifestyle controls the humidity level within your home. Cleaning and repair of damage caused by condensation is your 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.

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 for smooth operation and to prevent damage to the doorframe. Silicone lubricants work well for these tracks. Acquaint yourself with the operation of sliding door hardware for maximum 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. You may also apply a silicone lubricant. This is available at hardware stores. Avoid petroleum-based products.

Tinting

Applying tinting or foil lining to dual pane windows can result in broken windows due to heat build-up. Some manufacturers void their warranty on the windows if you apply tinting or foil lining.

Weep Holes

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

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 agenda. Windows should operate with reasonable ease and locks should perform as designed. If they do not, we will provide adjustments.



Condensation

Condensation on interior surfaces of the window and frame is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures. You influence the humidity level within your home 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 the installation of landscaping 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 regarding flaws allowable in window glass. Cracked windows after the home orientation are non-warrantable.

See also Condensation and Ventilation

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 result in separation at joints of trim. This condition can usually be corrected with caulking or touch 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.



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

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

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your homeowner 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 touch up of the original finish. Such repairs may be visible under certain lighting conditions.

Gaps

We will correct gaps in excess of 1/16 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 floor (slate, some ceramic tiles, and so on) are unavoidable and are excluded from this repair.

Hammer Marks

We will correct hammer marks visible from a normal viewing position 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 exceed 1/16 inch. Where trim is painted, pieces should be flush and no raw wood should show. Separations that occur between two dissimilar materials that exceed 1/8 inch will be corrected. In most cases, the repair provided is caulking and touch up with 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 1.5 m (5 feet) *under normal lighting* conditions and from a *normal* viewing position.



EXTERIOR

Cracks: One-Time Repair

We will caulk and apply touch-up paint to cracks in exterior trim components that are visible from 6 m (20 feet) or that result in trim becoming detached one time near the end of the first year if needed. Paint or stain touch-up will vary from the surrounding area.

Raised Grain

Because of the effects of weather on natural wood, you should expect raised grain to develop. This is normal rather than a defect in the wood or paint; warranty coverage excludes this condition.

Resins

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

Separations

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

Home Care Supplies

You will find that caring for your home is much easier if you have necessary tools and supplies on hand. As you review the maintenance information in this homeowner guide and in the manufacturer materials, note the materials and tools you will need. Note sizes, colors, brands, sources, and so on to create a convenient inventory that will make shopping for home-care products easier. You may wish to make copies of this form before filling it out.

<i>Product</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Source</i>



Additional Warranty Coverage

Two-Year Systems & Building Envelope Warranty

We warrant that for two years from the date of closing the home will be free from defects in material or workmanship that result in

- A failure of the electrical, plumbing, or heating delivery and distribution systems
- Detachment, displacement, or deterioration of exterior cladding such as brick or siding

Report concerns related to this warranty coverage to your warranty office just as you did for one year warranty items.

Ten-Year Structural Warranty

The warranty coverage that comes with your home includes ten years of protection against defects that result in damage due to the failure of a load bearing component. Load bearing components include the piles, footings, foundation walls, grade beams, teleposts, load-bearing walls, beams, floor systems, and roof trusses.

Excluded Components

Items that are not load bearing components and which are therefore excluded from this ten year structural warranty are driveways, decks, and garage floors, patios, sidewalks, retaining walls, and all other concrete work which is not a load bearing component.

Complete Details

For more details on structural coverage, contact the warranty office.

Manufacturer Warranties

Please take 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 guide current. However, if any detail in our discussion conflicts with the manufacturer's recommendations, you should follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

Some manufacturer's 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 assures that in the event of a recall the company can contact you and arrange to provide the needed correction.

Appliance Warranty Service

The manufacturers of kitchen appliances have asked to work directly with you if any repairs are needed for their products. They may be able to resolve the issue by talking with you by phone and if they cannot, they prefer to set an appointment directly with you.



Customer service phone numbers are listed in the use and care materials for each appliance. Be prepared to provide the model and serial number of the item and the closing date on your home. A form is included in this homeowner guide so you can 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.



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): _____

<i>Appliance</i>	<i>Manufacturer</i>	<i>Model #</i>	<i>Serial #</i>	<i>Service Phone #</i>
Air Conditioner				
Compacter				
Cooktop				
Dishwasher				
Disposal				
Dryer				
Furnace				
Heat Pump				
Humidifier				
Microwave				
Oven				
Range				
Range Hood				
Refrigerator				
Washer				