

Your HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE



 **Caviness
& Cates**
Communities
Your Place to Call *Home*

 **CATES**
BUILDING, INC.

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Congratulations on purchasing your new home!

We share your excitement about your new residence and look forward to working with you.

We designed this *Homeowner Guide* to assist you during and after the purchase of your home. The information presented here will answer many questions and prepare you for each step of the new home experience, making this exciting time easier. Please bring this guide to all scheduled meetings.

In addition to guiding you through the process of purchasing and building, this book provides you with maintenance information and a description of our home warranty guidelines, component by component. We recommend that you take time to review this material thoroughly.

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

Sincerely,



Andrew K. Benbow
Director of Customer Service
Caviness & Cates, Cates Building



Your Feedback and Referrals

Our desire to maintain open communication with you extends through the buying process and after your move-in. In an effort to improve the product and service we provide, we welcome your comments on how we've performed. We survey our customers after move-in. Our goal is to build the best home and the best customer relationship possible. Your feedback helps us reach that goal.

Approximately one month after your closing, you will receive a survey via email from an independent customer satisfaction survey organization, such as Avid Ratings. The questionnaire covers the new home process. Your candid responses to this are much appreciated.

You may receive a second survey approximately six months after this first one. This questionnaire focuses on quality and warranty service. Again, your time and thoughts are valuable to us as a means to improve.

As time passes, if your housing needs change, we are ready at any time to build you another home. We also appreciate your referrals. Our office is always happy to provide you with information about where we are currently building and the products we offer.

Meet the Builders

Our Roots

Founded in 1999, **Caviness and Cates** has grown from building a few homes a year to being listed as one of the nation's "Top 100" Builders. Our success has been achieved by building a team of employees that understand customer service and trade partners that value a quality product.

The Foundation

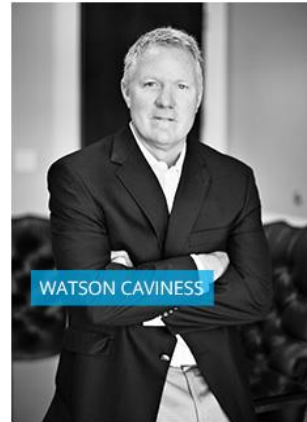
Our customer is our foundation. A home is one of the larger purchases made in life. Tied to this investment is more than a dollar figure; there are opinions, beliefs, emotions... A sense that we as the builders, will treat their home as a priority, and that the voices of our customers will be heard and respected. Our business depends on our customer's happiness and our foundation is based on that guarantee.

In the Backyard

With a home office centrally located to the areas where we build in the Carolinas, we live and build in our own backyard. We handpick our neighborhoods and have formed strong relationships with the most reputable subcontractors and product vendors. Most importantly, we encourage our future homeowners to participate in every stage of our building process. From visiting neighborhood model homes to selecting finishes in our Fayetteville Design Studio, it's all within a short drive.

For the long haul

We have had the good fortune to be recognized for the 9th consecutive year by Builder Magazine as one of the "Top 100" Builders in the nation. Although this list has been an industry staple for over 30 years, what it symbolizes to us is the strength and stability of our company. We aren't going anywhere... We intend to be here to build and continue to support our current homeowners in to the future and beyond!



Cates Building

Founded in 1996 in Fayetteville, NC, Chris Cates, who started as a local general contractor has taken a "customer first" approach which has helped him establish and grow a highly successful Building Company. Now building in communities across the Carolinas, Cates Building continues to build high-quality affordable homes and strives to give customers the most pleasant buying experience possible.

Chapter 1

Purchasing Your Home

New Home Specialist

One of the first people you will meet in your new home search is your New Home Specialist.

The purchase of a new home is a unique and emotional experience. We are committed to making the home buying process pleasant and exciting. One way to achieve this is to consolidate as many activities as possible under the responsibility of one person.

At Caviness and Cates we take great pride in the New Home Specialists who represent us. They are thoroughly knowledgeable in all areas regarding the purchase of a new home and will be able to assist you in the purchase, construction and closing phases of your new home buying process.

Your New Home Specialist will provide you with information to help you through your home buying process and address any questions/concerns you may have along the way. Your New Home Specialist will arrange any contact with the Project Manager. Due to safety and liability concerns it is necessary for you to coordinate and schedule any home site visits with your New Home Specialist.

Communicating With Us

Your **New Home Specialist is your Point of Contact** for the duration of your new home buying process. **Addressing questions or concerns with personnel other than your Point of Contact may delay or hinder resolution.** We are pleased you have chosen us and are working directly with one of our New Home Specialists or one of our valued partner Realtors. We ask that your New Home Consultant be your main point of contact during your new home buying experience. This will ensure consistency and give us the greatest opportunity to exceed your expectations.

Put it in Writing

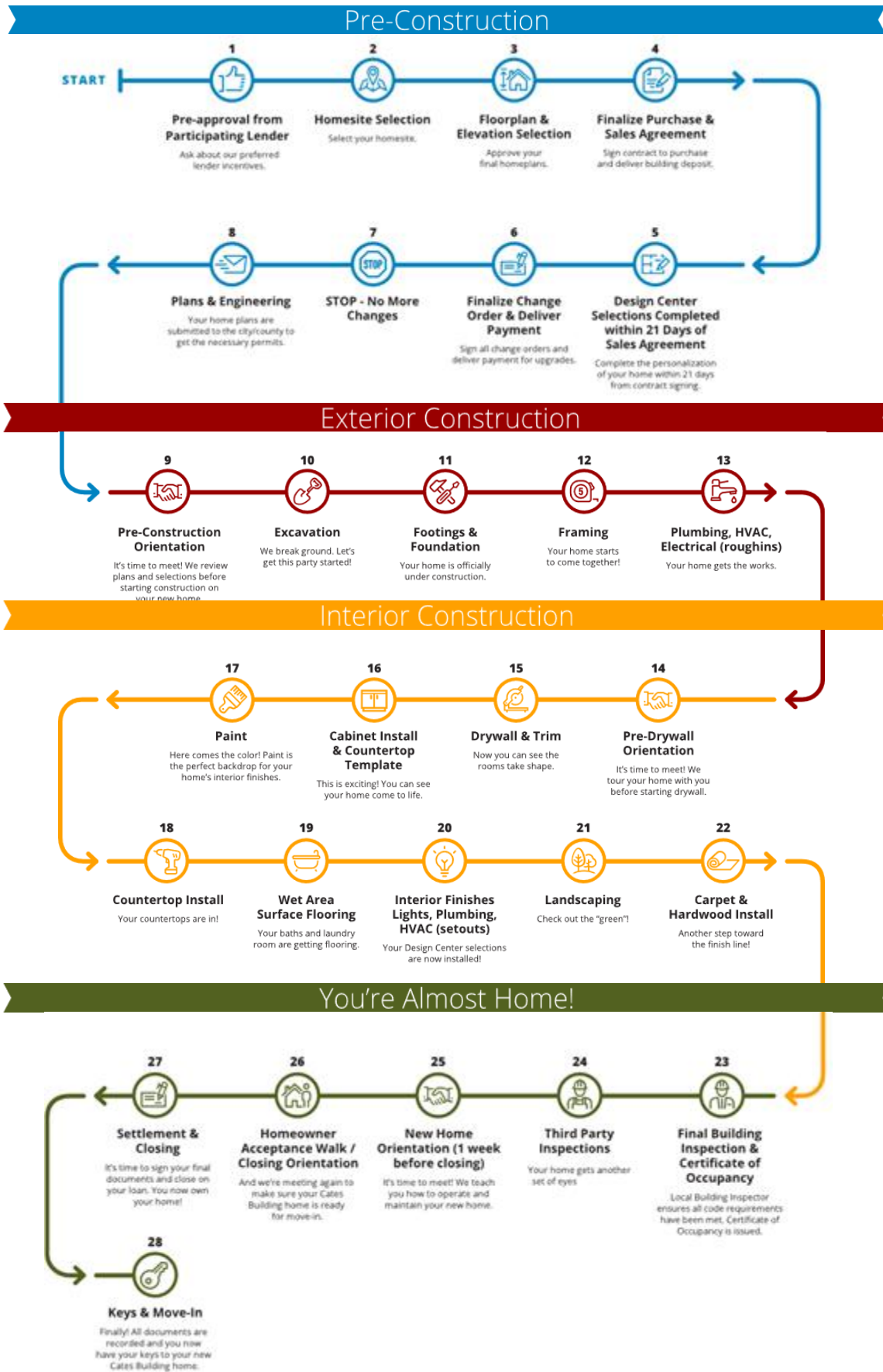
Our goal is to eliminate any confusion, misunderstandings, or even forgotten agreements that are sometimes a result of verbal communication. **Please make all requests are in writing and make sure you get your responses from us in writing.** Please inform your New Home Specialist if you do not receive a written response to any of your requests. Acceptable documentations include emails.

Pathway to your New Home and Construction Sequence

The specific sequence of construction steps can vary somewhat and in later stages, interior and exterior work occurs simultaneously. Generally we build your home in the following order:

1. Pre-approval from Caviness & Cates or Cates Building Participating Lender
2. Lot selection / Purchase (45 days if purchase is necessary)
3. Floorplan and Elevation selection
4. **Finalize Purchase and Sales Agreement***
5. **Design Center Selections***
6. Finalize change orders, and deliver deposit
7. STOP – no more changes
8. Plans & Engineering
9. **Pre-Construction Orientation***
10. Excavation
11. Footings & Foundation
12. Framing & Roofing
13. Mechanical Systems Rough-In (Plumbing, HVAC, Electrical)
14. **Pre-Drywall Orientation or Frame Stage Tour***
15. Insulation, Drywall & Trim
16. Cabinet Install & Countertop Template
17. Paint
18. Countertop Install
19. Wet Area surface flooring
20. Interior Finishes Lights, plumbing, HVAC (setouts)
21. Landscaping
22. Carpet & Hardwood Install
23. Final Inspection
24. Third Party Inspections – Quality Inspection & HERS Rating
25. **Home Owner Orientation*** (1 week before closing)
26. **Confirmation Tour*** (acceptance)
27. **Settlement & Closing***
28. Keys & Move-In

****Meetings you are invited to attend***



Pre-approval from Preferred Lender

When you use our preferred lenders, some of the most knowledgeable people in the industry go to work for you to search out the best range of financing programs in the market and then adapt those programs to your specific needs. If you have specific needs due to past credit, income, or employment alternative challenges, our preferred lenders will recommend financing options. Prior to writing your purchase agreement, your New Home Specialist will put you in touch with our preferred lenders for pre-qualification purposes. You will be expected to complete a loan application within five (5) business days from the date of your contract. Your loan application can be done online or directly with your Mortgage Planner. In either case, your Mortgage Planner will go over all of your information, present the available loan programs, and discuss the loan process.

The Advantages of Using Our Preferred Lenders

- Accountability to Caviness & Cates and Cates Building. The preferred lenders communicate directly with your New Home Specialist about loan status, construction status, and closing. We work together with our preferred lenders to make sure you are receiving outstanding service.
- One-stop shopping. Our preferred lenders offer a wide variety of programs including special financing alternatives.
- Prompt, professional service. Our preferred lenders have a highly professional staff with years of experience, facilitating a smoother mortgage process.
- Accurate good faith estimates. Full disclosure of buyer closing costs.
- Incentives. Special incentives are offered in our communities for home buyers who obtain financing through our preferred lenders. If any other lender is used, these incentives are not available.

Finalize Purchase and Sales Agreement

Your New Home Specialist will walk you through the Purchase Agreement to ensure all parts are filled out correctly and all pertinent items are covered. The purchase agreement is the legal document that represents your decision to purchase a home. It describes your home (both a legal description and the street address), financing information, homeowner association information, if applicable, and additional legal provisions. We recommend that you read these documents carefully.

Purchase Agreement - Meeting Details

Appointment Set by: Buyer's Agent or New Home Specialist

Appointments Available: As needed

Where: Sales Office

Attendees: Purchasers, Buyer's Agent

Length: 60-90 minutes, depending on your questions

Purpose: Document your decision to purchase a new home and provide an overview of the new home process

Preparation: List any questions you wish to discuss; Arrive prepared to make your earnest money deposit

Preliminary Closing Date

We recognize that timing is vitally important in planning your move. We can specify an exact delivery date when construction reaches a point at which weather and other factors are unlikely to affect completion of your home. This usually occurs approximately one month before the confirmed possession date. Until then, many factors can influence the schedule:

- Weather can delay getting the foundation in and can affect framing, roofing, and exterior finish.
- Material shortages and labor availability may also affect the construction schedule.
- If you are delayed in responding to a request from your lender, this can affect work progress.
- Change requests signed after selections were completed can impact the construction schedule.
- Delays in municipal inspections can add time to the schedule as well.

Design Center Selections

Part of the fun of buying a new home is selecting features, finish materials, and colors. You will make these choices at our design center. Once your purchase agreement has been accepted, your New Home Specialist will schedule your selections meeting.

Plans and Specifications

Take as much time as you need to visit the model homes with your New Home Specialist to become familiar with all of our included features. In addition, notice the variety of selected features displayed in each model for your consideration. If you visited one of our other communities to see an example of a floor plan not shown as a model in the community where your new home will be built, take special care to study the specifications as they often vary from community to community. Your New Home Specialist will assist you.

Included Features

Each floor plan includes a substantial number of appealing features and materials as listed on the model feature sheet available from our sales center. Please review this information carefully to prevent any misunderstandings about which features are included in the base price of your new home. To delete an included feature, document that decision on your selection sheets. If you have any questions, your new Home Specialist will be able to assist you.

Selected Features

Based on feedback from our customers, we have assembled a collection of the most popular choices that are available for the home plans in your new community. This list and the current pricing of these items are available from your New Home Specialist. Pricing and the available selections are updated regularly based on feedback from our customers; the list applicable on the date you sign your purchase agreement will apply to your home.

Custom Features

The possibilities for your new home far exceed the popular ideas we suggest on our available selections list. In addition to the available choices, you may have custom features you want us to consider incorporating into your new home.

Think, dream, imagine, look—we will assist you in any way that we can to make these decisions as early as possible. Please keep in mind that your new neighbors have this same opportunity and may request still other features. We make no claim

that we mention or offer every possible idea. Requests for custom features are documented in detail on a change request as described later in this chapter.

Selection Process & Paperwork

We provide you with selection sheets that list the choices you need to make. Schedule a time to visit the design center for a preview and to meet with a design consultant to finalize your choices as soon as possible. **Plan to finalize your selections within 14 days of signing your purchase agreement.**

Informed Choices

We recommend that you review the maintenance tasks and warranty guidelines in Chapter 4, *Caring for Your Home*, prior to finalizing your selection decisions.

Be Thorough

Our selection sheets are very detailed. Fill in all blanks completely. Costly errors arise from assumptions and incomplete selection sheets. After completing this form, double-check all color numbers and names then sign and date each page.

Colors

You are welcome to bring cushions or swatches to showrooms to coordinate colors. View color samples in both natural and artificial light to get an accurate impression of the color. Variations between samples and actual material installed can occur. This is because of the manufacturer's coloring process (dye lots) and the fact that over time, sunlight and other environmental factors affect the samples. Some colors will appear different when seen in a large area as opposed to the sample.

Exterior Choices

Your homeowner association and selections your future neighbors have made may limit your choices for exterior finish materials or colors. The sooner you make your selections, the more choices you have. Viewing existing homes is one way to select exterior colors. Selections often look different on a full-size home. Some colors require extra coverage which can impact the cost.

Selection Hold

We reserve the right to place a hold on your selections until your lender has approved your loan and all contingencies are released. Occasionally, a home is already under construction and we have made some or all of these choices.

Availability

If a selection you make turns out to be unavailable, we will contact you and request that you make a different selection. Because so many choices are offered, anyone would be unable to predict when a particular manufacturer or supplier may discontinue any particular item. We regret any inconvenience this causes. Similarly, materials readily available when your home is built may not be available in years to come if replacements are needed.

Record of Selections

Please retain your selection sheets for future reference. They are useful for matching paint colors, tile grout, and replacement items in your home.

Selection Appointment - Meeting Details

Appointment Set by: Design Center

Appointments Available: As needed

Where: Design Center

Attendees: Purchasers, Design Consultant, a real estate agent (when applicable) is welcome but not required to attend

Length: 3-4 hours

Purpose: Select and document choices for your new home

Preparation: Take time to enjoy a preview visit to become familiar with the Design Center and the choices available. Bring color samples, notes, photos of items that will influence choices. Bring any questions you wish to discuss.

Change Requests

Although we strongly encourage you to finalize all your choices at the selections meeting, we do offer you the flexibility to request a change to your initial selections or upgrades at a later time. This is a request and must be accepted by us before the change order is final. Understand that Change Orders are costly and may cause delays to the completion of your home.

Note: All changes made after a home has started must be paid for in advance by the customer and are nonrefundable.

A \$500 Administrative/Change Order fee is assessed for all requests. You will be notified of the disposition of your request within 2 business days. The final change order price for an approved change may include fees for demolition, restocking fees, trip charges, re-inspection fees, time delays, and additional vendor charges associated with product specification changes. The administrative change order fee will be refunded for all changes not accepted.

Change Request Schedule

Throughout construction, your home will reach several milestones which determine the available options we can offer. Once a milestone has been reached, certain options are no longer available due to stage of construction and option lead times. The Selections Policy identifies the construction milestone cutoff points for available options:

Changes affecting:

Windows, doors, cabinets, elevation

Mechanical systems, appliances, floor coverings

Texture, hardware, lighting

Interior trim

Should be made prior to:

Foundation

Framing

Mechanical rough-ins

Insulation

Chapter 2

Construction of Your Home

The construction of a new home differs from other manufacturing processes in several ways. By keeping these differences in mind, you can enjoy observing the construction process as we build your new home.

- You have more opportunity for input into the design and finish details of a new home than for most other products. Our success in personalizing your home depends on effective and timely communication of your choices.
- Because of the time required for construction, you have many opportunities to view your home as it is built, ask questions, and discuss details.
- As a consumer, you rarely have the opportunity to watch as the products you purchase are created. Unlike other products that are created in a setting where mistakes can be corrected before the product leaves the factory, you will be able to watch as items are installed and corrections are made along the way.

Start of Construction

Before construction of your home can begin, we have several important tasks to accomplish that involve outside people and entities. For example, your selections or change requests may necessitate an update to floor plans, elevations, trade contractor schedules, and material orders. Approved change requests that involve structural (load bearing) elements of your home require review by an engineer. This must be completed prior to applying for a building permit and can take from several days to several weeks. Next, residential construction requires that we obtain a building permit. The application process can take from a few days to many weeks depending on the volume of applications being processed by the building department where volume varies from month to month. **Selecting a home that has already been permitted can reduce the time to start construction.** The time of year and related weather conditions may also affect the start date and early stages of construction.

Pre-Construction Orientation

You will have the opportunity to meet with your Project Manager twice during the construction process. The first of these is a Pre-Construction Orientation (the second will be a Pre-Drywall Orientation of Frame Stage Tour). We will discuss such things as site visit protocols, how to handle questions, trade contractor communication, change requests, and target delivery date. (See the following sample form we will use). Please bring any questions you have and this guide with you to this meeting.

Pre-Construction Orientation - Meeting Details

Appointment Set by: Builder Sales Representative

Appointments Available: Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Where: Community sales center

Attendees: Purchasers, Sales consultant, and Project Manager

Length: 60-90 minutes, depending on your questions

Purposes: Review plans, specifications, selections and change requests. Discuss what you should expect during the construction process. Outline construction site safety, site visit protocols, and how to handle questions.

Preparation: List any questions you wish to discuss. Bring your selections list and this guide.

PRE-CONSTRUCTION ORIENTATION

Community:	Lot Number:
House Plan:	Elevation:
Buyer:	Project Manager:
Listing Agent:	Date:

The Following Items must be reviewed and initialed prior to the start of construction:

Contract Review:

- _____ Contract & Coversheet
- _____ New Start Sheet (Contract Modifications, Interior/Exterior Selections, Review Color Mini's)
- _____ Redlined Plan with All Changes
- _____ Low Voltage Locations
- _____ Review Who to Contact for Pricing, Questions, Concerns

Lot Review:

- _____ Plot Plan (Foundation Type, Garage Hand, Setbacks, Utilities/Easements, Driveways/Walks, Deck/Porch/Patio Placement)
- _____ Drainage
- _____ Sewer/Septic

Schedule Review: *Dates are estimated only, subject to change

- _____ *Estimated Footing/Box Date _____
- _____ *Estimated Pre-Drywall Orientation Date _____
- _____ Possible Delays (Weather, Inspections, Late Changes)
- _____ Review How to Schedule an Onsite Meeting with Project Manager
- _____ Review 4 Orientation Meetings

The Items Above Have Been Reviewed with A Builder Representative and All Parties Agree That All Pre-Construction Items Have Been Addressed and that the Construction Process Can Continue.

Customer Signature: _____

Project Manager Signature: _____

You, as our valued customer, are our most important asset. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns. Thank you for choosing Caviness & Cates / Cates Building as your homebuilder of choice.

Safety

We understand that you will want to visit your new home between these construction reviews. A new home construction site is exciting and can also be dangerous. Your safety is of prime importance to us. Therefore, we must require that you contact us before visiting your site. We reserve the right to require that you wear a hard hat and that a member of our staff accompany you during your visit. Please observe common sense safety procedures at all times when visiting:

- Keep older children within view and younger children within reach, or make arrangements to leave them elsewhere when visiting your homesite.
- Do not walk backward, even one step. Look in the direction you are moving at all times.
- Watch for boards, cords, tools, nails, or other construction materials that might cause tripping, puncture wounds, or other injury.
- Do not enter any level of a home that is not yet equipped with stairs and rails.
- Stay a minimum of six feet from all excavations.
- Give large, noisy grading equipment or delivery vehicles plenty of room. Assume that the driver can neither see nor hear you.

In addition to safety considerations, be aware that mud, paint, drywall compound, and other construction materials are in use and can get onto your shoes or clothing.

Pre-Drywall Orientation or Frame Stage Tour

This is the second opportunity to meet with the Project Manager during the construction process. Many buyers appreciate the opportunity to tour their home just after the rough mechanical stage, before insulation. The rooms have begun to take shape but the inner workings are still visible. Here you can see the quality that we build into the walls of your home.

Although the time to make changes has passed, this meeting provides all of us with an opportunity to confirm that we are correctly installing your selections. We will also update you on the target delivery date during the frame tour.

As with the pre-construction conference, your pre-drywall frame tour is scheduled by your buyers' agent. You will meet your builder at your new home. Frame tours usually take around 30-45 minutes. (Please see the following sample form we will use). Please remember to bring this homeowner guide, selection sheets, and any approved change request.

Please understand that if for any reason you are unavailable to attend this meeting, we will continue with construction.

Pre-Drywall (Frame Stage) Tour - Meeting Details

Appointment Set by: Builder Sales Representative

Appointments Available: Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.; Friday 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Where: Your new home

Attendees: Purchasers, Project Manager, Builder Sales Representative

Length: 30-45 minutes, depending on your questions

Purposes: Review exterior and interior quality. Confirm installation of selections up to this point. Set or finalize the delivery date target

Preparation: List any questions you wish to discuss. Bring your selection materials and this homeowner guide. Wear shoes and clothing appropriate to an active construction site.

PRE-DRYWALL ORIENTATION

Community:	Lot Number:
House Plan:	Elevation:
Buyer:	Project Manager:
Listing Agent:	Date:

The following items must be reviewed and initialed prior to the start of drywall

- _____ Review contract with buyer(s) and realtor – make sure all changes are in place per contract
- _____ Walk buyer(s) outside of home – verify exterior paint and/or vinyl color are per selection
- _____ Walk buyer(s) inside of home – verify locations of phone and cable outlet are in the correct _____ place and all additional framing is correct per contract if applicable.
- _____ Review with buyer(s) that all selections have been made at this time
- _____ Review any concern buyer(s) may have on Warranty Manual – (Remind buyer(s) to review warranty manual on our website)
- _____ Inform buyer(s) and realtor that at time No Changes or Additions can be made at this stage of construction once sheetrock is installed
- _____ Establish closing date with buyer(s) and realtor **Closing Date:** _____

Comments: _____

The Items Above Have Been Reviewed with A Builder Representative and All Parties Agree That All Pre-Drywall Items Have Been Addressed and that the Construction Process Can Continue.

Customer Signature: _____

Project Manager Signature: _____

You, as our valued customer, are our most important asset. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns. Thank you for choosing Caviness & Cates / Cates Building as your homebuilder of choice.

Construction Schedule

The delivery date for your new home begins as an estimate. Until the roof is on and the structure is enclosed, weather can dramatically affect the delivery date. Even after the home itself is past the potential for weather-related delays, weather can severely impact installation of utility services, grading, and concrete flatwork, to mention a few examples. Extended periods of wet weather or freezing temperatures bring work to a stop in an entire region.

When favorable conditions return, the trades go back to work, picking up where they left off. Please understand that they are as eager as you are to get caught up and to see progress on your home.

"Nothing's Happening"

Expect several days during construction of your home when it appears that nothing is happening. This can occur for a number of reasons.

Lead Time

Each trade is scheduled days or weeks in advance of the actual work. This period is referred to as "lead time." Time is allotted for completing each trade's work on your home. Sometimes, one trade completes its work a bit ahead of schedule. The next trade already has an assigned time slot, which usually cannot be changed on short notice.

Building Department Inspections

Progress also pauses while the home awaits building department inspections. This is part of the planned sequence of the construction steps and occurs at several points in every home.

Detail Work

Additionally, throughout construction of a home, work progresses rapidly at times as highly visible stages are completed (such as installing large expanses of walls) and more slowly at others (such as detail work to frame soffits and closets). If you have questions about the pace of work, please contact your sales consultant.

Delivery Date Updates

We recognize that timing is critical to planning your move. Although a guaranteed date is unrealistic in the early stages of construction, we can provide regular updates. We will give you an estimated delivery date at each of our construction meetings. You are also welcome to check with your sales consultant between meetings for the most current target date.

As completion nears, more factors come under our control and we can be more precise about your delivery date. Expect delivery (closing) dates to be set at the Pre-Drywall (Frame Stage) Tour. We suggest that, until you receive this commitment, you avoid finalizing arrangements for your move. Until then, flexibility is the key to comfort, sanity, and convenience. We want you to enjoy this process and avoid unnecessary stress caused by uncertainty that is unavoidable.

Please keep in mind that your belongings may be brought into the home and garage only after the closing because of insurance and building department regulations.

Locks and Keys

Once exterior doors and locks are installed, we will access your home with a construction master key. Our company policy prohibits staff members from loaning these keys to purchasers or their agents without written authorization from us. When you take possession, your locks will be keyed out to only your keys, and the construction master keys will no longer open your home.

Plans and Specifications

The building department of the municipality where your home is to be located must review and approve the plans and specifications for your home. We then construct your home to comply with these approved plans and specifications. They become part of our agreements with trade contractors and suppliers. Only written instructions from us can change these contracts. Even with this detailed documentation, each home is still unique. Many factors can cause variations between the m you viewed and the home we deliver to you:

Regulatory Changes

From time to time, municipal agencies adopt new codes or regulations that can affect your home. Such changes are usually adopted in the interest of safety and are legal requirements with which Caviness & Cates / Cates Building must comply. Therefore, our on-site builders may construct the same floor plan slightly differently in two different jurisdictions or at two different times within the same jurisdiction.

Individual Foundation Designs

Another area where variations among homes can appear is in the foundation system. The foundation design is specific to each home. Based on the results of a soil test, an engineer determines which foundation system is appropriate. Because of variations in soil conditions among home sites, your foundation may differ from your neighbors' foundations or that of the same floor plan in another community.

Topography and Home Site Conditions

Because each home site is shaped differently, the position of your home on the site may vary from others in the community. You will receive a copy of a site plan, a drawing that shows you the home's position on your home site, at your preconstruction conference. In addition, the exterior elevations of each home are affected by the topography, or surface contours, of your home site. For instance, slope on the site may affect the configuration of the driveway and walks, as well as the number of steps, and where rails occur. Exterior finish varies in accordance with the slope on the site and retaining walls are sometimes needed for extreme conditions.

Existing Trees

We identify any existing trees on your home site that must be removed to create room for your home, drive, and so on. Our construction practices include steps intended to preserve other trees in a healthy condition. However, because the reaction of trees to construction activities and your new home are outside our control, we are unable to guarantee the health or survival of any existing trees.

Utilities and Mailboxes

The location of meters, phone and electrical junction boxes, and mailboxes are examples of items outside of our control. The authority of the utility companies and the postal service to designate the placement of these items is well established.

Changes in Materials, Products, and Methods

The new home industry, building trades, and product manufacturers are continually working to improve methods and products. In addition, manufacturers sometimes make model changes that can impact the final product. For instance, appliance manufacturers generally make design changes every year. The model homes will contain the appliances that were current when they were built although your home may have a more recent version.

In all instances, as stated in your purchase agreement, any substitution of method or product that we make will be of equal or better quality than that shown in our models. Since such substitutions or changes may become necessary because of matters outside our control, we reserve the right to make them without notification.

Model Homes

Our models display many decorator items, window coverings, and furnishings. Mature landscaping, extra walks, fences, lighting, fountains, signs, and flags are other examples of items which are not part of the home we will be building for you. Please carefully review your home's specifications as well as information we provide about available choices displayed in the models to avoid misunderstandings. Contact your sales consultant with any questions.

Measurements

Because finish sizes can vary slightly, you should measure for window coverings in your home rather than in any model.

Television and the Internet

You may be aware of various home construction methods and materials from watching television programs or exploring the Internet. We routinely review new approaches with a focus on building homes with materials and methods that perform predictably and to our standards. While we will be happy to discuss alternative methods and materials you may be interested in, we take a conservative approach to utilizing new methods or products until they have been proven over time. In addition, consider that what is appropriate for a home in one area may be inappropriate for your new home because of soil, climate, and other conditions.

Natural Variations

Dozens of trade contractors work to assemble your home. The same individuals rarely work on every home and, even if they did, each one would still be unique. The exact placement of switches, outlets, registers, and so on will vary slightly from the model and other homes of the same floor plan.

Quality

Our company will build your new home to the quality standards described in our documents and demonstrated in our model homes. Each new home is a handcrafted product—combining art, science, and raw labor. The efforts of many people with varying degrees of knowledge, experience, and skill come together.

Quality Assurance

From time to time during a process that takes several months, involves dozens of people, and occurs exposed to weather conditions, an error or omission may occur. We have systems and procedures for inspecting our homes to ensure that the level of quality meets our requirements. We inspect every step of construction and are responsible for quality control. In addition, the county, city, or an engineer conducts a number of inspections at different stages of construction. Your home must pass each inspection before construction continues.

Our Quality Assurance Program begins during the preparation for your foundation and continues through completion. It is designed to assure you that your new home is built to our standard of excellence. The final step in our program is an extensive, detailed inspection by a licensed third-party Home Inspector with over 20 years of experience. This Quality

Inspection includes a checklist of over 400 inspection points. We strive to have any deficiencies corrected prior to your Pre-Closing Orientation.

In addition to the third-party inspection provided by Caviness & Cates or Cates Building, some home buyers choose to employ a personal Licensed Home Inspector. Please refer to the following Home Inspector Authorization section for more information.

Your Questions

We also respect your interest and appreciate your attachment to the new home. Therefore, your input into our system is welcome. However, to avoid duplication of efforts, confusion, misunderstandings, or compounding errors, we ask that you first check your purchase documents to review what you ordered and the specifications for construction of your home. If you still believe we are in error, do one of two things:

- Bring your concern up at the pre-drywall (frame stage) tour.
- Contact your sales consultant, in writing, with your question. You are welcome to use one of the *Home Buyer Inquiry* forms included at the end of this chapter. We will note the date and time it was received and will respond within two business days unless we notify you that additional time is needed. (Additional forms are available at your sales center.)

Also keep the following points in mind once you have notified us of a concern:

- Your concern may involve a detail we have already noticed or appreciates your pointing out. Still, correction may not occur immediately. Trades and suppliers often impose trip charges for extra visits to the home site so to be efficient, we may schedule the correction for the next routine visit. Also, a particular trade may be unavailable on short notice.
- Work may simply be incomplete; an early stage can look wrong and be correct when complete.
- Methods and materials vary from region to region and change over time. When you are familiar with one method, you naturally question a different one. That does not make the new method wrong. Ask questions until you are comfortable.

“Ugly Duckling” Stages

During the construction process, every new home experiences days when it is not at its best. Homes under construction endure wind, rain, snow, foot traffic, and activities that generate noise, dust, and trash. Material scraps are a byproduct of the process. Although your new home is cleaned by each trade upon completion of their portion of the work, during your visits you will encounter some messy moments. During the build process we can expect inevitable occurrences such as broken windows, damaged siding, drywall damage, etc. These items may not be repaired immediately depending on the trades scheduled to work on your home at a given time. Keep in mind that the model homes you toured also once endured these “ugly duckling” stages.

Single Source

Our company is a single source company. That means that we select all personnel and companies who supply materials to or work in your new home. We order all materials and products from suppliers with whom we have established relationships. Trade contractors who work on our sites are subject to review and evaluation by construction and warranty personnel. They are also required by our trade agreements to attend safety training and company meetings.

Although sweat equity arrangements are unavailable as a part of our purchase agreement, you are welcome to add your personal touches to the home after you close and take possession of it.

Trade Contractors

Your home is built through the combined efforts of specialists in many trades—from excavation and foundation, through framing, mechanicals, and insulation, to drywall, trim, and finish work. In order to ensure our standard of construction, only authorized suppliers, trade contractors, and our company employees are permitted to perform work in your home.

Each trade contractor works on a limited portion of the home; they are unaware of all the details that affect the home and are therefore unable to offer accurate judgments.

Suppliers and trade contractors have no authority to enter into agreements for our company. For your protection and theirs, the terms of our trade contractor agreements prohibit alterations without written authorization from our company. Their failure to comply with this procedure can result in termination of their contract. All questions or requests for changes should go through us. We will obtain input from trades when that is appropriate.

Private Home Inspections and Radon Tests

If you wish to retain the services of a private home inspector to review your home during or at the end of construction, please be aware of our policies regarding private home inspectors. These are listed in your General Builders Addendum, and on the Home Inspector Authorization which you will find following this section. Please review the requirements carefully prior to retaining any home inspector.

The Home Inspector Authorization form should be completed by the inspector you hire and submitted to your sales consultant prior to scheduling a home inspection or radon test. **Any reports should be completed and submitted to the Builders' Sales Representative a minimum of two weeks prior to closing.**

We will address concerns involving building code or contract issues only. If any radon test results are higher than EPA recommendations then we will mitigate and retest as needed. Design details that are a matter of taste and style are outside the areas appropriate for comment by an inspector.

Home Inspector Authorization

Buyer: _____

Lot # _____ Community: _____

Address: _____

Projected Closing Date: _____

Requested Home Inspection Date and Time: _____

Our company welcomes visits by a private home inspector you retain for that purpose provided that he/she has registered with our main office as detailed below. Please review our policies carefully. Your inspector—

- ☐ Must provide us with evidence of current worker's compensation and liability insurance.
- ☐ Must be a member of a professional association such as the American Society of Home Inspectors.
- ☐ Must be experienced with new home construction.
- ☐ Is responsible for staying informed as to the stage of construction the home has reached.
- ☐ Should NOT make any markings on the home itself.
- ☐ Should provide you and our company with a written report of any concerns.

Ask your inspector to complete this form, attach the required documentation, and deliver it to your sales office a minimum of two weeks prior to any desired site visit appointment.

Your superintendent will permit an inspector to visit only after company approval has been issued. We will address questions involving building code or your purchase agreement documents only.

Inspector Use

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

Office phone _____ Email _____

Cell phone _____ Fax _____

Caviness & Cates / Cates Building Use

License _____

Insurance _____

Approved date _____ By _____

Scheduled _____

Homeowner Orientation

Your homeowner orientation is an introduction to your new home and its many features. We follow a preplanned agenda and a set route through the home to assure that we cover everything. Our homeowner orientation provides you with a—

- Demonstration of your new home.
- Review of key points about maintenance and home warranty coverage.
- Confirmation that
 - The overall quality of your home is equal to the overall quality of our model homes.
 - We installed selections as you ordered them.
 - Small parts (such as the kitchen sink strainer) are present.
 - Applicable manufacturer documents are included.
 - All cosmetic surfaces are in good and acceptable condition.

Quality

The overall quality of your home should equal that shown in our models and described in your purchase documents. We list action items for further attention and arrange appropriate work. Orientation typically items fall into several categories:

- Incomplete or missing (Cabinet knob needed, left of range)
- Incorrect (Porch light should be oil rubbed bronze, not satin nickel)
- Dysfunctional (Bath fan does not come on)
- Below company standard (Mitered corner rough, top right of master bedroom door, hallway side)
- Damaged (Scrape on wall from carpet installation)
- Soiled (Mud on garage floor)

At some point, quality ceases to be scientific and becomes a matter of personal taste. In a few areas, your personal standards may be even higher than ours. Our commitment to you is that we will deliver what we promised. If you wish to make it even better after moving in, we will be happy to assist you with information.

Last Minute Activity

If you visit your home a day or two prior to orientation, you may notice dozens of details that need attention. During the last few days just prior to your orientation appointment, many trades people and our company employees will be working in your home. They are completing last-minute adjustments and fine-tuning your home. These finishing touches cannot be performed until all of the parts have been installed. What seems like a rush of activity is a normal part of the construction process.

Cosmetic Surfaces

Cosmetic surface damage caused during construction is readily noticeable during the orientation. Such damage can also occur during the move-in process or through daily activities. Therefore, during your orientation, we will confirm that all surfaces are in good and acceptable condition. Details that need attention will be listed on your orientation forms.

Repair of cosmetic surface damage that occurs after move-in is your responsibility. Our home warranty specifically excludes repairs for damage caused by moving in or living in the home. If your movers scratch the floor, notify the moving company. If you slide a packing box across a counter and a staple scratches the surface, repair of the counter is your responsibility.

We are always available to assist you with information about cosmetic repairs you may need to make. Additional details appear on the orientation agenda.

Seasonal Work

Any construction tasks that cannot be completed during the winter months are classified as “seasonal” meaning that they will be completed when weather permits in the spring and summer. These circumstances create additional responsibilities for both of us.

We maintain a list of all seasonal work that remains on homes delivered during the winter. Our trades receive copies of these lists so that they can plan the most efficient way of completing seasonal work. This sometimes means that jobs will be done one neighborhood at a time, instead of in the chronological order in which the houses were delivered.

Factors that affect seasonal work include temperature, precipitation, frost penetration, and the inspection process. If your lot faces north on the property it may take a lot longer for the ground to thaw versus your neighbor who has a south facing driveway.

Scheduling

We schedule the orientation with you as your home nears completion, typically several days before your closing. Appointments are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Especially in winter months, beginning by 3:00 p.m. assures sufficient day light to view all surfaces adequately. We meet at your new home. Expect your orientation to take approximately two hours.

Preparation

Following these hints will assure that you get the maximum benefit from your orientation. Of all the meetings we host with home buyers, this one is probably the most detailed and many would agree it is the most important.

Allow Enough Time

Arrange your schedule so you can use the full amount of time allotted—we plan on two hours.

Bring this Guide

By bringing this guide, including your selection sheets and any approved change requests with you, any questions about the items installed in your home can usually be answered conveniently and immediately.

Avoid Distractions

Our experience shows that the orientation is most beneficial when buyers focus all their attention on their new home and the information we present. Although we appreciate that friends and relatives are eager to see your new home, it would be best if they visit after your orientation. Similarly, we suggest that, if possible, children and pets not accompany you at this time. We also recommend that, if possible, you turn your cell phone off during this meeting. If a real estate agent has helped with your home purchase, he or she is welcome but not required to attend.

Review Orientation Agenda

We have included a sample orientation agenda following this section. We document action items just as we have at other meetings.

Bring Your Questions

If you have not already done so, please read the maintenance information and warranty guidelines in Chapter 7 of this guide. If you have questions, make note of them to bring up at the orientation.

Attire

Wear close-toed, low-heeled shoes that are appropriate for walking around the exterior of the home and convenient to get off and on. We will tour both the exterior and interior of your home. Anticipate that some dust, bending, kneeling, and reaching will be encountered.

Get Involved

Plan to listen carefully and take a hands-on approach. Push buttons, lock locks, and flip breakers. This helps you remember the dozens of details we cover.

Homeowner Orientation - Meeting Details

Appointment Set by: Builder Sales Representative

Appointments Available: Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or Friday 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Where: Your new home

Attendees: Purchasers, Project Manager, Builder Sales Representative

Length: Up to two hours, depending on your questions

Purposes: Demonstrate features of your home. Review key maintenance points. Confirm quality reflects the standards shown in our models. Confirm installation of selections. Confirm manufacturer literature and small parts are accounted for. Confirm the good condition of cosmetic surfaces. Confirm your Confirmation Tour appointment. Discuss warranty reporting procedures

Preparation: List any questions you wish to discuss. Bring your selection materials and this homeowner guide. Wear shoes and clothing appropriate to an active construction site. Attend alone—we would like your undivided attention. Plan to participate in a hands-on way. Plan to turn your cell phone off if possible.

HOMEOWNER GUIDE

Community: _____ Lot #: _____
 Address (new): _____
 Homeowner Name(s): _____
 Contact number(s): _____
 Email(s): _____

New Home Orientation

Date: _____

Inspection of your home was made in the company of a representative of Caviness & Cates / Cates Building. We will adjust, install, or repair the items documented on the homeowner orientation itemized list. Your signature at the bottom of this form acknowledges that there are no commitments or verbal agreements for work to be performed other than listed on the itemized list. Any additional items, unseen defects or inoperative mechanical items shall be reported to the Warranty Department after closing in accordance with the guidelines set forth in your Homeowner's Guide and Warranty Manual. Authorization to perform the work has been given.

OPERATIONS AND MECHANICALS:

- _____ Appliances
- _____ Shutoffs (Water: main, sinks, toilets/Gas: Main, WH, cooktop, FP)
- _____ Electrical panel and breakers
- _____ Water heater
- _____ Washer/Dryer connections
- _____ Plumbing fixtures (faucets, sinks, toilets, tubs, showers)
- _____ HVAC (filters, thermostat unlock)
- _____ Fireplace
- _____ Outlets/Switches (GFCI)
- _____ Smoke detectors
- _____ Windows/Doors (screens, tilt, locks, thresholds)
- _____ Garage door

EXTERIOR:

- _____ Yard grading/Drainage and Landscaping (irrigation winterization)
- _____ Electrical Outlets
- _____ Water meter, Cleanouts, Hose bibs
- _____ Foundation Drains
- _____ Concrete Flatwork

Please check or initial each line above as it is explained.

NOT COVERED BY WARRANTY AFTER CLOSING:

- _____ Appliances: warranted by the manufacturer
- _____ Caulking: shrinking of caulk is inevitable, and maintenance is a homeowner responsibility
- _____ Changes after closing: to preserve warranty, changes to systems such as alarm, HVAC/Thermostats, electric, etc. should be done by the original installer only
- _____ Concrete cracks: settlement cracks are normal
- _____ Cosmetics (such as scratches, dents, chips, cuts) in/on: Appliances, Cabinets/Doors, Countertops, Doors/Door hardware, Fireplace surround, Flooring (Hardwood, Carpet, Vinyl, Tile), Mirrors/Shower doors, Sinks/ Plumbing fixtures, Tubs/Shower, Windows/Screens...
- _____ Flooring damage: be sure to follow manufacturer guidelines for preventative care and maintenance
- _____ HVAC registration and maintenance: register your systems with the manufacturer immediately and perform regular maintenance such as replacing filters
- _____ Landscaping: Care of landscaping, grading, correcting Erosion, etc. are homeowner responsibilities. Grass, sod, trees, etc are excluded from warranty. Water may stand 48 – 72 hours after a heavy rain stops
- _____ Paint & Drywall: small cracks, nail pops, or seams in drywall and paint from settlement are normal. You will receive touch-up paint for any cosmetic repairs
- _____ Plumbing: clogged drains from household items, and damage from lack of winterization to pipes and irrigation, are excluded from warranty
- _____ Termites: Home is treated and has a 1-year warranty from a third party (see third party handout for info)

The items above have been explained to me by a Caviness & Cates / Cates Building representative. (Please sign and date)

Caviness & Cates / Cates Building Representative

Homeowner

(Date)

Homeowner

(Date)

Your acceptance walk is schedule for:

Date: _____

Time: _____

*You, as our valued customer, are our most important asset. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns.
 Thank you for making us your homebuilder of choice.*

HOMEOWNER GUIDE

New Home Orientation

Date: _____

Community: _____

Address (new): _____

Homeowner Name(s): _____

Contact number(s): _____

Email(s): _____

Lot #: _____

HOMEOWNER ORIENTATION ITEMIZED LIST

ITEM NUMBER	PLEASE CORRECT THE FOLLOWING	DATE SCHEDULED	DATE COMPLETE	HOMEOWNER ACCEPTED
1	TOUCH UPS (PAINT, FLOOR, GROUT, TUBS/SHOWERS)			
2	RECLEAN			
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				
21				
22				
23				
24				
25				

The items above are to be corrected as part of my New Home Orientation. I have checked or initialed all items on the New Home Orientation page including the items not covered by warranty after closing. Any additional repairs or adjustments needed are documented on the itemized list above.

Caviness and Cates Communities Representative

Homeowner

Date

Final inspection of the above items has been made by the undersigned and a Caviness & Cates Representative. Items listed have been adjusted, installed, or repaired in an acceptable manner. Warranty policies and procedures have been reviewed and the undersigned agrees to abide by their provisions.

Homeowner

Date

*You, as our valued customer, are our most important asset. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns.
Thank you for choosing Caviness & Cates as your homebuilder of choice.*

Chapter 3

Closing on Your Home

At closing the ultimate purpose of your purchase agreement is achieved: Ownership of your new home is transferred from our company to you. This process involves several steps and detailed preparation.

Confirmation Tour

We take responsibility for resolving items noted during the orientation. Many of these can be completed before you move in.

Sometimes parts need to be ordered or assistance from specialty trades may be required. Under these circumstances you can expect us to resolve all items within 15 working days unless we inform you of other scheduling. Any items still outstanding at your confirmation tour are documented on a closing letter (see the following example).

If work does need to be performed in your new home after your move-in, construction personnel are generally available for appointments Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Gaining access to occupied homes to complete orientation items is a concern to homeowners and builders alike. Our company asks that you make appointments so that someone over 18 is present for repairs. Working around your busy schedule may result in service taking longer than anyone wants. Your cooperation is essential.

Confirmation Tour - Meeting Details

Appointment Set by: Buyer's Agent

Appointments Available: Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. or Friday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Where: Your new home

Attendees: Purchasers, Project Manager

When: 30-60 minutes prior to scheduled appointment with closing attorney

Purposes: Tour your home's exterior if weather prevented that at the orientation. Review completed work performed on orientation items. Document any remaining items and discuss expected scheduling.

Preparation: Bring any questions you have about operation of your new home or warranty service

Closing Letter

Community: _____ Lot # _____
Address (new): _____
Homeowner Name(s): _____
Contact number(s): _____
Date: _____ Email(s): _____

It is the intent of Caviness and Cates / Cates Building to have all repairs completed prior to closing on your home. However, there are times when this is not possible due to different circumstances such as weather, backordered material, etc.

This letter is documentation that we will complete the following items after closing:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

We thank you for purchasing a Caviness and Cates / Cates Building home and are committed to the highest standards of customer service after closing. We will be completing the above listed items as soon as possible. Please contact our Warranty Department at (910) 778-7908 with any questions.

Caviness & Cates / Cates Building Rep

Homeowner

Date

Closing Location

Closing appointments take place at a lawyer's office. We have lawyers that we work with regularly in each subdivision where we build in who understand the process and can assist in making for smooth transactions. We highly recommend using these lawyers but you do have the right to choose a different lawyer as long as they are approved by the lender and the title insurance company. We will confirm with you which lawyer will handle the transaction in your contract addendum.

Documents

The materials involved in a closing include such items as mortgage loan documents, disclosures, homeowner association items, a statement of closing costs and adjustments, and new home warranty materials. You will also receive items in the mail in the weeks following your closing. For example, some mortgage lenders forward coupon booklets for payments. We suggest that you store the legal documents from your closing with other valuable papers, in a safe place. You will need them for tax purposes and when you refinance or sell your home.

Preparation

Several tasks need to be completed prior to your closing appointment. Double check this list several weeks prior to your expected closing date to avoid last minute stress. ***We recommend that you plan deliveries of any kind for one or more days after the closing date since unexpected delays can prevent us from delivering keys to you on the day of closing.***

Insurance

Your lender will require proof of a homeowner's policy from your insurance company. Your insurance agent should know exactly what is needed. We suggest that you arrange for this at least three weeks before the expected closing date and confirm that your lender has received it. This proof of insurance must be provided before we are able to release the keys to your new home.

Builder or Lender Issues

Please discuss and resolve any questions, agreements, or other details regarding your home with your Buyer's Agent well in advance of the closing. Likewise, confirm with your lender that all necessary closing preparations have been addressed.

Down Payment or Closing Cost

Your down payment and any closing cost are to be paid to the attorney that will be handling the transaction and then the attorney disburses to all interested parties. Depending on the size of the down payment or the amount of the closing cost, most attorneys require you to wire the funds to their trust account. Under the Good Funds Settlement Act, a North Carolina attorney is not permitted to record documents (transfer title to your name) without first having collected all required funds in their trust account. In planning be sure to allow time to arrange for this with the attorney. NEVER send a wire without calling the attorney's office to verify wiring instructions. Make sure the number you use to call the attorney is not a phone number on an email telling you where to send the wire.

Keys

Keys and garage door openers are delivered after documents are finalized and funding confirmation has been received (after the deed has been recorded). ***We recommend that you plan deliveries accordingly to avoid stress and***

inconvenience. Our insurance prohibits us from permitting you to store items in the home prior to key delivery.

Utility and Community Services

We will have utility service removed from our name on the closing date. You will need to notify all applicable utility companies of your move so that service is provided in your name. We suggest that you contact these companies well ahead of time to avoid any interruption in service.

<i>Service</i>	<i>Contact Details</i>	<i>Date Contacted/Notes</i>
Electric		
Gas		
Mail		
Security System		
Telephone		
Television		
Trash Collection		
Water/Sewer		

Closing Disclosure: The “Final Number”

Certain customary items in connection with the property will be prorated to the date of closing such as prepaid expenses, or reserves required by your lender and homeowners association, if applicable. Pro-rations of general real property taxes and applicable assessments will be based on the current year's taxes and assessments or, if they are unavailable, on the taxes and assessments for the prior year.

The final cost figure is available near to the actual closing. Although a reasonably close estimate may be determined before the date of closing, the proration of several items included is affected by the closing date and cannot be calculated until that date is known. The Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA) provides you with many protections. Under this law, you can review the settlement page that lists costs you will be paying at closing at least three business days before the closing appointment.

Closing Appointment - Meeting Details

Appointment set by: Buyer's Agent

Appointments available: Normal business hours of lawyer's office or lenders office

Where: As indicated in your Contract Addendum

Attendees: Closing Agent, Purchasers

Length: 45 minutes to one hour

Purposes: Sign final documents. Make final payment. Schedule to receive the keys to your new home after all details have been finalized (after the deed has been recorded).

Preparation: Arrange for homeowner insurance and have your agent forward evidence of insurance to your lender and our lawyer. Transfer utility services into your name as of the date of closing. Confirm with your lender that financial arrangements are finalized and all documents are ready for closing. Transfer funds, if necessary, sufficiently in advance to allow for processing. Obtain a certified check in the amount of the “final number” and made out to Caviness & Cates / Cates Building. Bring this Homeowner Guide. Plan to turn your cell phone off if at all possible.

Moving Hints

As you move into your new home, take precautions to protect vulnerable surfaces such as hardwood floors; cover railings with moving pads or blankets; remove doors where furniture might be a tight fit; and protect carpet with ribbed, plastic runners.

Professional movers should have insurance for any damage that they might accidentally cause. Friends and relatives will not. They are also unlikely to have the training and practiced skills of professional movers. If you are moving yourself, organize the schedule to avoid rushing and include rest breaks. People who are tired or in a hurry are more likely to injure themselves or damage your belongings.

Moving Preparation Checklist

- ☐ Compare proposals of professional movers:
 - Costs for services such as packing and unpacking, packing materials and boxes, Distance and weight charges
 - Insurance
 - Availability and notice needed

- ☐ Plan a self-move well in advance:
 - Make a truck reservation early (6–8 weeks or more)
 - Include a reservation for a dolly and moving pads
 - Reconfirm one-week prior
- ☐ If you have children, involve them in planning and preparing for the move.
- ☐ Retain receipts for tax purposes. Moving costs may be deductible.
- ☐ Send change-of-address notices to magazines and book clubs.
- ☐ Contact utilities several weeks prior to your move.
- ☐ Give the forwarding order to your former post office one month prior for uninterrupted service.
- ☐ Register children in their new schools.
- ☐ Transfer medical and dental records, if necessary.
- ☐ Confirm homeowner insurance policy has been issued and evidence of it forwarded to our company.
- ☐ Order checks with your new address; update financial records.
- ☐ Update your driver's license, and car and voter registration.
- ☐ Properly dispose of flammable or hazardous materials that should not be moved.
- ☐ Donate unwanted items
- ☐ Return borrowed items

Packing Materials

- ☐ Boxes of various sizes; cartons for mattresses
- ☐ Packing tape and heavy string
- ☐ Packing paper, bubble wrap
- ☐ "Fragile" labels for delicate items
- ☐ Labels to identify rooms, such as den, master bedroom, and so on; include a number on these
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Master packing list (list each box by number with name/room and brief description of contents)
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Furniture pads, blankets, rugs

Moving Day Necessities

- ☐ Children's toys and games
- ☐ Toilet paper
- ☐ Beverages and snacks
- ☐ Paper towels
- ☐ Soap and hand towels
- ☐ Trash bags
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Prescription medication
- ☐ Medical supplies for special needs
- ☐ Shelf liners
- ☐ Small tools: tape measure, scissors, screwdrivers, hammer
- ☐ Dryer vent flex hose
- ☐ New hoses for washing machine
- ☐ Furniture protector pads

Chapter 4

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 an attempt 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, home care ideas, suggestions for extended absences, appliance service information, and a home scare supply list and 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 a minor maintenance attention provided immediately saves you a more serious, time-consuming, and sometimes costly repair later. Note also that neglecting routine maintenance (or failure to notify us of any defect within a reasonable time frame) 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

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 warranty office for assistance.

- Emergency service
- Appliance service (direct from the manufacturer)
- Warranty service

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 warranty 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).

EMERGENCIES during STANDARD BUSINESS HOURS, contact 910-481-0503

EMERGENCIES AFTER HOURS, WEEKENDS OR HOLIDAYS, call 800-873-0634

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

- Total loss of heat during winter temperatures
- 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.

Non-Emergency Warranty Items

If you need to initiate non-emergency warranty service, you are welcome to do so by submitting a warranty request to our office.

Put It in Writing!

Written report of items provides you with the maximum protection by documenting each issue for your warranty file. This also allows us to operate efficiently, thereby providing faster service to all homeowners. In each case, retain a copy of what you submitted with the date you reported the items. Send us notice in writing by mail to--

Caviness & Cates / Cates Building, Attention: Warranty
639 Executive Place, Suite 400
Fayetteville, NC 28305

Or, use the warranty claim forms at cavinessandcates.com/warranty or catesbuilding.com/warranty-claim

For questions or follow up you can call our Warranty Coordinator at 910-778-7908.

Help Us to Serve You

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

- Your name, address, and preferred method of contact during business hours.
- 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 and times to reach you.

Inspection and Repair Hours

Many homeowners ask whether evening and weekend appointment times are available. We understand 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.
- 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 Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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 that 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.

Renters

If you rent your home, a written authorization will permit us to work directly with your renter or property management company. Without such authorization, we are able to accept requests for warranty service only directly from you.

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.

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 or personal items in or near the work area. We will reschedule the repair appointment rather than risk damaging your belongings.

Signatures on Work Orders

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

We routinely contact homeowners at random by phone or email to ask for feedback about the repair process. If you have suggestions on how we can improve the service we provide we want to hear them. If you are dissatisfied with any service

we provide, you can note that on the work order or call the warranty office with your feedback. We are available to review your concerns and determine whether our requirements have been met.

And naturally if we exceeded your expectations, the service personnel of our company and the trades with whom we work sincerely appreciate your compliments on their efforts.

Completion Time

Regular review of outstanding work orders is part of our office routine. Checking with trades and homeowners alike, we strive 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 most warranty work orders within 15 workdays, 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.

Appliance Warranty Service

The manufacturers of kitchen appliances have asked to work directly with you if any repairs are needed for their products or as a result of 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.

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, or register on the manufacturers' web site. 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.

Additional Warranties

The warranty agreement in your contract specifies the following additional warranties (please reference your contract for more information and full, terms, conditions and exclusions):

Ten Year Major Structural

Builder warrants that the Residence will be free from any defect which: (a) due to noncompliance with the Warranty Standards, (b) results in or causes actual, tangible damage to a "Load-Bearing Component" of the Residence (c) materially diminishes the structural integrity and the load-bearing performance of the Residence, and (d) materially affects the physical safety of the occupants of the Residence. Only a defect or defects meeting all of the criteria listed in (a) through (d), inclusive, above shall be deemed a "Major Structural Defect." The Warranty also covers damage to the roof, walls or foundation of the Residence resulting from expansion, subsidence or lateral movement of the soil, provided that such damage is caused by a Major Structural Defect as defined above. The term of this Major Structural Defect Warranty shall be ten (10) years beginning on the date of actual closing.

As used above, the term "Load-Bearing Component" means only the following: (1) roof framing members (rafters and trusses); (2) floor framing members (joists and trusses); (3) bearing walls; (4) columns; (5) lintels; (6) girders; (7) load-bearing beams; and (8) foundation systems and footings.

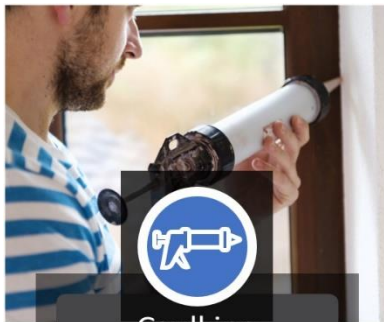
The following items are NOT Load-Bearing Components and defects thereto shall not be covered as Major Structural Defects pursuant to this Section: (a) non-load-bearing partitions and walls; (b) wall tile or wallpaper; (c) plaster, laths or drywall; (d) flooring and subflooring material; (e) brick, stucco, stone or veneer; (f) any type of exterior siding; (g) roof shingles, sheathing and tar paper; (h) heating, cooling, ventilating, plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems; (i) appliances, fixtures or items of equipment; and (j) doors, trim, cabinets, hardware, insulation, paint and stains.

Two Year Major Components

For a period of two (2) years beginning on the date of actual Closing, Builder warrants that the "Major Components" of the Residence will be free from defects in material and workmanship due to non-compliance with the Warranty Standards.

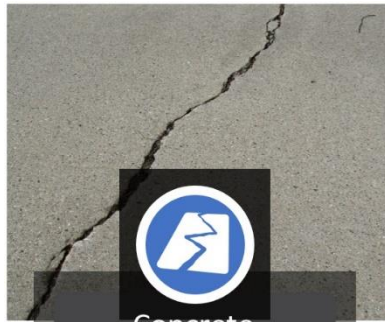
Major Components refers only to the following plumbing, electrical, heating and cooling systems of the Home:

Electrical System:	Electrical wiring and connections
HVAC System:	Heating/cooling duct work, drain lines, refrigerant lines, and registers. (NOTE: Manufacturer warrants other parts for at least 1 year)
Plumbing System:	Plumbing pipes and their fittings.



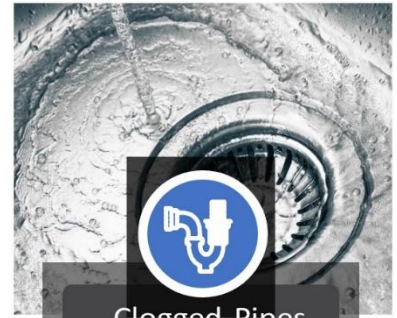
Caulking

[Shrinking of caulk is inevitable. For best results, re-caulk interior and exterior locations regularly. This is especially important for wet areas.]



Concrete

[Concrete will crack due to expansion and contraction; this is normal. Do not use ice melt products on your new concrete, as this can cause chipping or flaking which is excluded from warranty.]



Clogged Pipes

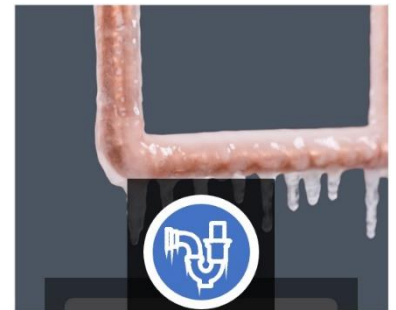
[Clogged drains from household items (such as wipes, floss, oil/grease, etc) are excluded from warranty.]



Garage Door

[You may need to adjust door sensors if they become misaligned. Lubricate rollers and hinges every six months.]

The Most Common Requests That Are Excluded From Your Warranty



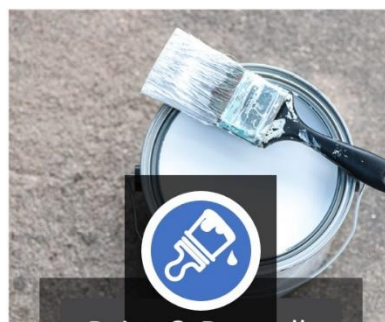
Frozen Pipes

[Winterizing plumbing and irrigation prevents frozen pipes and harmful water damage. It is your responsibility to perform this maintenance.]



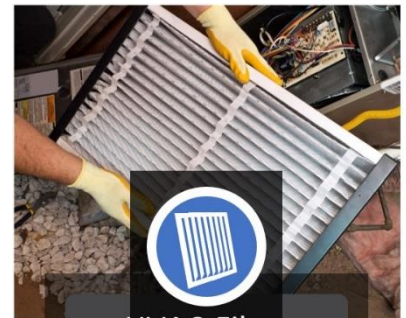
Landscaping

[Care of grass, sod, trees, and correcting erosion is a homeowner responsibility. Water may stand 48 – 72 hours after a heavy rain stops, or longer in drainage swales or if the ground is saturated. Winterize irrigation systems.]



Paint & Drywall

[Small cracks, nail pops, or seams in drywall and paint (especially at trim, moldings, corners, tile, etc.) from settlement, acclimation, expansion or contraction are normal and are excluded from warranty. You will receive touch-up paint for repairs of these and other cosmetic concerns.]



HVAC Filter

[It is important to maintain your HVAC system including changing filters. You will have better performance and efficiency, save on energy bills, preserve the manufacturer warranty, and extend the life of your system.]

Air Conditioning through Wood Trim

An alphabetical list of the items in your home - including maintenance hints, warranty criteria, and troubleshooting tips where applicable:

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Air Conditioning

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Note: *Contact the HVAC installer and/or manufacturer within 30 days after closing to make sure your personal information has been registered with the manufacturer for warranty purposes. To preserve warranty coverage, have the original installer make any desired changes to the system including installing upgraded thermostats. Check filters at least once per month (replacing as needed), and have your HVAC service provider perform regular maintenance as recommended by the manufacturer to ensure system performance and to preserve manufacturer warranties. Do not turn off systems completely for an extended period of time (for example, if you plan to take a trip away from home). Do not install energy saving or power management boxes on your system which are designed to cut power in peak usage times, as this may reduce system performance or cause other issues.*

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 blinds and/or 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

Humidifier - If a humidifier is installed on the HVAC system, or if you use a humidifier in the home, turn it off when you use the air conditioning; otherwise, the additional moisture can cause a freeze-up of the cooling system. Cold air holds less

moisture than warm air and there is ample ambient moisture in summer air. If your humidifier adds more, it can overwork the air conditioner and reduce its cooling effect.

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

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. Minor airflow adjustments may be needed. Airflow can be maximized by leaving interior doors open as much as possible.

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 system 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 system will not operate.
- Air conditioner and heater 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 system is on.
- Condensation drain line is clear, and not clogged
- Filter is clean to allow airflow.
- Vents in individual rooms are open.
- Air returns are unobstructed.

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

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

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

Non-Emergency - Lack of air conditioning is not an emergency. Air conditioning contractors in our region respond to air conditioning service requests during normal business hours and in the order received.

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 original installer 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. **Note:** *to preserve warranty coverage, have the original installer make any desired changes to the system, such as upgrading control panels or adding cameras and other accessories.*

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

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

Whirlpool Appliances: 1-877-947-4334 OPT 2
Frigidaire Appliances: 1-855-224-4987
GE Appliances: 1-800-GE-CARES

Your closing documents are your proof of purchase. Please have model number and serial number ready when contacting the manufacturer:

	Model Number	Serial Number
Range	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Range Hood	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Cook Top	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Wall Oven	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Dishwasher	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Refrigerator	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Freezer	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Microwave	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Washer	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Dryer	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Disposal	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Attic

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

Your attic is inspected before your closing to confirm insulation is correct. No warranty is offered for attic use as storage.

Brick and Cultured Stone

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

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

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We check the brick and stone during your homeowner orientation to confirm correct installation of designated materials.

Cabinets

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

Cleaning - Consult your manufacturer's recommendations regarding product to use in caring for your cabinets. Follow their directions. Use such products minimally to avoid excessive build-up. Using products not approved by the manufacturer may 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.

Painted Cabinetry - Painted cabinets are a beautiful option, but special maintenance and care is required to maintain their striking appearance. There are inherent characteristics in painted cabinetry that are considered normal and acceptable:

- Wood is an imperfect product that takes in and expels moisture with changes in humidity even when finished. It is porous, and some woods are more porous than others.
- We offer painted cabinetry in several different colors and wood species, and each may have different characteristics when it comes to appearance and durability.
- It is expected with painted cabinetry that the joints of the doors and face frames may show. Since wood naturally expands and contracts, the joints on a door or face frame do the same. You may see hairline cracks in the finish surface at the joints in both doors and face frames. These joints are normal and do not affect the strength of the door or face frames. Although they may not be prevalent when the product is new, over time as the wood takes in and expels moisture, the joints may start to show. This is not considered a defect, as it is a characteristic of the wood.
- The end grains on doors and drawer fronts may also show through the paint. Tighter grained woods such as maple may lessen the appearance of the end grains, but will not completely eliminate them from showing.
- Painted cabinets also have a tendency to show chips, nicks, and dings more readily than stained cabinetry.

Maintenance of your painted cabinetry is essential to keeping it looking new for many years. Care should be taken to keep any excess water or moisture away from your painted cabinetry. Never use a steamer or steam cleaner on or around any wood surface. Water that is allowed to seep into the joints or open end grains may cause the wood to prematurely expand and could cause the paint to flake or chip. Cleaning painted cabinetry should be done according to manufacturer recommendations. Any excess water should be removed immediately and dried thoroughly.

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. Items requiring special lighting or viewing from specific angles to be visible will not be changed.

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.

Painted cabinets - Painted cabinets will show hairline cracks at all joints in the doors and face frames. The construction seams where two cabinets meet may be more visible on painted cabinets compared to stained cabinets and have a higher tendency to show chips, nicks, and dings. No type of steam or steam cleaner should be used to clean cabinets or come in contact with cabinets, as loose or peeling paint caused by moisture is not covered under this warranty. Hairline cracks in

the joints of doors and face frames are also not covered under warranty and repair or touch up is Homeowner responsibility.

Separations - We will correct gaps between cabinets and the ceiling or cabinets and the walls by adding filler 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 take several months to manufacture and may have noticeable variations in wood grain and color.

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

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

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

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will test carbon monoxide detectors during the orientation to confirm that they are working and to familiarize you with the alarm. Our company 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.

Cleaning - Always follow manufacturer recommendations for carpet care. 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.

Per the Manufacturer Warranty, 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.

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

Pet Damage - Pet damage, such as from claws/teeth, fluids etc. is excluded from warranty.

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 model homes 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.

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

Tack Strips - It may be normal to feel a tack strip by walls, edges, stairs, transitions, etc.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your new home orientation, we will confirm that your carpet is in acceptable condition. We will address 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.

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.

All new homes go through a period of settlement, so your home may experience some minor material shrinkage, cracking, and other events which are normal and customary. Examples include small cracks in drywall and paint, and separation where dissimilar materials meet each other. For example, where moldings meet sheetrock, or where tile grout meets a sink. In most cases, paint and caulking is all that is necessary to conceal the types of blemishes that result from the natural

expansion and contraction of construction material. Because these events are normal and customary, they are not a defect or structural defect covered by this express limited warranty.

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 wipe or vacuum when needed. Occasionally, a wet mopping with warm water may be appropriate. If you feel a cleaning agent is required, consult the manufacturer.

Grout Cleaning - Use a brush and water to clean grout. If you feel a cleaning agent is required, consult the manufacturer.

Sealing Grout - Sealing grout is your decision and responsibility. Once grout has been sealed, ongoing maintenance is necessary to maintain protection against staining. Limited warranty coverage on grout that has been sealed is voided.

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, or normal foundation settlement or 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.

Cracks: Cracks appearing in ceramic tiles are commonly due to shrinkage. Cracks are evaluated under normal viewing and lighting conditions. We are not responsible for color variations or products. Any grouting or caulking that is needed after closing is your responsibility.

Concrete Flatwork

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Freeze/thaw cycles in our climate are responsible for the majority of the homeowner concerns with concrete. 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 homes' foundation and the concrete flatwork: the patio, driveway, garage floor and concrete slabs, 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. Avoid using soap on an unpainted concrete floor. Because of the porous nature of concrete, soap (or any cleaner that lathers) is extremely difficult to rinse off.

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 and cracking will occur. For example, a typical concrete slab 10 feet across can shrink approximately 5/8 inch as it cures. Some of this shrinkage shows up as cracks. Cracking of concrete flatwork also results from temperature changes that cause expansion and contraction. Soil and climate conditions in our area can cause frost heave, which may cause concrete movement and may result in concrete cracks. During the summer, moisture finds its way under the concrete along the edges or through cracks in the surface. In winter, this moisture forms frost that can lift the concrete, increasing the cracking. As cracks occur, seal them with a waterproof concrete caulk (available at hardware or home improvement stores) to prevent moisture from penetrating to the soil beneath. If not addressed this could erosion and further issues.

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 shrinks 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.

Ice, Snow, and Chemicals - Driving or parking on snow creates ice on the drive which magnifies the effects of snow on the concrete surface. Remove ice and snow from concrete slabs as promptly as possible after snowstorms. Protect concrete from abuse by chemical agents such as pet urine, fertilizers, radiator overflow, repeated hosing, or de-icing agents such as road salt that can drip from vehicles. All of these items can cause spalling (chipping of the surface) of concrete. **Caution: Exposure to deicers or salt may damage the concrete surface and will void warranty coverage.**

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

Spalling (Surface Chips) - Causes of spalling include fertilizer, un-cleared snow and ice, ice-melting agents, road salts from vehicles, animal urine, radiator overflow, etc. Spalling is excluded from warranty.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

Cracks - It is not unusual for cracks less than 1/4th of one inch in average width to appear in concrete surfaces. These are non-structural and frequently occur due to normal settling of a Home. When new concrete hardens, normal shrinkage cracks often occur, and because concrete is not an elastic material, minor cracks (less than 1/4th of an inch in average width) are inevitable and are rarely a cause for concern.

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

Spalling (Surface Chips) - Causes of spalling include fertilizer, un-cleared snow and ice, ice-melting agents, road salts from vehicles, animal urine, radiator overflow, etc. Spalling is excluded from warranty.

GARAGE FLOOR

Garage Floor Cracks - We will repair cracks in garage floors in excess of 1/4 inch in average width. When repairs are necessary the color and texture of the repair materials will vary from the original concrete.

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

DRIVEWAY

Cracks in driveways are excluded from warranty.

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.

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

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

Normal Activities - As you live in your home, your daily lifestyle contributes to the moisture in the air also. Cooking, laundry, baths and showers, aquariums, plants, house and so on all add water to the air in your home. Likewise, your daily routine can mitigate the amount of moisture in your home and reduce condensation on interior surfaces. Your daily habits can help keep your home well-ventilated. Run the hood fan while you are cooking. Run your bath fans for a minimum of 30 minutes after bathing or showering. Air your house by opening windows for a time when weather permits.

Temperature - Avoid setting your thermostat at extreme temperatures. Heating your home will cause the materials to dry out faster, generating more moisture into the air. Drying the materials out too fast also increases shrinkage cracks and separations.

Ventilation - The best way to assure adequate moisture ventilation after a shower is to run exhaust fans in bathrooms, leaving the bath fan running for a minimum of 30 minutes after bathing or showering. Use your range hood fan when using the stove. When weather conditions permit, open windows so fresh air can circulate through your home. Keep the dryer exhaust hose clean and securely connected.

See also Ventilation

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

Countertops

If your home has granite or cultured marble counter tops, no two pieces will have the same pattern or exactly the same color. The product installed in your home will vary in color and pattern from the sample you selected.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

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. This is a homeowner responsibility to maintain.

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.

Cutting - Use a cutting board to protect your counters when you cut or chop.

Heat - Protect the counter from heat and from extremely hot pans. To prevent possible damage, use a protective pad under the item. If you cannot put your hand on it, do not put it on the counter. Do not use countertops as ironing boards and do not set lighted cigarettes on the edge of the counter.

Moisture - Coffee pots, electric fry pans, slow cookers, and so on are the major cause of swelling problems. Rubber drain mats can trap moisture beneath them, causing the laminated plastic to warp and blister. Dry the surface as needed.

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.

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 - 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. Caulking will be one of your home maintenance responsibilities.

Crawl Space

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The crawl space is not intended as a storage area for items that could be damaged by moisture. Wood stored in a crawl space can attract termites. You may notice slight dampness in the crawl space. Landscaping that is correctly installed helps prevent excessive amounts of water from entering crawl spaces. Report standing water for inspection.

See also Ventilation

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

Damp-proofing

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

We spray your foundation walls with a damp-proofing material as required by local codes. This is not waterproofing. Although we make every effort to assure a dry foundation, during times of excessive moisture, you may notice some dampness. Over time, natural compaction of soils in the backfill areas will usually eliminate this condition. Careful maintenance of positive drainage will also protect your foundation from this condition.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will correct conditions that allow actual water to enter the foundation unless the cause is improper installation of landscaping or failure to adequately maintain drainage and grade after closing.

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, and maintain 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.

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 the event that we needed to 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.

Barn, Bi-Fold or Bypass Doors - Interior barn or bypass doors sometimes stick because of weather conditions. Apply a silicone lubricant to the tracks to minimize this inconvenience. These doors can easily lose alignment. A misaligned door can be re-adjusted to its proper position. This is part of routine homeowner maintenance.

Exterior 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. To ensure longer life for your exterior wood doors, plan to refinish them at least once a year. Stained exterior doors with clear finishes tend to weather faster than painted doors. Treat the finish with a wood preserver every three months to preserve the varnish and prevent the door from drying and cracking. Reseal stained exterior doors whenever the finish begins cracking or crazing. Separation between exterior door frames and trim is normal due to materials expansion and contraction rates of the different materials. This is excluded from warranty.

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 heat pump, 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 either metal or 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.

Failure to Latch - If a door will not latch because of minor settling during the first year of occupancy, please notify us.

Storm doors - Adjustments and maintenance are a homeowner responsibility, damage is excluded from warranty, manufacturer's warranty may apply.

Threshold / Weather Stripping - Weather stripping and exterior door thresholds occasionally require adjustment or replacement. This is Homeowner maintenance and is excluded from warranty. Do not use solvents on the sill. To clean, use water and a soft rag.

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

After closing, care of drywall is one of your maintenance responsibilities and are excluded from your warranty. 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. 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.

Related Warranty Repairs - If a drywall repair is needed as a result of 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.

Truss Uplift - Truss uplift can occur when outside temperatures are significantly colder than inside temperatures. The result appears as a minor crack along the joint of the ceiling and wall. We will repair separations in excess of 3/16 inch.

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 and may be used to control 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 may 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 - If you wish to make any modifications, contact us first. **Having another electrician modify your electrical system during the warranty period will void that portion of your limited warranty.**

Motion Switches - One of the energy saving devices in your home is the motion sensor. There are three set points on the switch: off, sensor, & on. When in the “on” position the light will remain illuminated until you turn it off. When in “sensor” position, this device senses your presence and turns on the light while you are in the space. After you leave, the light will

automatically turn off. If you are using a CFL bulb with this device, ensure you use a dimmable bulb as a regular CFL performs poorly in conjunction with motion switches.

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

Keep these conservation 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.
- Learn how to use your programmable thermostat for comfort and efficient energy use.
- If you have a zoned system (more than one system and separate controls) think through operating schedules and temperature settings to maximize comfort and minimize energy consumption.
- Keep the garage overhead doors closed.

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.
- 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.

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.
- 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.

Appliances

- In selecting your home's appliances, compare the information on the energy 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.
- Refrigerator shelves are warmer near the door and the coolest parts are near the bottom and toward the back. If possible, keep your meats and dairy products in those cooler places.
- A fuller refrigerator works less to keep cool but do not pack it too tightly—good air circulation is important to efficient operation. Likewise, keep your freezer full.
- 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

- Use compact fluorescent bulbs (CFL) or fluorescent tubes where possible. At this time, incandescent bulbs are the least efficient source of light. Keep your light fixtures and bulbs clean to get maximum light they produce.
- **Caution:** Compact fluorescent bulbs contain small amounts of mercury. If you break one, ventilate the area and clean up wearing gloves. Disposed bulbs should be delivered to a facility designed to manage them. Always dispose of CFLs or fluorescent bulbs properly rather than putting them in your regular trash. Contact your local waste management program for instructions.
- 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 or shovel snow.
- Notify local security personnel or police of the dates you will be away.
- Stop mail, newspapers, and other deliveries.
- Consider the use of lighting timers.
- Confirm that all insurance policies that cover your property and belongings are current and provide sufficient coverage.
- Some insurance policies stipulate how often your home should be checked when you are away; contact your insurance carrier to make certain you understand and comply with these requirements.
- Mark valuable items with identifying information. Consider whether you have irreplaceable items that should be stored in a bank vault or security box.

As You Leave

- Forward phone calls to a relative or close friend.
- 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.
- Disengage the garage door opener (pull on the rope that hangs from the mechanism). See *Garage Overhead Door* for additional details.
- Some manufacturers suggest snapping a vise grip on to the track above the roller when you will be absent for an extended period of time. Upon your return, 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.
- Leave a second car in the drive.
- Be energy conscious—change the settings on your thermostat for both summer and winter usage. Leaving the temperature in the home at a minimum 65 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

All new homes go through a period of settlement and movement. Your home may experience some minor material shrinkage, cracking, and other events which are normal and customary. Examples include small cracks in drywall and paint, and separation where dissimilar materials meet each other. For example, where moldings meet sheet rock, or where tile grout meets a sink. In most cases, paint and caulking is all that is necessary to conceal these types of blemishes that result from the natural expansion and contraction of construction material. Because these events are normal and customary, they are not a defect or structural defect and are excluded from this express limited warranty.

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 - 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.

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.

Vinyl Fencing - Vinyl fencing is an excellent and durable product if treated and maintained properly. Do not paint or use harsh chemicals to clean the fence, use only a mild soap and water.

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 - Over time wood 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, we will confirm the acceptable condition of the fence during your new home orientation. Although developer-installed fencing falls outside our limited warranty we may be able to assist in communicating any concerns you have and obtaining a response.

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.

GAS FIREPLACE

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

We urge you to have the installer come out and do a full demonstration; see your walk through pack or contact us for more information. Always 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 and do not turn on any lights.

Practice Prevention

- Store matches away from children and heat sources.
- Avoid smoking in bed and always use a fire safe receptacle to extinguish smoking materials. Keep lighters and matches out of reach of children.
- Avoid leaving small children home alone, even for a short time.
- Maintain appliances in clean and safe working condition.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets.
- Ensure that all electrical cords are in good repair.

- Avoid having any flammable objects or materials near the stove or leaving anything that you are cooking unattended.
- Keep the range hood filter clean to prevent a buildup of grease.
- Allow space for cooling around electrical equipment. Maintain a clear space of at least three feet around heat.
- 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 grill 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, 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 cooking, wear an oven mitt and use tongs to submerge spent coals in a metal pail of water.
- All Grills: Use 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 grill 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.
- If you decide to remodel, complete any unfinished areas, 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 grill, 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.

Foundation

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

Cracks - Surface cracks can develop in foundation walls. Surface cracks are not detrimental to the structural integrity of your home. If a crack develops in a foundation wall that allows water to come through, follow the procedures for submitting a warranty request.

Dampness - Due to the amount of water in concrete, foundations may be damp.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

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 foundation penetrations such as drains or vents. We will seal cracks that exceed 1/8 inch in average width.

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

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

Framing

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

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

Loading - Your limited warranty does not cover loss or damage caused by or resulting from abnormal loading of structural elements which exceeds designed loads, including, without limitation, water beds, safes, weight benches, large fish tanks and pool tables.

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 - Some floor and stair squeaks are unavoidable. We will make reasonable efforts to correct (such as refastening any loose subfloor to attempt to reduce squeaking), but cannot guarantee a squeak proof floor.

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. Be familiar with the steps for manual operation of the door in the event of a power failure. 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 or area manager 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. **Some water can be expected to enter under normal conditions.**

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

Early in land development, general drainage patterns are established in principle with municipal and other authorities. You and your neighbors share an overall drainage plan for the community. We are responsible for completion of final grade and for obtaining approval from the municipality where required. After closing you are responsible for maintaining the grading. 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

You share in an overall drainage plan for the community that was predetermined before the homes were built. The grading around your home has been inspected and approved for proper drainage of your lot. 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 and encased in a PVC pipe (in some cases according to subdivision design it may be located in the back yard). Governing municipalities require that this be visible.

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

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

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. Standing water will not remain for extended periods within 10 feet of the home after a rain (generally no more than 24 hours), except in swales that drain other areas. In these areas a longer period can be anticipated (generally no more than 48 hours). Water may stand longer during periods of heavy rains, especially when heavy rains occur on successive days. No grading determination will be made while frost or snow is on the ground or while the ground is saturated.

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. Your limited warranty excludes damage resulting from any changes after Closing to the grading or drainage of the property, or modifications or additions to the Home or the property under or around the Home. If you alter the drainage pattern after closing 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. Proper watering and care of sod, trees, or shrubs is 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. Standing water will not remain for extended periods within 10 feet of the home after a rain (generally no more than 24 hours), except in swales that drain other areas. In these areas a longer period can be anticipated (generally no more than 48 hours). Water may stand longer during periods of heavy rains, especially when heavy rains occur on successive days or the ground is saturated.

Under Concrete - We will fill visible sunken areas under concrete before closing. After closing, any further settlement is your responsibility to correct.

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.

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

Downspout Extensions or Splash Pads - Extensions should discharge outside of rock or bark beds so that water is not dammed behind the edging materials that might be used. The downspouts that end on sod should have an extension or splash pad 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.

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

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

See also Roof/Ice Damming

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

Leaks - We correct leaks that occur during the warranty period.

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

Standing Water - Small amounts of water (up to 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.

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. Clean only with a professional product approved for pre-finished wood or laminate (see the manufacturer's instructions for approved products). Do not wet mop a pre-finished wood or laminate floor.

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.

High Edges - Factory finished boards are not sanded to the exact same level after installation. Therefore, some boards may sit slightly higher than others.

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.

Moisture - Moisture can damage the floor. Wipe up spills immediately; exposure to moisture or the use of improper cleaning products or methods will allow water to get into the cracks between the boards and cause swelling or cupping. Damages from the above exposures to moisture are not covered under warranty.

Natural Variation Between Boards - Your flooring will have variations from board to board including the grain pattern, dark gray or black marks or shading, finish texture and knots of various sizes.

Pet Damage - Scratches, stains or moisture damage from pets is excluded from warranty. Keep pets nails trimmed, etc.

Putty and Filler - Putty and/or filler are used on every hardwood floor. Since factory finished floors must be installed with the finish in place, colored putty is used to conceal face.

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.

Samples from Showroom - Samples will not exhibit all possible color and grain variations you will see in your floor. No two floors are alike; your new floor may appear slightly different.

Scratches and Dents - Put soft plastic slides under the legs of furniture to help prevent scuffing and scratching. Fabric or felt laced glides are not recommended because they trap particles which may scratch the floor. When moving furniture or other objects, do not slide or even roll on wood flooring (wheels may dent the floor). It is best to pick up the object completely. Impacts (such as from a dropped object or high-heeled shoes) may leave dents. Scratches and dents are not covered under warranty.

Separation - Expect some shrinkage 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.

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

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

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

Warping - Warping may 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.

Wood Ages with Light and Time - All wood changes in color with exposure to light (both natural and artificial). The darker the stain color, the less apparent this aging will be. This color change will be more noticeable in lighter colors, which will darken. Sections of the floor which are covered by area rugs or furniture may age differently. These changes are not covered by manufacturers' warranties.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your homeowner orientation we will confirm that hardwood floors are in acceptable condition. Because these products are intended as flooring, the accepted point of view from which to inspect a wood floor is from a standing position under normal lighting. We will correct cosmetic details listed during your homeowner orientation when they are readily noticeable under normal lighting conditions from a standing position.

Floor noise - Minor squeaks and pops are to be expected as a result of expanding and contracting wood flooring. They may come and go as the pressure between individual boards changes. On glue-down floors, a DriTac or similar repair kit may be used.

Gaps and Separation Between Boards - Wood flooring expands and contracts with changes in your home's relative humidity. Potential purchasers should be cautioned that cracks, gaps and/or separations may emerge and we will not make any attempts to repair or replace boards with small horizontal cracks (unless part of another problem). We suggest using filler to conceal gaps.

Heating System: Gas Forced Air

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Good maintenance of your HVAC system can save energy dollars and prolong the life of the system. 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 - HVAC system we install may include combustion and fresh air ducts. If installed, the outside end of these duct are covered with a screen to minimize insects or animals entering the duct. Cold air coming in though these ducts means they are functioning as they should.

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

Duct Cleaning - We recommend that you have your home's ducts cleaned every two to three years. Yearly cleaning is only necessary if health issues are a factor.

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

Electronic Ignition - Your heat does not have a standing pilot light; this saves gas. Instead, the manufacturer has installed a silicon nitride hot surface igniter. This igniter will glow when heating up to allow ignition of the natural gas and is designed for many years of use. There are no maintenance requirements for this item. Should replacement be required, contact a professional.

Filter - A clean filter will help to keep your home clean and reduce dusting chores. Remember to change or clean the filter monthly during the heating season (year-round if you also have air conditioning). A clogged filter can slow airflow and cause cold spots in your home. Although it takes less than one minute to change the filter, this is one of the most frequently overlooked details of normal HVAC system 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 system. If you have a permanent, washable, removable filter, you need to clean this monthly. Use water only to clean the filter, tap to dry or air dry, and leave the system off for a brief period. Do not use soaps or detergents on the filter.

System Fan Cover - You need to position the blower panel cover correctly for the system 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 system will not operate. The blower will typically cycle on and off more frequently and for shorter periods during severe cold spells.

Furnished Home - The heating system was designed with a furnished home in mind. If you move in during the cooler part of the year and have not yet acquired all of your draperies and furnishings, the home may seem cooler than you would expect.

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

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

On-Off Switch - The HVAC system has an on-off blower switch. This switch looks like a regular light switch. When turned off, this switch overrides all system commands and shuts down the blower. This is usually done only when maintenance service is being performed, although young children have been known to turn the system off using this switch

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 - Heat 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 heater 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 system, the flow of heated air to that area of your home becomes restricted.

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. Minor airflow adjustments may be needed. Airflow can be maximized by leaving interior doors open as much as possible.

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

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

TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: NO HEAT

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the—

- Thermostat is set to "heat" and the temperature is set above the room temperature.
- System fan cover is installed correctly for the fan to operate. This panel compresses a button that tells the blower it is safe 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 system will not operate.
- Breaker on the main electrical panel is on. (Remember, if a breaker trips you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.)
- System switch is on.
- Gas line is open at the main meter and at the side of the unit.
- Filter is clean to allow airflow.
- Vents in individual rooms are open.
- Air returns are unobstructed.
- Exhaust vent is not blocked by snow or ice.

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

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will install heating systems according to national and local building codes, as well as to designs of the particular home. Refer to the manufacturer's limited warranty for information regarding warranty coverage.

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

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

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

Thermostat - Thermostats are calibrated to plus or minus two-four degrees.

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 system. 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 come on to maintain the temperature you set at the thermostat. The auxiliary system may also come on whenever the temperature at the thermostat is moved 5 degrees 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.

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

Register Adjustment - Registers will require adjustment from time to time to maximize your family's comfort. Do not completely close off more than one supply register at a time. This can restrict the airflow too much and reduce the efficiency of the system. A good technique is to completely open all the vents, 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 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.

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. Minor airflow adjustments may be needed. Airflow can be maximized by leaving interior doors open as much as possible.

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 snow or other materials do not block unit.
- 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

We will install heating systems according to national and local building codes, as well as to designs of the particular home. Refer to the manufacturer's limited warranty for information regarding warranty coverage.

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

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

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

Thermostat - Thermostats are calibrated to plus or minus two degrees.

Humidifier

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

Insulation

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The effectiveness of blown insulation is diminished if it is uneven. As the last step in any work you do in your attic (for example, 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.

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 care and maintenance 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.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

Backfill Settlement - We construct the foundation of your home beginning with an excavation into the earth. When the foundation walls are complete, the area surrounding them is backfilled. Soil in this area is not as compact as undisturbed ground. Water can penetrate through the backfill area to the lower areas of your foundation. This can cause potentially severe problems such as wet foundations, cracks in foundation walls, and floor slab movement. Avoid this through proper installation of landscaping and good maintenance of drainage. Backfill areas will settle and require prompt attention to avoid damage to your home and voiding of the structural warranty. Keep downspout extensions in the down position to channel roof runoff away from the foundation area of your home. Routine inspection of downspouts, backfill areas, and other drainage components is an excellent maintenance habit.

See also Grading and Drainage

Bark or Rock Beds - Do not allow 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.

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.

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

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

See also Property Boundaries.

Requirements - In addition to complying with applicable developer requirements, check with your local building department and homeowners association before designing, installing, or changing landscaping for any regulations that they require you to follow.

Seeded Lawns - If lawn seeding is part of your home purchase, consider this as the first step in establishing your yard. Remember that the forces of nature are far stronger than grass seed. You will need to over-seed at some point, perhaps more than once. Heavy storms can cause washouts and erosion that you will need to correct. It generally takes at least three growing seasons to establish a good lawn, longer if weather conditions are difficult or if you do not have the time to devote to lawn care. Before over-seeding, remember to fill any slight depressions with a light layer of topsoil. Minimize traffic of all kinds on newly seeded areas and avoid weed killer for at least 120 days. Keep the seed moist, not wet.

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:

- 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.
- Water on grass acts like a magnifying glass and will burn your new sod. Therefore, early morning or late evening is best. Avoid watering after 8:00 am or before 6:00 pm.
- New sod should be watered to the point that the soil is soft when you step on it.

- Water every day for seven days then cut back to once every other day. If temperatures are hot and dry, water more often; if precipitation occurs, water less.
-

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.

Sprinkler System (Irrigation) - If we included a sprinkler system with your home, we can have the installer demonstrate the system and make final adjustments shortly after you move in at your request. The installer will note and correct any deficiencies in the system at that time. Whether we install your sprinkler or you install it yourself, keep these points in mind:

- You are responsible for routine cleaning and adjusting of sprinkler heads as well as shutting the system down in the fall. Never install spray heads within three feet of the foundation. Failure to drain the system before freezing temperatures occur can result in broken lines, which will be your responsibility to repair. We suggest that you have the system blown out to ensure water is out of the lines. You may contact the office for a trade contractor reference.
- Remove the back flow preventer to avoid freezing and damaging the unit.
- Conduct weekly operational checks to ensure proper performance of the system.
- Direct sprinkler heads away from the home. Trickle or bubbler-type irrigation systems are recommended for use adjacent to your home's foundation.

Automatic timers permit you to water at optimum times whether you are at home, away, awake, or asleep. The amount of water provided to each zone can be accurately and consistently controlled and easily adjusted with a timed system. You may need to make adjustments to these settings periodically.

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 - Caring for existing trees, including pruning dead branches or removing these trees altogether is your responsibility. 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.
- Landscape fabric holds moisture in the ground and can cause root rot. Avoid installing landscape fabric and rock around trees and shrubs unless you leave a hole in the fabric large enough to provide good aeration around base of tree or shrub.
- Avoid piling excess soil around the base of your trees and shrubs because this can also cause root rot.
- Avoid tilling or planting flowerbeds around trees. This is especially important while trees are recovering from 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.
- Freeze/thaw cycles may result in vertical tearing of tree bark; this usually repairs itself over time.
- Trees and shrubs require regular inspection for insect infestation. Early detection and prompt treatment may prevent further damage.

Utility Lines - A slight depression may develop 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. Without maintenance, your yard will quickly begin to show weeds. 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. Maintaining landscaping is a homeowner responsibility. Plants, sod, and trees are excluded from warranty. Sprinkler/Irrigation systems are only covered for 30 days after closing, and freeze damage is excluded from warranty.

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

Humidifier

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

See also Condensation and Ventilation

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

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 splash blocks or downspout extensions in place to channel roof water away from your home. Clean gutters regularly, especially during the fall and early winter.

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.

Purchases or Stored Items - Carefully inspect items you bring into your home such as boxes that have been in storage or new house plants for any sign of mold, including musty odors.

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 to your system.
- Develop the habit of running the hood fan when you are cooking.
- Also run bath fans when bathrooms are in use.
- Connect your clothes dryer exhaust to the vent pipe. Clean the exhaust tube as needed to keep it clear and functioning efficiently.
- Air your house by opening windows for a time when 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. Mold is excluded from warranty.

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 selection sheets are your record of the paint and stain color names or numbers used in your home (see Chapter 3, "Your Home Selections").

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. 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. When possible, we leave any paint that is left over 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, except painting we perform as part of another warranty repair.

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.

Wood Grain - Because of wood characteristics, color variations will result when stain is applied to wood. This is natural and requires no repair. Wood grain may be visible on painted or stained trim, columns, etc. We do not provide corrections for this condition.

Parging

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The white, powdery substance that sometimes accumulates on parging 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.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm that foundation parging is complete and in acceptable condition during your homeowner orientation. We will repair areas needing attention which are noted during your homeowner orientation.

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.

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.

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 outside. 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. Some flex in tubs and showers is normal.

Freezing Pipes - Keep the garage doors closed to protect plumbing lines running through this area from freezing temperatures. **Set the heat at a minimum of 65 degrees if you are away during winter months.** In unusually frigid weather or if you will be gone more than a day or two, increase your heat and open cabinet doors to allow warm air to circulate around pipes. Leaving faucets dripping inside the home is one of the best methods to prevent frozen pipes. Use an ordinary hair dryer to thaw pipes that are frozen. Never use an open flame.

Jetted Tubs - If your home includes a jetted tub follow manufacturer directions for its use and care. Never operate the jets unless the water level is at least one inch above the jets. Clean and disinfect the system every one to two months, depending on usage. Avoid abrasive cleansers which will damage the surface and make keeping it clean difficult.

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.

Outside Faucets - **You must remove hoses during cold weather, even if the faucet is located in your garage.** If a hose is left attached, the water that remains in the hose can freeze and expand back into the pipe, causing a break in the line. Repair of a broken line that feeds an exterior faucet is a maintenance item. We recommend that you get in the habit of always removing any hose you use from any exterior or garage faucet.

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.

Septic Systems - We install septic systems as designed and specified by the local authority. We will correct problems caused by improper installation. If consumer action or negligence is the cause, Homeowner is responsible for correcting the problem. Do not exceed the water capacity, place non-biodegradable items into the system, place non-permeable surfaces over the system, or allow vehicles to drive or park over the disposal area. Maintain the system regularly to include pumping as needed.

Shut-Offs - Typically, the water supply can be shut-off entirely in two locations. The first is at the meter and the second is in the home. Use the shut off at the meter for major water emergencies such as a water line break or when you install a sprinkler system. Familiarize yourself with the main shutoff valve in the home in the event of an emergency. See also Extended Absence. 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.

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. Please note that it may take more time for hot water to reach certain areas of the home.

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 inside your home is open.
- Main shut off at the street is open.
- 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 in 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 emergency number.
- 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 (hose bibs) 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.

Fiberglass Fixtures - Tub and shower repairs are very common and do not void any manufacturer warranties.

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.

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.

Resilient (Vinyl) Flooring

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Although resilient floors are designed for minimum care, they do have maintenance needs. Follow any manufacturer's specific recommendations for care and cleaning.

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

Limit Water - Wipe up spills and vacuum crumbs instead of washing resilient floors frequently with water. Avoid getting large amounts of water on the floor from baths and showers. Limit mopping or washing with water; excessive amounts of water on resilient floors can penetrate seams and get under edges, causing the material to lift and curl.

Moving Furniture - Moving appliances across resilient floor covering can result in tears and wrinkles. Install coasters on furniture legs to prevent damage. If you damage the resilient floor, you can have it successfully patched by professionals. If any remnants remain when installation of your floor covering is complete, we leave them in the hope that having the matching dye lot will make such repairs less apparent.

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

Seams - Any brand or type of resilient flooring may separate slightly due to shrinkage. Seams can lift or curl if excessive moisture is allowed to penetrate them. You can use a special caulking at tub or floor joints to seal seams at those locations.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm that resilient floor covering is in acceptable condition during your new home orientation. Our limited warranty excludes damage to resilient floors caused by moving furniture or appliances into the home. We can assist you in contacting professionals who can repair any damage that occurs after your move-in. We are not responsible for discontinued selections.

Lifting - We will repair lifting or bubbling and nail pops that appear on the surface.

Seams - Seams will occur and are sealed at the time of installation. We will correct gaps in excess of 1/32 inch when viewed under normal lighting conditions and from a normal viewing position. Note that strong sun light can cause a shadow and call attention to a seam.

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.

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

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

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.

See also Tabbing

TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: ROOF LEAK

Please keep in mind that roof leaks cannot be repaired while the roof is wet. However, you should report the condition immediately so repairs can be made as soon as conditions dry out, 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 eaves trough 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, or some action you have taken, such as walking on the roof. Roof repairs are made only when the roof is dry.

Ice Damming - We will repair damage from ice damming if it results from a demonstrated defect in work or materials we supplied. However, most of the time ice damming occurs naturally, is excluded from warranty, and damage that results may be covered by your homeowner insurance.

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

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

Shower Doors or Tub Enclosures

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

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.

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

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

Hardboard - Use non-abrasive household cleaners. Test the cleaner on a small area prior to large scale use. Rinse surface thoroughly after cleaning. If power washers are used be certain that the pressure is on a low setting. Touch up paint is sold through most manufacturers. Paint touch up is best applied only to the direct area with a small artist brush or Q-tip. Hardboard siding can be re painted a different color but the surface must be cleaned and prepped with primer.

Vinyl - Vinyl siding expands in hot weather and contracts in cold weather; a popping noise can occur along with these changes. Vinyl siding will occasionally require cleaning. Start at the top to avoid streaking and use a brush such as you would use on a car and a cleaning product recommended by your siding manufacturer. Follow directions carefully. Power-washing should be completed by professionals only, to avoid damage or water intrusion.

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.

Cracks and Chips - Cement board siding is susceptible to the same characteristic limitations as other cement products. Cracks more than 2" in length and 1/8" in average width are generally considered excessive. Chips or dents are excluded from warranty.

Loose Siding - If siding becomes detached from the home due to installation error we will correct it.

Wavy Siding - Some waviness in siding is to be expected. See manufacturer installation instructions; waves or similar distortions in vinyl siding are generally considered excessive only if they exceed 1/2 inch in 32 inches.

See manufactured products section

Smart Home Technology

We confirm that all Smart Home devices are in acceptable condition and installed correctly during your orientation. We assign all Smart Home warranties to you, effective on the date of closing. Each of the Smart Home manufacturers warrant their products directly to you according to the terms and conditions of those written warranties. It is the Homeowner's responsibility to set up each Smart Home device.

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

Squeaks: Stair vibration or squeaks are excluded from warranty coverage.

Structured Wiring (Cable, Internet)

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Your home is equipped with structured (low voltage wiring) connections as shown on the blueprints and selection sheets. Initiating service, additions to these services, and moving outlets for decorating purposes or convenience are your responsibilities.

Structured Wiring - Structured wiring is a term used to describe many different types of residential wiring products that all have the same basic purpose—to effectively distribute a variety of data signals throughout your home. Signal types supported range from television to computer networks. Structured wiring also may include pre-wiring for an alarm system and/or pre-wiring for a surround sound entertainment system. The type of wires and components provided is listed in your home's specifications. While some systems and components may be "smart" we make no representations that the included technology is the latest cutting-edge, or future-proof. Our intention is to provide a basic start for most users. If you have specific tech requirements, please let us know at the time of contract, or at the latest during the Pre-Drywall (Frame Stage) tour.

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will repair wiring that does not perform as intended from the main service box and throughout the home. From the service box outward, care of the wiring is the responsibility of the local service provider.

Termites

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

We treat your home for termites and provide you with a certificate confirming that treatment at closing. Plan to renew this service 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.
- Inspect under the carpet tack strip by lifting the edge of carpet in the corner of a room. The tack strip is untreated and provides a convenient path for termites through your home.
- 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.
- Maintain a safe zone of at least two feet in width around the perimeter of your home. Avoid planting grass or shrubs, installing any sprinkler device, or digging of any kind in this area.

If you believe you see signs of termites or if you have any questions, contact your termite treatment company for guidance, and let us know as well.

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.

See also Pests and Wildlife

Utility Locations

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Work that includes digging, augers, 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.

Daily Habits

Your daily habits can help keep your home well-ventilated. Develop the habit of running the hood fan when you are cooking. Run your bath fans for a minimum of 30 minutes after bathing or showering.

See also Condensation

One-Year Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

Water Heater-Electric

Homeowner Care and Maintenance Guidelines

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

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

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

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 - Higher settings can waste energy dollars and increase the danger of injury from scalding. Hot water will take longer to arrive at sinks, tubs, and showers that are farther from the water heater. The cool water in the lines must be purged before hot water reaches the fixture.

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 - 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. 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 concrete slabs. 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.

Cleaning - Clean during moderate temperatures with only a mild soap and warm water using a sponge or soft cloth and dry with a towel. Avoid abrasive cleaners, commercial glass cleaner, razors, brushes, or scrubbing devices of any kind. Minor scratches can often be minimized by rubbing with a mild automotive polish.

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

Screen Storage and Maintenance - Many homeowners remove and store screens for the winter to allow more light into the home. To make re-installation more convenient, label each screen as you remove it. Use caution: Screens perforate easily and the frames bend if they are not handled with care. Prior to re-installing the screens, clean them with a gentle spray of water.

Sliding Glass Doors - Sliding glass doors are made with tempered glass, which is more difficult to break than ordinary glass. If broken, tempered glass breaks into small circular pieces rather than large splinters which can easily cause injury. Keep sliding door tracks clean 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. Contact the manufacturer to check on their current policy before you apply such coatings.

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.

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.

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).

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

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.

Rough-Sawn Columns - We use high grade solid wood rough sawn columns. Timbers will “season” or get acclimated to surrounding conditions during the first 18 months. Some checking (large cracks) may occur; these are not a defect and not a structural concern. The outer fibers lose moisture to the surrounding atmosphere and attempt to shrink, but the inner portion of the timber member loses moisture at a much slower rate resulting in cracks or “checks.” The checking process will stabilize as the moisture content of the timber reaches equilibrium. Checking is a normal and natural characteristic of wood, not a defect.

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>

Maintenance Schedule

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

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

<i>Task</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>D</i>