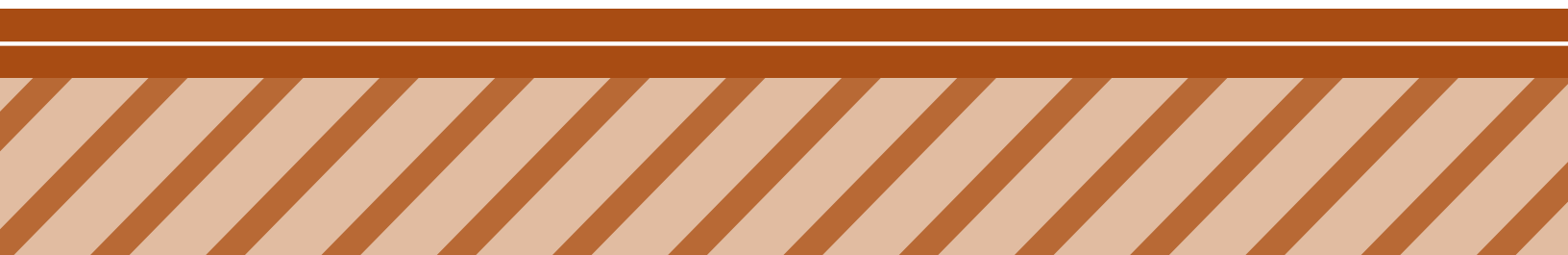




# NEW HOME CARE GUIDELINES







# New Home Care Guidelines

## Version 1.0

This manual provides basic Homeowner Care and Maintenance guidelines for weather-sensitive issues and general maintenance suggestions that can affect your home.

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## Chapter 1: Semi-Annual Checklist

Please use these seasonal lists to perform routine maintenance checks on your home.

**Routine maintenance is the responsibility of the homeowner.**

### Monthly

- Check the garage door safety mechanism.
- Test GFCI electrical outlets monthly.
- Clean/replace furnace filters. **It is important that this is checked monthly. The furnace filter should be changed at least once every three months. A dirty furnace filter can cause damage to your furnace/HVAC unit and any damages incurred are not covered under warranty.**

### Fall/Winter

- Remove hoses from all outdoor spigots and shut off supply to and drain spigot.
- Clean gutters.
- Adjust and clean door thresholds.
- Check weather-stripping and sweeps on doors and replace as needed.
- Caulk/paint exterior trim as needed.
- Caulk tubs, showers and sinks.
- Check ceramic tile- seal/re-grout as needed.
- Test the furnace - have a trial run early in the Fall.
- Caulk around all windows, doors, countertops, sinks as needed.
- Inspect fireplace.
- Clean and wax cabinets. This will prevent warping, cracking and drying out of the wood.
- When using a humidifier, follow the recommendations as set by the manufacturer. Settings will change as the weather fluctuates.
- Check alignment of gutters, downspouts and splash blocks to ensure water is properly diverted away from the home.

### Spring/Summer

- Clean condensation lines.
- Check ceramic tile and reseal/re-grout as needed.
- Check granite counter tops and reseal as needed.
- Adjust and clean door thresholds.
- Check weather-stripping and sweeps on doors, replace as needed.
- Clean all window tracks especially the egress windows.
- Inspect all doors for proper operation.
- Tighten any loose doorknobs.
- Clean weep holes on all windows and door sliders.
- Caulk/paint exterior trim as needed.
- Test the air conditioner- have a trial run early in the Spring. (It's also a good idea to have a certified Heating and Cooling Contractor perform an annual check-up on the system.)
- Caulk around all windows, doors, countertops, sinks as needed.

- Shut-off outside spigot and turn on supply line in house to use for outside water.
- Inspect the roof for snow/ice damage - repair as required.
- Test the smoke detector for proper operation by removing battery and testing battery for strength. Before reinstalling depress test button to reset detector and then reinstall battery.
- Clean and wax cabinets. This will prevent the wood from warping, cracking, and drying out.
- Check and clean dryer vents and the vent duct to remove any lint or obstructions, which could spark a fire or trap moisture that could promote mold growth.
- When using a humidifier, follow the recommendations as set by the manufacturer. Settings will change as the weather fluctuates.
- Check alignment of gutters and downspouts to ensure water is properly diverted away from the home.

## **Chapter 2: Leaks and Moisture Damage**

At some time, your home could experience a leak. It may be a roof leak, plumbing leak or some other source. Moisture caused by leaks or other sources can result in damages to your home if not addressed immediately. It is your responsibility to report leaks within the first 24 hours. A leak could be as damaging to your home as a fire if not addressed quickly. AE Moyle is not responsible for any damages caused by leaks that are not addressed in a timely manner. AE Moyle is not responsible for any consequential damages due to water leaks or moisture damage.

### **Plumbing Leaks**

- Turn off water at main shutoff valve (the shutoff valve is typically located in the basement or a closet with a slab style foundation).
- Contact your Plumbing Contractor on their emergency number located on the water heater.
- If the Plumbing Contractor does not respond, contact the Customer Care Department or the after-hours emergency number located in the New Home Manual.
- Thoroughly dry the area around the leak to prevent lingering moisture. The use of fans will help expedite the drying process.
- Move nearby items that may have been damaged or can be damaged by extended exposure to moisture. Items that are damaged from water or extended exposure to moisture are considered consequential damages and should be reported to your homeowner's insurance. AE Moyle is not responsible to cover these items.

### **Roof and Other Leaks**

- Call AE Moyle Customer Care Department, then follow the prompts for your area.
- Thoroughly dry the area around the leak to prevent lingering moisture. The use of fans will help expedite the drying process.

- Move nearby items that may have been damaged or can be damaged by extended exposure to moisture. Items that are damaged from water or extended exposure to moisture are considered consequential damages and should be reported to your homeowners insurance. AE Moyle is not responsible to cover these items.

## Chapter 3: Critical Weather-Sensitive Items

### Frozen Pipes

When the temperature drops below 32°F, water pipes can freeze. Frozen pipes can burst and flood the home when they thaw. When a pipe bursts from the freeze, you will either hear or see the water leaking out. If you suspect a frozen water pipe, please turn off the water at the main shut-off valve to stop flooding and water loss should a pipe burst.

- If you have elected to include a basement in your home and later decide to finish your basement, care should be taken to ensure that the plumbing lines are not isolated from the heating source without insulation being added. Water shut offs need to remain accessible.
  - As a new homeowner, it is critical that you spend time going through your home before and after a thawing period to look and listen for any evidence of water that may result from a burst pipe. ***(Please note: frozen or burst pipes are only warrantied during the first year if the temperature at the time of damage is zero degrees Fahrenheit (0°F) or above, and if the failure was due to a building defect.***
    - Suggestions to prevent frozen pipes:
      - a. Remove garden hose and any attachments from the spigot before cold weather to prevent the hose bib (sillcock) from freezing.
      - b. Keep your home heated at a comfortable temperature - at least 65°F.
      - c. Do not leave the garage door open for extended periods of time.
    - During extremely low temperatures:
      - a. Keep all the faucets, both hot and cold, dripping at a slow pace.
      - b. Leave closet and cabinet doors open so that the pipes can be exposed to warm air.
      - c. Keep garage doors closed.
- If the temperature drops to below zero (0°F) for an extended period of time, it is possible that pipes may freeze even if the above precautions are taken.***
- When leaving the home for an extended time during cold weather it is best to:
    - a. Shut off the water supply at the water meter.

- b. Drain all the pipes by opening all the faucets and flushing the toilets or hire a plumber to flush the water out of the lines.
- c. Keep heat on in the home – at least 65°F.

## **Ice Damming on Roof**

Michigan and Indiana have freeze-thaw cycles more frequently than most states. It is common for winter storms to be followed by relatively mild temperatures, which result in the freeze-thaw cycles. These variations in temperatures can result in a build-up of ice, known as ice damming, in the shingles, gutters, and roof valleys.

During prolonged cold spells, ice can build up at the roof eaves. This build-up can occur when snow and ice accumulate and the roof, gutters and downspouts freeze up. The ice will begin forming at the lower portion of valleys and gutters. As this ice and snow mass increases in size, it pushes up and penetrates under the shingles, valleys, and soffit areas of the home. Since homes are made to shed water downward, this upward pushing of the ice is not normal and is considered an “Act of God”, or something that cannot be controlled or protected under warranty. **In the event of a leak or damage resulting from this condition, contact your insurance carrier immediately.**

## **High Winds**

Damage to shingles or siding from high winds/gusts or sustained winds of 60 miles per hour or more is not covered under warranty. **Report any property damage from high winds/gusts to your insurance carrier immediately.** (For additional information, see the Roofing section of this manual)

## **Winterizing Your Home**

When sub-zero temperatures are combined with wind, various problems may occur. If the steps below are followed, problems should be minimized.

- Open cabinet doors located on or near outside walls to expose the water lines to warm air.
- Maintain a slow stream of water running from all faucets, tubs and showers.
- Remove the garden hose and all attachments from the spigot before cold weather to prevent the hose bib (sillcock) from freezing. Shut off the supply line to the spigot and open up hose bib to let water drain out to keep it from freezing. (Reverse this procedure in the spring to use water hose bib again.)
- Keep garage doors closed.
- Make sure the fireplace damper is closed when the fireplace is not in use.

## **Exterior Concrete (Driveways, Walks, Patios, and Porches)**

- Protect exterior concrete surfaces. Avoid using de-icing material such as salt, which can damage concrete. Plain sand will give a safer skid resistance to the ice.

- As a yearly homeowner-maintenance project, caulk cracks with a waterproof concrete caulking material prior to applying water repellent. It is best to do this in consistent temperatures of 50°F or warmer to achieve optimum results.
- Apply water repellent (containing silane/siloxane) to drives, walks, steps, and porches as a yearly homeowner-maintenance project. This will help to reduce porosity and potential damage from the elements (road salts and other chemicals that vehicles may drip onto the concrete). This should be applied in consistent temperatures over 60°F. Most home improvement stores carry concrete water repellent.

## **Vents or Louvers**

- Vents or louvers allowing rain or snow to enter under strong wind conditions are not a warranted item. Any damage resulting from rain or snow infiltration should be reported to your insurance carrier immediately.
- Be sure to check your vents and louvered vent covers on a regular basis for any damage and repair or replace as necessary.
- Occasionally, animals may take up residence in vents and cause blockages or additional damage. Professionals may need to be called in to remove them from these areas and any damage caused should be repaired. AE Moyle does not cover pests and/or rodents.

## **Chapter 4: Care and Maintenance Guidelines**

### **Air Conditioning**

Air conditioning can be a wonderful contribution to the comfort of your home. However, it is often used improperly and inefficiently, which results in wasted energy and creates frustration.

To fully and efficiently utilize the air conditioning system, it is important to understand that air conditioning is a total, whole-house system. Air-conditioning is the process of treating air to simultaneously control the temperature, humidity and cleanliness of the conditioned space. Be aware that outside air disrupts the cycle. Shield the inside of your home from direct and indirect sunlight during the time when you are running the air conditioning. Close windows, drapes, and blinds for best efficiency. Comfortable conditions vary based upon personal preference. The heating and cooling system must maintain the proper balance between temperature, relative humidity and air motion for the desired comfort.

***Note:*** *At the time of installation, outside temperatures must be at or above a consistent 60°F in order to fully charge the air conditioning system. While the system comes with a “factory charge,” the outside temperature may have been too low to verify that the air conditioner was working properly.*

A common problem for air conditioning is turning the thermostat off and on too frequently. This can cause an overload of the compressor motor that will then trip the breaker. To

avoid unnecessary breakdowns, refer to the manufacturer's manual for operating instructions.

Once OUTSIDE temperatures reach a consistent warm temperature:

- Switch the thermostat to the “COOL” position.
- Wait approximately one hour and then check the registers for cool air.
- Check for frost build-up on the lines or for condensation gathering around the furnace area.
- If you experience cool air coming from the registers and there is no frost or condensation gathering anywhere, you should be set for the summer.
- Remember to **change your furnace filter at least once every three months**. This is especially important when using your air conditioning.

If you are experiencing a “no cool air” situation, check the following:

- Thermostat temperature setting & switches.
- Battery on the thermostat, if applicable.
- AC breaker on the electrical panel.
- AC breaker outside the house near the AC unit.
- ON/OFF switch on furnace (see manufacturer's book for location).
- Safety switch for the fan cover.

If after checking all of these items, you:

- Do not feel cool air coming from the registers.
- Find frost build-up on the large black insulated line at the indoor furnace/coil or at the large black line outside at the air conditioner.
- Find a condensation puddle.

**Then, turn off the air conditioner and call your Heating & Cooling Contractor for assistance.**

Please remember to inform the Heating & Cooling Contractor that you are an AE Moyle customer. This will help ensure that you receive immediate assistance. This information is found on the subcontractors' name sticker on the side of the furnace.

*Reminder:* Replace the filter at least once every three months. Any plugged filters could cause the air conditioning lines to freeze up. If this happens, the A/C unit needs to be turned off and allowed to thaw out, at which point, condensation will develop and may cause water damage that is consequential and is not covered under warranty.

Condensation lines can clog under normal use. This is a homeowner maintenance item. Unobstructed lines will be provided at time of occupancy. Periodic cleaning of these lines with a shop-vac should keep them clean.

Central air conditioners are complex. A certified Heating and Cooling Contractor should perform an annual check-up. Running a dirty or poorly lubricated air conditioner will

decrease its efficiency and shorten its life. A unit with a low coolant level will not cool adequately and will require more money and energy to operate as it struggles to keep up.

The condenser should not be enclosed and must be in a level position. It is important to keep the area around the compressor clear of debris and level. Remove grass clippings, leaves, etc., on a regular basis. Please note that with poor airflow, the system will not function properly and can result in damage to the mechanism.

Register Locations - Our Heating and Cooling Contractors engineer each system to meet or exceed the performance standards specified by the Mechanical Code. We do not specify register locations because the contractor is responsible to ensure that their installation meets these standards. Register locations may vary for several reasons, including (but not limited to) design variations, framing variations due to elevation or floor plan changes, variations in plumbing and/or electrical installations.

## **Appliances**

In accordance with the terms and conditions of the written warranties, the manufacturers guarantee all appliances. Manufacturers' literature is left in the kitchen drawer/cabinet and is referenced during the New Home Orientation process. Be sure to read the information thoroughly before using the appliance. The appliances are warranted directly to you in accordance with the terms and conditions of written warranties supplied by the manufacturer. If any issues arise with your appliances after the one year warranty period you will need to contact the manufacturer's Customer Care Department directly. Please refer to your appliance manuals for that specific information.

**Please remember to mail any warranty registration cards directly to the manufacturer upon taking possession of your home.**

## **Cabinets**

New cabinets should be treated like furniture. Slight color variations in cabinets will occur in some finishes. These variations are a normal part of the wood finish and are not a defect.

Avoid using cleaners that contain bleach, ammonia, or state on the label that they contain any type of abrasives. These cleaners can cause damage to the cabinet finish. If a spill occurs, it is important to clean up the spill and dry the surface immediately. A spill left unattended can be absorbed and cause damage.

Refer to the manufacturer's recommendations for cleaning tips. (Reminder: Never use a dishcloth to clean or dry cabinet exteriors or interiors as detergent or grease remnants may be within the dishcloth.)

**Do not overload drawers or shelves with heavy glassware, dishes, silverware, etc. Distribute the weight as evenly as possible to prevent sagging. Excessive weight to drawers and shelves can void the warranty.**

## **Caulking**

All building materials are subject to expansion and contraction due to changes in temperature and humidity. This results in separation between materials.

The effects of this expansion and contraction can be seen in small cracks in the foundation, drywall, paint, etc. This is especially common where moldings meet drywall, at mitered corners and where tile grout meets tubs or sinks. This is normal. All interior caulking shrinks and deteriorates over time. This is a regular semi-annual homeowner maintenance responsibility. (Please see Semi-Annual Checklist for more details). Shrinkage of lumber components is most noticeable during the first year, but typically continues into the second year. In most cases, caulking and paint is all that is needed to repair this shrinkage. This is also a homeowner maintenance responsibility.

## **Concrete**

Concrete expands and contracts with temperature changes. Because the curing of concrete is a chemical process and can take up to one year to complete, changes in size and strength are to be expected. It is very difficult to control the effects of water evaporation, air bubbles within the concrete, air, humidity and wind. In addition, concrete surface discoloration and color variations are not controllable and are not considered a defect.

Michigan and Indiana are classified as a Severe Weather Region for concrete. The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) defines a severe weather region as outdoor exposure in a cold climate where concrete may be exposed to the use of deicing salts or where there may be a continuous presence of moisture during frequent cycles of freezing and thawing. Naturally occurring conditions affect concrete in numerous ways.

Exposure to severe weather can damage driveways, walks, curbs, steps, porches and slabs. Deicing salts from either direct application or from being carried onto an area from the undercarriage of a car, salt trucks, foot traffic, etc. can cause deterioration to concrete.

Pitting, spalling, or scaling can occur when salt or deicers are applied directly to the surface of the concrete. These materials withdraw moisture and promote expansion and contraction of the concrete during the freeze-thaw cycles. Other chemicals, such as lawn fertilizer, can chemically attack the surface of the concrete, resulting in spalling, scaling and pitting. These chemicals are controllable and are the responsibility of the homeowner.

**We recommend that homeowners avoid all vehicle traffic on the driveway within 30 days of the date installed.** This time frame is important to allow the concrete sufficient time to cure. Until concrete has cured, it cannot withstand extreme weight such as moving

vans, school buses or garbage trucks. It is especially important to limit the amount of weight placed on the concrete during the first year because it needs sufficient time to cure and gain strength.

## **Humidity, Condensation & Mold Prevention**

### **Humidity**

One of the many benefits of our homes are they are built very air tight to meet the stringent Energy Smart requirements. They provide better insulating properties and a cleaner, more comfortable living environment than older homes and most new homes. In order to benefit from these improvements, you must monitor and properly manage one of the most important conditions with a high-efficiency home, which is moisture. The more air tight a home is, the less fresh air will circulate within the home. This air inside your home is saturated with water vapor from the building components such as concrete, lumber, drywall and paint. Therefore, there will be a significant amount of moisture in the air for the first few years of occupancy. This moisture in the air is more commonly referred to as humidity. This humidity should be managed, especially in these first few years, as the moisture in the building components balances to more stable humidity levels. Depending on the volume of daily activities such as showering or cooking, this period of time could be much longer. As a new homeowner it is important to monitor the moisture levels in your home. Here are a few examples of humidity issues:

Common signs of high humidity (Discontinue humidifier use and use dehumidifier if needed)

- Frost or condensation on windows
- Condensation on basement walls that forms wet area on basement floor – common during warm seasons
- Moisture visible in the unfinished basement wall cavities – common during warm seasons
- Hardwood floor buckling or cupping
- Visible mold in corners of the wall/ceiling or on the baseboards of a finished basement

Common signs of low humidity (Requires use of humidifier)

- Static electricity
- Irritated throat and nasal passages (nose bleeds)
- Hardwood floor separation or cracking
- Trim or cabinets pulling away from the wall or ceiling

Besides these visual signs, you can also purchase an inexpensive hygrometer at most hardware stores that will measure the internal humidity in the home. Then you can use the chart below as a reference for proper humidity levels within the home compared to outdoor temperatures. If you purchased a humidifier with your new home, there will be a similar guide on the controls reflecting outdoor temperatures. Please note the guide below is only a reference because there are several other factors that could change the

appropriate level of humidification and you should refer to the common signs of humidity issues above for proper action.

#### **General Guideline for Indoor Humidity\***

| <b>Outdoor Temperature</b> | <b>Ideal Indoor Humidity</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Above 40 degrees           | Not more than 55 percent     |
| 20 to 40 degrees           | Not more than 40 percent     |
| 10 to 20 degrees           | Not more than 35 percent     |
| 0 to 10 degrees            | Not more than 30 percent     |
| -10 to 0 degrees           | Not more than 25 percent     |
| -20 to -10 degrees         | Not more than 20 percent     |

*\* This chart is to be used as a general reference only. As the homeowner, you are responsible for maintaining the proper humidity specific to your home.*

AE Moyle does not warranty any of the above items and it is the sole responsibility of the homeowner to maintain them. Please refer to your New Home Performance Guidelines Manual for further information.

#### **Condensation**

Condensation is the visible sign of the presence of humidity. Humidity (also known as water vapor, moisture and steam) is the presence of water (in gas form) in the air. Moisture in wet air seeks out drier air to mix with. This is known as vapor pressure. This vapor pressure allows moisture indoors to penetrate through wood, drywall, brick, cement, etc. to escape to the drier air outside.

One of the most disturbing problems in a new home is condensation. It may look as if moisture is seeping through basement walls, pipes are leaking, or water is coming through the windows. Condensation takes place wherever warm, moist air inside the home comes in contact with a colder surface, such as a window, basement wall or an exposed pipe.

Condensation is more common in new homes. The foundations of the home are built by mixing concrete and water. The water slowly evaporates as concrete cures, which raises the inside air moisture content above normal. Proper ventilation will facilitate a normal drying-out process. Trying to speed up the process by creating extremely high temperatures during the winter would cause the foundation to dry out unevenly, exaggerating the effects of normal shrinkage. Instead, use a fan or dehumidifier in basements during the summer months to avoid moisture build up and potential mold/mildew problems.

#### **Mold**

Mold is a type of fungus which is naturally occurring and is spread by means of microscopic spores which travel via wind. These mold spores can be found anywhere life is supported; however, they need a certain environment to grow which is comprised of a food source, a temperate climate (between 40° F and 100° F) and moisture. A food source can be anything from plant matter such as leaves to household items such as furniture,

carpet or drywall. If enough moisture remains on a food source or growing medium, mold can develop in as little as 24 to 48 hours.

Residential home construction is not, and cannot be, designed to exclude mold spores, however homeowners can take steps to reduce or eliminate mold growth. Since moisture is the only factor that can be controlled in a residential setting, it's imperative that good housekeeping and maintenance practices be upheld. The responsibility falls on the homeowner for any damage, costs, or expenses caused by mold.

### **Consequences of Mold**

Not all types of mold are harmful, however certain strains of mold have been shown to have adverse health effects in susceptible persons. The most common effects are allergic reactions, including skin irritation, watery eyes, runny nose, coughing, sneezing, congestion, sore throat and headache. People with weakened immune diseases may also be at risk for infection.

### **Additional Homeowner Steps to Reduce Mold Growth:**

In addition to managing humidity noted in the Humidity section, here are some additional steps to reduce mold growth.

- Check items for signs of mold before bringing them into the home. This includes potted house plants, furniture, clothing items, bedding, etc.
- Ensure dryer vents to the exterior of the home are in good shape and clear of obstructions
- Utilize kitchen and bathroom fans to circulate air and dry wet surfaces when needed
- Promptly clean up spills
- Inspect for leaks on a regular basis. Look for discoloration in drywall or bubbling or warping in flooring and repair any leaks promptly
- Regular vacuuming and cleaning will help reduce the occurrence of mold. Mild bleach solutions and most tile cleaners work very well to keep mold at bay
- Should mold develop, clean the affected surface with a mild bleach solution if surface is color safe or discard item if surface is porous. Homeowner should call a qualified professional cleaner if mold growth is severe

### **Cosmetic Items**

The BUYER/OWNER has not contracted with the BUILDER to cover ordinary wear and tear or other occurrences subsequent to construction that affect the condition of features of the house. Chips, scratches or mars in the tile, woodwork, walls, porcelain, brick, mirrors, plumbing fixtures, marble, granite, and Formica tops, lighting fixtures, kitchen and other appliances, doors, paneling, siding, screens, windows, carpet, vinyl floors, cabinets and the like that are not noted prior to occupancy by the BUYER/OWNER or any damage done by the homeowner are non-warrantable conditions, and the upkeep of any cosmetic aspect of the house is the BUYER/OWNER's responsibility.

## **Countertops**

### **Laminate**

Keep countertop seams dry. Excessive amounts of standing water in or near seams may prevent the glue from bonding properly. The manufacturer does not warranty damage caused by excessive water in seam areas. Use caution when using rubber drain mats. They can trap moisture beneath them causing the countertop to warp and blister.

Always use a cutting board. Protect the counter from extremely hot pans. Avoid abrasive cleaners that will damage the luster of the surface and inhibit its resistance to stains.

Shiny laminate surfaces require extra care to protect the surface from scratching. Moving a dish, cup or other items across the surface will cause scratches more easily seen than on a matte surface. If you choose a shiny laminate, take extra care to protect its surface.

Even though every precaution is taken during the construction process to protect the materials in the home, minor damage may occur to countertops. If a repair is required, only qualified professionals are used as they utilize the same repair process as the product manufacturers.

### **Simulated Marble**

Even though the surface of cultured or simulated marble is very hard, it can be scratched. Use caution with sharp objects such as knives, scissors, and the bottoms of containers. Damage due to homeowner usage is not warranted. Follow manufacturer's guidelines and recommendations for care and maintenance of marble surfaces.

### **Granite**

Granite countertops are composed of natural materials and are subject to variations in background color, veining distribution and pattern. Fissures, dry seams and pitting are naturally occurring features in granite and should not be considered a defect. These natural characteristics will not change over time and in no way will affect the performance of the granite. All slabs are inspected prior to the installation.

- **Staining:** Granite countertops are semi-porous; however, they will resist staining when properly sealed and maintained. Most stains that occur can be removed with a poultice.
- **Cleaning:** The manufacturer recommends that you do not use anything other than lukewarm water or Windex to clean the granite top.
- **Scratching:** Granite countertops are extremely hard surfaces and very resistant to scratching. Although knives will not cause scratches to it in most cases, the granite top should not be used as a cutting surface as it will dull your knives.

- **Chips:** When fabricating countertops, chipping at the edges and corners may occur. These chips are normally patched and are considered normal characteristics when dealing with natural stone.
- **Heat:** Granite countertops are heat resistant and unlikely to burn or scorch. However, thermal shock or cracks may occur if the countertop is subjected to extreme temperature changes. The manufacturer recommends that you protect your countertop from extreme heat by using trivets or hot pads.
- **Cut-outs:** The material from the sink and cook top cut-outs are not part of the finished product and will not be made available to the customer.
- **Granite Sealers:** Granite sealers penetrate deep into the granite pores and help prevent absorption of water and oils, which can leave stains. Generally speaking, the higher the quality (and price), the longer the life span of the sealer. Some sealers can provide protection for up to 10 years. The life expectancy of the sealer you purchase should be clearly marked on the product label. The manufacturer recommends not waiting for the old sealer to wear off before applying additional coats. It is very important that you follow the sealer product instructions to the letter to insure the best possible seal and resistance to staining.

## Quartz

Quartz countertops are composed of the mineral quartz which is highly resistant to both chemical and mechanical weathering. Although they are very durable, quartz does require some care and routine maintenance. All slabs are inspected prior to the installation.

- **Staining:** Quartz countertops are non-porous; however, they can still be stained by food, grease and other items. Most stains that occur can be removed with a degreaser or disinfectant cleaner that does not contain bleach. Harsh chemicals can harm your countertop. Be sure to wipe up spill as soon as possible.
- **Cleaning:** The manufacturer recommends that you use lukewarm water and soap. Look for cleaners developed for quartz countertops specifically.
- **Scratching:** Quartz countertops are resistant to scratching, but not scratch proof. Use a cutting board to avoid damaged to your countertop.
- **Heat:** Quartz countertops can be damaged by heat. The manufacturer recommends that you protect your countertop from extreme heat by using trivets or hot pads.
- **Cut-outs:** The material from the sink and cook top cut-outs are not part of the finished product and will not be made available to the customer.
- **Sealers:** Quartz countertops are naturally glossy and do not require any sealers.

## **Doors**

Interior doors will often develop slight bows, especially during the winter season when they are exposed to varying climate conditions that are common during construction. These bows will often disappear after occupancy when the temperature and humidity within the home stabilizes. **Homeowners are asked to wait at least 9 months after occupancy before reporting a warped door condition.** Installation of a whole house humidifier will help reduce the occurrence of warp damage, as well as the shrinkage of other lumber products in the home. The humidifier should be run in the winter months only.

Putty, filler, or white latex acrylic (paintable) caulk can be used to fill any minor separations that may develop at mitered joints in the door trim and should be followed up with painting. This is the homeowner's responsibility as part of the proper care and maintenance of your home.

The standard door for all communities is a very stable insulated steel entry door. If your steel front door gets dented, it can be repaired. Contact a licensed trade contractor or check at your local hardware store for the appropriate bonding repair material.

Weather-stripping and/or thresholds on exterior doors will occasionally require an adjustment by the homeowner. During cold temperatures and high winds, some air infiltration is to be expected.

**Do not lubricate locks with graphite or any type of lubricant. Doing so will void the manufacturer warranty on the locks.**

## **Dryer Vents**

The dryer vent should be checked monthly to maintain a clear opening to avoid condensation in vent lines. At this time, the vent should also be checked for any evidence of animals that may try to gain access to the vent and cause damage. Additionally, the dryer is one of the largest users of electricity in the home and its lint screen should always be clean before each use. If the lint screen is clogged, an obstruction can occur in the vent which can increase not only the time it takes to dry clothing, but also increase the amount of electricity used. **Please note: a blocked lint screen or build-up in the venting system is a fire hazard and this is not covered under RWC Limited Warranty.** It is the homeowners' responsibility to maintain vent covers. (Please also see the Vents and Louvers section of this manual.)

## **Drywall**

### **General Information**

Drywall is a relatively inflexible gypsum material that is placed on the interior lumber surfaces of the home. All lumber contains natural flaws. These flaws may contribute to

the stress and strain on the drywall resulting in minor cracks. Due to the natural settling of materials and the “drying out” of a new home, minor drywall cracks may also develop at tape joints and corner bead areas.

Drywall cracks that exceed 1/8” in width or cracks that are visible from a distance of six feet, under normal lighting conditions, are considered a defect and should be reported to the Customer Care Department. (Normal lighting conditions are defined as indirect sunlight or medium artificial light. High-intensity lighting, direct sunlight, or artificial lighting aimed directly on an area is not considered within the definition of normal lighting. Likewise, scone lights that cast light directly on a wall surface are not within the definition of normal lighting.) **These repairs will be done only one time during the one-year coverage period, if selected. It is recommended that the request for repairs be made near the 12<sup>th</sup> month after closing, as the house will tend to stabilize itself near the end of the first year.**

If you chose to have the one-time repair, an appointment will be scheduled for the Customer Care Technician to meet with you to determine what items will be repaired. Following the inspection, up to two trips may be required for drywall repairs and paint touch-up. Remember, **a perfect match between original drywall texture and paint cannot be expected.** Please see the New Home Performance Guidelines for more information. AE Moyle is not required to repaint an entire wall or room when these repairs have been made. Cracks or nail pops that are covered by wallpaper will not be repaired. Any affected drywall areas to be repaired with walls painted by the homeowner before the expiration of the warranty will need to be touch-up painted by the homeowner and AE Moyle accepts no responsibility for the matching or application of the paint.

Tape cracking or breaking in situations caused by truss uplift is not covered under your warranty. (See Truss Uplift below.)

### **HOMEOWNER RESPONSIBILITY DURING DRYWALL REPAIRS**

The homeowner is responsible for the following actions prior to beginning repairs:

- Remove and protect any wall hangings or window treatments near areas to be repaired as well as any wall hangings on the other side of an interior wall if applicable.
- Move and protect any furniture or decorations near areas to be repaired.
- Provide clear access to the areas to be repaired.

The homeowner is responsible for the following actions after repairs are completed:

- Remove any drywall dust that may have formed on furniture, decorations, or wall hangings.
- Move all furniture or decorations back to their original locations.
- Re-hang any window treatments or wall hangings that were removed prior to repairs.

### **Truss Uplift**

The home building industry has made significant changes over the years. One such change is the shift to roof trusses instead of rafters and ceiling joists. Truss uplift is a

common phenomenon in homes built with roof trusses as opposed to rafters. When truss uplift occurs, the top floor ceilings can separate from the interior walls in the winter months due to the contraction of the wood trusses when they get cold. They will transition back down in the summer when the temperature warms back up. This is a homeowner maintenance responsibility as it is a cosmetic, non-structural problem.

Roof trusses will rise in the winter because the bottom chord of the truss is buried below the insulation. The insulation prevents the bottom chord from obtaining the same temperature and moisture content as the top chord. Even on the coldest days, while the cold winter air has high-relative humidity, the bottom chord is still warm. The top chords, which are above the insulation, get very cold in a ventilated attic. (While the bottom chords are warm and drying out, the top chords are doing just the opposite. The top chords absorb moisture from the air causing them to elongate.) With the top chords growing and the bottom chords shrinking, the truss arches up in the middle causing the ceilings to lift off the walls. This may cause the ceiling drywall to lift and can crack the drywall tape. In the summer, the cycle reverses itself.

## **Electrical**

### **Electrical Supply**

The main control panel contains electrical breakers that control all of the electrical power to the home. The breakers in this panel are labeled to indicate the area they control.

In the event of a total loss of power, check the main breaker in the main control panel. Then check with your local utility company to see if power is out in your area for some reason. Both of these sources should be checked prior to calling for service.

### **Circuit Breaker Operation**

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 back "ON". Switching the breaker directly from "tripped" to "on" will not restore service to the home. If you need to turn a circuit off to work on it for any reason, always test it first to make sure the power is off before proceeding.

### **Repeated Tripping of Circuits**

If a circuit trips repeatedly, unplug all the items connected to it and reset the breaker. If it trips when nothing is connected to it, call the Electrical Contractor listed on your emergency sticker located on the panel. If the circuit remains on, either the circuit was overloaded, or one of the items you unplugged is defective (worn cords can trip breakers).

### **Ground Fault Interrupter Circuits**

GFI (Ground Fault Interrupter) receptacles have a built-in element that senses fluctuations in power. Building codes for bath, kitchen, exterior, and garage outlets require these receptacles. Heavy appliances such as freezers or power tools can trip the GFI breaker. Excessive moisture can cause GFI's to trip. Do not plug a refrigerator or

food freezer into a GFI controlled outlet. A refrigerator or freezer in the garage should have its own dedicated circuit from the main control panel.

GFI circuits have test and reset buttons. These are pointed out during the New Home Orientation. Once each month the test button should be pressed to trip the circuit. To return service, press the reset button. If a GFI breaker trips during normal use, it may be an indication of a faulty appliance. Always check the GFI breaker before calling for service.

The Electrical Contractor may charge you for resetting a tripped breaker. If you have a question or are unsure about how to check for a tripped breaker, just phone the Electrical Contractor for advice. If the advice saves an unnecessary service call, everyone benefits.

### **Lighting**

If a light fails to come on, check to see if the bulb is loose or burned out. Also, check to see if the bulb is the correct wattage for the fixture. Improper wattage can cause damage to the fixture. Next check the circuit breakers. If you still have no power, contact the Electrical Contractor listed on your emergency reference sticker. Light bulbs are not something that is covered by your one-year warranty. This is considered a homeowner maintenance item.

### **Garbage Disposal**

There is an electrical outlet for the disposal under the sink. This outlet is controlled by the wall switch. An allen wrench is provided with the disposal to loosen a blockage. Follow the instructions provided with the disposal for proper use. Please reset the disposal unit before requesting a service call on your disposal unit.

### **Ceiling Fans**

**DO NOT** hang a ceiling fan from an existing ceiling light box without adding additional support to carry the extra weight. If you want ceiling fans after you move in, contact a certified electrician to install the proper support for a ceiling fan. Electrical work is usually best left to the professionals.

### **Fireplace**

Care for your fireplace can be as simple as wiping off dust and periodically vacuuming the fire box top and the valve compartment. Keep these areas clean from dust, cobwebs, debris, or pet hair. Use caution when cleaning these areas. Screw tips that have penetrated the sheet metal are very sharp and should be avoided. Please remember that when cleaning your fireplace, the unit should not be in use.

To maintain your fireplace, make sure all aspects of the unit are functional at least twice a year. Before starting the unit for the first time, check that the chimney's vent is free of bird's nests and or other critters that may have taken up lodging. Leaves and any other combustible materials should also be cleaned out before initial start-up. Maintenance of the chimney vent is considered a homeowner maintenance responsibility.

If the glass should ever break or the unit does not fire up according to the directions found in the gas valve compartment, please call the HVAC contractor at the number on the furnace identification label.

### **Radiant Transference**

Radiant transference occurs when cooler air comes in contact with the metal fireplace radiating cooler air into the home. An example of this is when standing near a window during the winter months. This effect is a natural occurrence with fireplaces and may be more noticeable during the early spring, late fall and winter.

## **Floor Covering**

### **Carpet**

Refer to the manufacturer's recommendations for carpet care. Regular vacuuming and immediate treatment of stains will prolong the beauty and life of your carpeting. Color variations may develop from exposure to direct sunlight. Vacuum regularly. Please note: check with carpet supplier for acceptable vacuum cleaners.

### **Resilient Flooring (Vinyl Flooring)**

Although resilient floors are designed for minimum care, they do vary in maintenance needs. Most resilient flooring is “no wax”, which means it has a clear, tough coating on the surface. Even this surface will scuff or become dull over time. If you want to restore original shine, use acrylic finishes. All resilient floors require some regular application of a good floor finish to retain a high gloss. Do **not** use solvent-base waxes, gasoline, kerosene, alcohol, benzene, naphtha, turpentine, or similar cleaning solvents. These can severely damage a resilient floor. Any oil base cleaner can damage resilient floors. Refer to the manufacturer's literature for your specific floor covering for any specific cleaning instructions or for any other additional information needed.

Use extreme caution when moving appliances across resilient floor covering. Tears and wrinkles can result. Coasters should be installed on furniture legs to prevent permanent damage.

**High heels are one of flooring's worst enemies. Avoid the wearing of high heels on any vinyl or hardwood floor.** Manufacturers do not warranty against damage caused by high heels, furniture, improper care, and foreign substances.

Yellowing of the surface can result from the rubber backing on area rugs or mats. Discoloration caused by sunlight, rubber backed mats and/or chemicals are not warranted.

Excessive amounts of water on resilient floors can penetrate seams and get under edges causing the material to lift and curl. Be careful to wipe up any spills as quickly as possible.

AE Moyle takes every precaution to protect the materials in your home throughout the construction process. However, minor damage may occur from time to time to vinyl flooring. In the event a repair is required, AE Moyle uses only qualified professionals utilizing the same repair processes used by the product manufacturers. After repairs are completed, the product will continue to carry the full manufacturer's warranty.

### **Hardwood Floor**

Wood floors will respond noticeably to changes in humidity level in the home. During the colder months, a humidifier will help, but not completely eliminate, this reaction and during the summer months a dehumidifier placed in the lower level can help minimize the reaction.

Newly laid wood floors will show small splinters. Moving furniture, dropping heavy or sharp objects, etc. can cause dimples or scratches. Some shrinkage or warping can be expected, especially around heat vents or any heat-producing appliances. Warping will occur if the floor becomes repeatedly wet or is thoroughly soaked even one time. A dulling of the finish in heavy traffic areas is likely; a white, filmy appearance is caused by moisture (often from wet shoes or boots). Use protective walk-off mats at the exterior doors to help prevent sand and grit from getting on the floor. Gritty sand is wood flooring's worst enemy.

Protect your floor when using a dolly to move heavy furniture or appliances. Never slide or roll heavy furniture or appliances across the floor. Permanent felt protectors should be used under heavy appliances, furniture, and chairs. Protectors will allow chairs to move easily over the floor while minimizing scuffing. Clean or replace the protectors on a regular basis to remove any grit that may accumulate. Be aware that spiked heels, shoes with cleats, or shoes in need of repair can damage the floor. Animal nails should be kept trimmed to minimize scratching of the floors.

AE Moyle takes every precaution to protect the materials in your home throughout the construction process, however, minor damage may occur from time to time to wood flooring. In the event a repair is required, AE Moyle uses only qualified professionals who utilize the same repair processes used by the product manufacturers. After repairs are completed, the product will continue to carry the full manufacturer's warranty.

### **Garage Door - Overhead**

Overhead garage doors are warrantied against defects in parts and installation. The warranty will be voided if the door has been altered or serviced by any person or company not authorized by AE Moyle. This includes installation of automatic garage door openers. If the original trade contractor is used to install the door opener, the warranty will not be affected.

A qualified and professional service technician should do all overhead garage door adjustments and repairs. Yearly maintenance by a qualified garage door company is

highly recommended. Any adjustments and repairs done by the homeowner may cause injury and additional damages.

As preventative maintenance, a homeowner should do the following:

- Tighten any loose nuts as needed. (Do not over tighten as you may strip the nut or pull the bolt head into the skin material.)
- Lubricate the bearing plates (each end of shaft).
- Lubricate the springs.
- Lubricate the roller bearings.

*Note: Recommended lubricant - Oil base spray lubricant. Non-recommended lubricant - WD40 or silicone base. Do not grease track (grease collects dirt and grit). Keep all loose material away from track (i.e., brooms, shovels, etc.)*

## **DO NOT OPERATE AN ELECTRIC GARAGE DOOR OPENER IF THE DOOR LOCK IS ENGAGED.**

\*Note: If your overhead garage door is to be equipped with an automatic garage door opener, please use the appropriate kit number that corresponds to the type of door that was installed. You may obtain the proper kit from the subcontractor which installed your overhead door.

Damage to the door may result if the proper bracket is not installed. If the door is 14 feet or wider, a strut must be mounted at the top of the upper sections. Failure to comply with these instructions will void the warranty on this door.

## **Gutters and Downspouts**

Gutters should be checked each spring and fall to ensure proper drainage. (See the Semi-Annual Checklist). Removing debris is a homeowner maintenance responsibility. Tree leaves, pine needles, etc., should be cleaned off the roof prior to each rainy season to prevent the debris from plugging up the flashing and gutters. This type of debris can also cause ice dams in the gutters during and after snow and ice storms. An ice dam causes water to back up underneath shingles, forcing moisture to create a leak inside your home. The subsequent damage can be extensive and is not warrantied. Professional services are available to help you maintain your gutters and downspouts.

Downspouts are installed to carry water to the ground and to the down spout extensions which direct the flow of water away from the foundation. This is for the protection of the foundation. The homeowner is responsible for maintaining downspouts/extensions ensuring they are properly attached at all times. Downspout extensions should discharge outside of the rock or bark beds so that water is not dammed behind any edging material.

Disclaimer: All additional gutter accessories are not covered under any AE Moyle warranty. Replacing lost or damaged downspouts and extensions is the responsibility of the homeowner.

## **Heating**

According to the standards established by The Limited Warranty, the sizing of the heating system is determined by its ability to maintain a temperature of 70° F, under normal operating and weather conditions. Temperature is measured at a point five (5) feet above the center of the floor in the affected area. On extremely cold days, a six (6) degree difference between actual inside temperature and the thermostat setting is acceptable. All rooms may vary in temperature by as much as four (4) degrees.

If AE Moyle finishes your basement, the temperature difference between the thermostat setting and the finished area can be up to an eight (8) degree difference. If the zone damper system option is selected and installed as part of your finished, basement then you can expect closer to a four (4) degree temperature difference. An unfinished basement is considered a tempered area and AE Moyle does not guarantee a maximum temperature difference.

There may be periods when the outdoor temperature falls below designated temperatures, thereby lowering the temperature in the home. Certain aspects of the home including, but not limited to, expansive stairways, open foyers, sunrooms, or cathedral ceilings may cause abnormal variation from these standards and are not covered by The Limited Warranty.

It is normal for a new heating system to omit a slight amount of smoke when it is first turned on, or an odor after an extended period of not being used (such as after the summer months if the air conditioning is not used). This is caused by dust that settled in the ducts and should pass very quickly. Note that such occurrences may activate the smoke detector. If this condition is extreme or persists, a professional should be contacted to check the furnace.

As a result of wind direction, sunlight, landscaping, exposed windows, and other factors temperatures may vary from room-to-room or between first and second floors. This is normal.

Because of these variations, you may need to make some seasonal adjustments to the registers. This will help maintain a good balance between rooms and floors. Closing some registers fully or partially in the winter and summer will also help maintain good balance on your comfort system.

Test the heating system (furnace) early in the fall. It will be more convenient to have repair service performed before winter begins.

If no heat is coming from the registers, the following checklist, along with referencing the manufacturer's literature, may help to identify the cause.

If the Heating Contractor makes a service call to repair one of the items listed, there will more than likely be a service charge payable by the homeowner.

Be sure to check the following:

- Thermostat temperature setting & switches.
- Battery on the thermostat, if applicable.
- Breaker on the electrical panel.
- Fuse, if the furnace has one.
- ON / OFF switch on furnace (see manufacturer's book for location).
- Safety switch for the fan cover.

If, after checking these items, the problem is not corrected, call the Heating and Cooling (HVAC) Contractor whose name and telephone number is listed on the furnace. Please remember to inform the Heating & Cooling Contractor that you are an AE Moyle customer. This will help ensure that you receive immediate assistance.

Inspect the filter at least once every thirty days; change or clean as needed during times of constant operation. The filter should be changed a minimum of at least once every three months. A clogged filter can slow airflow and cause cold spots in your home. This is one of the most frequently overlooked details of furnace care and can result in damage to the furnace or increased energy costs.

Regular maintenance of the furnace can save energy dollars, as well as prolong the life of the furnace. Read and follow the manufacturer's literature on use and care. The following guidelines apply to all furnaces.

The furnace will typically operate more frequently, albeit for shorter periods of time, during severe cold spells.

### **Continuous Air Circulation**

It is recommended that two-story homes have the fan set in the "on" position to help maintain a more consistent temperature from room-to-room and floor-to-floor. With the fan "on," the furnace blower motor will continuously circulate the air in the home to prevent air stratification.

Since we cannot control warm air rising and cold air falling, the fan must be run continuously. If not, a greater temperature difference between the first and second floors may be experienced.

The system has been balanced as best as possible to provide an environment that meets performance standards. Always allow unobstructed airflow from registers and return air grills. Heat register covers are removable and adjustable. If registers are adjusted, this may affect the performance of the system resulting in temperature differences amongst

rooms. It is recommended to leave the system as it is setup and contact your Heating and Cooling Contractor whose name and telephone number is listed on the side of the furnace.

### **Indoor Air Quality**

It is the homeowner's responsibility to control the level of humidity in the home by following proper use of range hoods, bathroom fans, and humidifiers. Excessive moisture can cause damage. Any repairs related to excessive moisture are the homeowner's responsibility.

### **Register and Thermostat Locations**

AE Moyle does not specify register or thermostat locations. Our Heating and Cooling Contractors engineer and warrant each design to meet performance standards.

The location of registers and thermostats may vary from models or previously built homes due to the following reasons:

- Design variations between heating contractors.
- Framing variations due to elevation or floor plan changes.
- Variations in plumbing installations.
- Changes to system design to enhance system performance.

In some cases, registers may be located on inside walls. Locating heating/cooling supplies over windows and doors was a traditional design method used to counteract the inefficient designs of windows and doors manufactured 10-15 years ago. Today windows, doors, and homes overall are much "tighter"; therefore, the location of these devices are not a critical design issue. Airflow is the primary concern in heating/cooling system design today. The key advantage for shortening supply runs to inside walls is to improve airflow and create less friction by having multiple fittings.

### **Landscaping**

Because it is critical that a regular watering regimen is implemented immediately after sod is laid, lawn prep and sod are usually done after your home is closed. During the summer months, the lawn prep and sod installation should be completed within 2 weeks after closing, weather permitting. During late fall, sod may be installed prior to closing.

Homeowner is responsible for maintaining any sod, hydroseed and/or landscaping through proper watering after installation has been completed. Newly installed sod may have dry or brown edges at installation- this is typical and will disappear over time with proper watering. It is critical to keep newly installed sod, landscaping and hydroseed adequately watered to ensure it establishes properly. Failure of homeowner to properly maintain sod, hydroseed and/or landscaping does not warrant any action by AE Moyle.

If your home closes between November and May, your lawn prep and sod installation may not be completed until temperatures and ground conditions permit. This work begins typically in late May or early June.

Our goal is to complete all homes delayed due to winter weather by mid-July. Soil quality is dictated by the natural ground conditions available. Topsoil is not added.

As the homeowner, it is your responsibility to hire a surveyor to mark your lot lines should you desire to know exactly where they are and especially if you intend to install a fence on your property or establish a landscape perimeter around your lot.

### **Trees**

Newly planted trees must be heavily watered for the first year. That means 30 to 60 minutes of watering every other day during the dry parts of the summer. Be mindful to water at a rate that allows the water to seep into the ground around the tree and not just run off into another area.

If it hasn't rained for a week, water every day. This will help your new tree establish roots and grow faster.

The second year the tree will require less water than the first year, but will still need to be watered well for continued health and growth.

### **Drainage**

The homeowner is responsible thereafter to continue to provide a positive drainage slope away from the foundation and to direct all downspout or sump pump discharge lines away from the foundation to prevent subsequent water problems. AE Moyle installs downspout extensions during the building process and the homeowner is responsible for maintaining these extensions. Any damage due to drainage issues around the foundation may not be warrantable if homeowner removes these extensions.

### **Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control**

Final grading or sod areas such as slopes, swales, and downspout discharge areas will wash away depending on the amount of rain or drainage occurring prior to grass taking root. AE Moyle is responsible for providing the proper drainage around the house and within drainage swales at the time of finish grade. After that time, the homeowner is responsible for maintaining drainage swales in washed-out or eroded areas. Washing away or erosion occurs as a result of water run-off on the property and/or from adjacent properties. The homeowner should be prepared to sod or seed areas as soon as possible after closing to prevent erosion. Delay in doing so can cause drainage issues and is not covered by the RWC warranty.

Settlement of the ground around the foundation which does not impede drainage, and/or settling of water, sewer, or other utility trenches, is to be expected. Ground settlement should not disrupt the water drainage away from the house. If settling occurs within 10 feet of the foundation and is found to impede drainage within that area, AE Moyle will provide the soil and labor necessary to correct that settling one time during the first year of warranty. This excludes any areas disturbed by the homeowner or water

erosion. Homeowner is responsible for re-establishing any landscaping or ground cover in the area.

If any areas beyond 10 feet of the foundation or around utility trenches settle greater than 6 inches in the first year, AE Moyle will fill the settled area one time during the one-year warranty period. This excludes any areas disturbed by the homeowner or water erosion. Homeowner is responsible for re-establishing any landscaping or ground cover in the area.

All rear and side yards receive a one-time bulldozer grade to establish proper drainage away from the house. This bulldozer grade is not a landscaping grade which means the rear and side yards are not yet ready for seed and sod. **Homeowner is responsible for preparing rear and side yards as well as establishing and maintaining adequate ground cover as soon as possible in these areas.** If groundcover is not promptly established in these untreated areas, wind and rain will cause the finished quality of these areas to deteriorate and repairs can be costly to correct for the homeowner. **Changes in grade either by the homeowner or from lack of proper groundcover will invalidate your warranty.**

It is normal for water to stand after a heavy rainfall, however it should not stand or form a pond in the yard for more than 24 hours after the rain has subsided or more than 48 hours in swales or sump discharge locations.

Determination of grading or pond formation should not be made while frost or snow is present on the ground or while the ground is already saturated or frozen as these factors can affect drainage. AE Moyle is not responsible if the source of standing water stems from the flow of water from an adjoining property, gutter downspouts, sump pump outlets or work performed by others.

## **Mirrors**

De-silvering or black spotting appearing in the mirror may be a result of improper cleaning materials used on the mirrors. To clean the mirrors, use window-cleaning products that contain vinegar, not ammonia. Using ammonia-based products on mirrors may dissolve the silver backing, voiding the warranty. Do not use abrasive cleaners as these will permanently scratch and mar the mirror surface.

## **Paint and Stain**

### **Interior Paint**

Routine cleaning is vital to the overall service life of a painted surface, however, when selecting a cleaner, be sure to use one that is non-abrasive. If cleaning a waterborne paint, avoid products that are ammoniated. Mild, soapy water will generally suffice, but always test the cleaning solution in an inconspicuous area first to ensure that it does not damage the paint film. Spackle may be used to cover any small defect prior to paint touch-

up. There may be some paint in a can that is left over from the original paint applied to your home that is either in the basement, under the stairs, or in the mechanical room.

When touching up paint, use a small brush to apply paint only on the spot needing attention. Touch-ups will sometimes be visible. When it is time to repaint a room, you should first prepare the wall surfaces by cleaning with a mild soap and water mixture or a reliable cleaning product. Follow the directions on the container.

### **Exterior Paint**

Check the painted/stained surfaces of your home's exterior annually. Repainting before there is much chipping or wearing away of the original finish will help to lessen the cost of extensive surface preparation. It is a wise maintenance policy to plan on refinishing the exterior surface of your home approximately every three years or as often as your paint manufacturer suggests for your area and climate. The chemical structure of the paint used on the exterior is governed by the climatic conditions. Over time, this finish will fade and dull a bit. Do not allow sprinklers to spray water on painted surfaces on the exterior of your home. This will cause blistering, peeling, splintering, and other damage to the home. Light colors will more readily show cracks and will require additional maintenance.

## **Plumbing**

### **Leaks**

**If a major plumbing leak occurs, first turn off the supply of water to the area involved.** This may mean shutting off the water to the entire home. After the water has been turned off, contact the Plumbing Contractor listed on your emergency sticker located on the water heater. Moisture can cause damage to your home and belongings if not addressed immediately. Items that are damaged from water or extended exposure to moisture are considered consequential damages and should be reported to your homeowner's insurance. AE Moyle is not responsible for consequential damages due to leaks.

### **Water Supply**

**The main water shut-off valve is located at the meter service.** Each sink and commode has an individual shut-off for its water supply.

If the water supply to your home stops, check the water meter shut-off to confirm the service has not been shut down in your area. If everything appears normal, contact the Plumbing Contractor listed on your emergency sticker which is found on the water heater.

### **Water Heater**

Review and follow the manufacturer's instructions for your water heater. **If you have no hot water, check the pilot, temperature setting, and water supply valve before calling for service.**

## **Clogged Drains**

There are two main causes of plumbing clogs:

1. Improper use of garbage disposal
  - Always use plenty of cold water when running the disposal; it cools down the motor and prolongs the life of the unit.
  - Never put grease through the disposal unit.
2. Foreign material being flushed down toilets
  - Flush toilet paper only; no paper towels, plastic, baby wipes, cleaning wipes
  - Do not flush feminine hygiene products or baby diapers
  - Do not flush foreign objects; toys, animals, etc.

Prior to closing, the plumbing drainage system is fully tested by the Plumbing Contractor as well as AE Moyle. This testing includes flushing toilet paper down drains to ensure no building materials are lodged in the drain system. In many cases, it is impossible to determine the root cause when clearing a clogged drain.

Unless the root cause of a blockage can be confirmed as a defect in the plumbing installation or is from construction debris, the homeowner is directly responsible for payment of costs incurred to clear the clog. If a drain clog occurs at any time during the warranty period where the root cause can be confirmed to be due to a defect or building material, the issue will be considered a warranted repair.

Clogged traps can usually be cleared with a plunger. If you use de-clogging chemicals, follow directions carefully to avoid personal injury or damage to the fixtures.

To clean the drain stoppers in bathroom sinks, loosen the nut under the sink at the back, pull out the rod attached to the plunger, and lift the stopper out. Clean and return the stopper to its original position.

## **Condensation**

Condensation on pipes may result from combinations of temperature and indoor humidity. Condensation on a pipe is not the same as a leak, nor is it a defect. The homeowner needs to maintain the proper relative humidity level within the house. We recommend running a dehumidifier in the house to control excessive humidity. See Condensation/Mold Prevention section for more details.

## **Faucets/Aerators**

Plumbing lines are flushed out to remove dirt and foreign matter prior to closing; however, there may be small amounts of minerals that enter the line. Based on area water content, faucets may drip because washers are rapidly worn when they come in contact with foreign matter. Remove and clean the aerators on faucets as part of the routine homeowner maintenance to allow proper flow of water. Replace the washer with an identical type and size.

A dripping faucet may be repaired by shutting off the water at the valve located directly under the sink. Remove the faucet stem, change the washer, and reinstall the faucet stem. The showerhead is repaired the same way.

### **Sewers, Fixtures and Drains**

The plumbing system is thoroughly flushed prior to closing on your home to remove any obstructions. Through homeowner use, however, piping, sewers, drains and fixtures can easily become clogged.

In many cases when a clog occurs, the obstruction must be pushed through the plumbing system in order to clear it. This often makes determination of the reason for the clog impossible. Homeowner is responsible for maintaining the plumbing system and, if warranted, should call a plumbing professional. Any system defects found and costs borne by homeowner for clearing plumbing stoppages due to those system defects or construction debris within the one year warranty period will be corrected and reimbursed by AE Moyle.

### **Sump Pumps**

Sump pump lines are usually equipped with a check valve, a device that prevents the previously pumped water from running back down the discharge pipe and refilling the sump pit. Sump pumps are mechanical devices that can and will fail for a variety of reasons. Numerous things can cause a sump pump failure: electrical problems, debris in the pit causing the pump inlets to be clogged, a clogged discharge line, mechanical problems, etc. Due to these failures, and because of the extensive consequential damages that can result from a failure, back-up sumps, battery back-up pumps, and/or alarm systems are strongly recommended for sump pump installations after closing on your home.

**IMPORTANT:** In the event of consequential damages by sump pump failures, the homeowner should contact their homeowner's insurance carrier. AE Moyle is not responsible for consequential damages. Please see the **Consequential Damages** section of this manual for the definition and examples. Homeowners are encouraged to carry insurance regarding sump pump failure. This coverage is not typically included in a homeowner's policy. The homeowner should request proof of coverage or obtain additional coverage from their insurer.

There are two kinds of sump pumps. Type one is called a floor drain style type of sump pump which empties out into the sewer system. This type of sump pump needs no maintenance and may be used on some furnace condensation line installations.

The second type of sump pump is called a stone and tile sump pump which is connected to a perimeter tile and is discharged to the outside. This discharge pipe needs to remain free of debris. Please be aware that depending on your specific water table or the amount of recent rainfall your sump pump can run very frequently.

### Homeowner's Responsibility (Sump Pump)

- Keep the sump pit and openings free from debris. Debris in the pit can affect the float, the switch, and the operation of the pump. Sump pumps are designed to pump water, not foreign objects such as mud, straw, pea gravel, or other debris.
- In Stone and Tile type systems, keep the discharge pipe (located outside) open and free flowing. In order for the pump to discharge the water, no blockage can be in the discharge line; this includes mud, debris, ice, snow, and other foreign matter that slows down or impedes pumping action.
- Always make certain that the pump has a 3-prong plug and has continuous power supply. If you unplug a sump pump for any reason, it will not pump. It is the homeowner's responsibility to make sure that the pump is always plugged into the electrical outlet and functioning properly. Read the manufacturer's manual regarding special information about the sump pump.

### Toilets

Federal Regulations amended water use regulations and defined water saving performance standards in 1992. This resulted in the following requirements for residential toilets:

For floor-mounted toilets, maximum flow may not exceed an average of 1.6 gallons of water per flushing. Prior to this regulation, most toilet tanks held 3 ½ or more gallons of water per flushing. This reduced amount of water results in less flushing force to dispose of waste in the toilet. Therefore, stoppages may occur more easily in water-saver toilets. Frequent stoppages may possibly be prevented by holding down the flush handle through the complete flush cycle to allow more water to flow from the tank into the bowl.

The main causes of toilet and sewer stoppages are: various domestic items such as paper diapers, baby wipes, excessive amounts of toilet paper or the wrong type of toilet paper, sanitary supplies, Q-tips, dental floss, children's toys, kitty litter, etc.

If a stoppage occurs, most of the time a plunger can be used to clear the stoppage with the following steps:

1. Turn the toilet supply off (located near the wall under the toilet tank).
2. Place the plunger cup over the opening at the bottom of the toilet bowl.
3. Force the plunger up and down several times without removing the plunger cup from the bowl opening.
4. Remove the plunger.
5. Flush the toilet.

If the stoppage does not clear, carefully refill the toilet tank by opening the water supply and repeat steps 1-5.

If the plunger does not clear the blockage after several attempts, there may be more than "ordinary" waste blocking the sewer line, and a plumbing auger may be required. You may wish to call a Plumbing Contractor to clear and check the line. Unclogging blocked

sewer lines, toilets and sinks are the responsibility of the homeowner and are not a warrantable item.

Running/dripping toilets.

- Check the shut-off float in the tank. Most likely the shut-off float is too high in the tank, preventing the valve from shutting off completely. The float should be free and not rub the side of the tank or any other parts.
- 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. If these techniques do not work, call a Plumbing Contractor.

#### **“Drop-In” Toilet Bowl Cleaners**

As stated in the manufacturer’s warranty, problems resulting from the use of “Drop-In” toilet bowl cleaners are not warrantied. These cleaners/products can and/or will cause deterioration of various internal parts in your toilet and will void the manufacturer’s warranty.

#### **Cleaning Fixtures**

Follow the manufacturer's directions for cleaning brass, stainless steel, fiberglass, vikrell, and porcelain fixtures. Abrasive cleansers will remove the shiny finish leaving behind a porous surface that is difficult to maintain. A non-abrasive cleaner or a liquid detergent is usually recommended for the fiberglass or vikrell tub / shower stalls. Clean fixtures with a soft sponge and soapy water, and then polish with a dry cloth to prevent water spots. If your sink is stainless steel, this does not mean it will not scratch. Stainless steel sinks should be cleaned with hot soapy water and wiped dry with a cloth. Do not use a stainless steel cleaner on the sink as it may void the manufacturer’s warranty. Avoid leaving produce on a stainless steel surface as prolonged contact with produce can stain the finish. In case of staining from liquids such as dye or vegetable juices, a mild detergent may also be added. White vinegar and lemon juice are good cleaning agents for hard-water and lime scale deposits.

#### **Tub and Shower Care and Cleaning**

The supplier of your shower and bath units recommends the use of mild cleansers without abrasives for weekly cleaning of your bath or shower made of fiberglass & vikrell material. The use of abrasive cleaning agents can result in surface dullness or discoloration of the finish. Do not use cleaning agents or any other product that has an acid content. Acid content products can dull or stain the tub finish.

#### **Shower Door Cleaners**

Most shower door handles are made of clear acrylic components. It has been found that daily cleaning sprays have an ingredient that disintegrates the acrylic. Continual daily use of these type of products may cause the shower door handle to fall off. Please read the product label to choose the appropriate type of cleaner recommended for the shower door. Our research shows that most of the manufacturers recommend using only water or window cleaner for cleaning shower doors.

## Recommended Maintenance for On-site Sewage Disposal Systems

- Septic Tank - The septic tank is the portion of your sewage disposal system that allows the collection and settling of all waste generated from your residence. Pump your septic tank a minimum of once every three years. Pumping of the septic tank removes excessive solids, which, if not removed regularly, can result in premature absorption system failure.
- Absorption System - The absorption area is the disposal part of your sewage system. Typically, the absorptive portion consists of a tile field, tile trench/dry well(s).
- Garbage Disposals - The installation of a garbage disposal on a private sewage disposal system is not recommended because excessive solids place a burden on the proper operation of your system. Avoid the addition of solid, heavy waste products such as coffee grounds, grease, tampons, sanitary pads, disposable diapers and other inorganic materials into your sewage systems.
- Hazardous Waste - The disposal of hazardous cleaning products may be harmful to the groundwater and the proper functioning of your sewage system. Products such as paints, thinners or pesticides should not be placed in your system.
- Septic Tank Filter - The septic tank filter is a mechanism to prevent solids from entering the absorption area of the sewage disposal system. This filter is typically located at the outlet end of your septic tank. The installation of a filter should include a manhole cover at ground level for easy access as it requires maintenance. Your septic tank may contain an effluent filter, check yearly and clean when necessary.
- Alternator Valve - An alternator valve is an enhancement feature that may be on your sewage disposal system that allows a resting period for part of your absorption area. This valve must be turned manually on a regular basis to allow its proper operation.
- Water Consumption/Usage - Be aware that all water running inside your home is entering your sewage disposal system. You should fix leaky faucets or running fixtures. A faucet leaking one to two drops per second amounts to 1.2 gallons per day or 438 gallons per year. This is half of the capacity of a typically installed 1000 gallon septic tank.

You should also eliminate basement sump pump, roof and foundation water from entering your sewage disposal system as excess unsanitary waste will impact the design basis of your sewage disposal system.

- Water Softener Discharge - Water softener discharge is not recommended to be deposited into your sewage disposal system due to the brine content. This material may impact the bacterial action of the septic tank. The salts also may inhibit the capabilities of the soil material in your absorption area to be effective in allowing water to percolate into the ground.

## **Roofing**

The roofing material on your home is asphalt composition. While this material will provide many years of service and weather protection for your home, a few reminders on the maintenance of your roof could save a great deal of expense and discomfort in the future.

**DO NOT WALK ON THE ROOF** - doing so can void the warranty. The weight and movement will loosen and break the integrity of the roofing material, which may result in leakage. During hot weather, composition shingles will be soft and pliable and they can be damaged. Extremely cold weather will make them brittle and similarly subject them to damage. Hire a professional for any roof work you may require.

After severe weather, a visual inspection of the roof for damage may be required. Have this done by a qualified professional. **Report any property damage as a result of high wind/ gusts to your homeowner's insurance carrier immediately.** Damage to shingles due to causes beyond normal use and service including, but not limited to, sustained winds of greater than 60 miles per hour is NOT warrantable. Information obtaining the wind gusts in your area can be found at the National Weather Service website, [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov). AE Moyle uses the information provided by this source to determine liability in situations when wind damage occurs.

## **Tile**

Re-grouting and caulking tiled areas are a homeowner's maintenance responsibility. Use the appropriate tile sealer and follow the instructions carefully. (See the Semi-Annual Checklist). Similarly, to extra touch-up paint, additional grout may be left in the home after completion in the basement, under the stairs or in a maintenance closet.

### **Ceramic Tile**

Ceramic tile is a glazed tile with a surface like chinaware. Glazed tile will clean up beautifully by vacuuming or a quick wipe with a damp cloth or sponge. If you feel a cleaning agent is required, use a mild solution of warm water and dishwasher crystals (this solution does not result in a heavy lather that can be difficult to remove from the grout). Rinse thoroughly.

**Do not use waxes, sealers, or bottled liquid cleaners.** Waxes will make cleaning difficult and some liquid cleaners contain harmful acids, which can etch the tile and eat into the grout. Glazed tile on walls seldom requires special cleaning, except to remove soap film, or the combination of soap film and calcium that can develop from hard water. The best cleaners are detergents and scouring powders without soap.

To remove heavier films, clean with detergent and immediately scrub with a stiff brush or scouring powder to remove stains. Rust stains can be removed with any good commercial rust remover.

## **Trim**

### **Exterior**

Inspect the exterior of your home to save costly hours and materials in maintenance. Make it a part of your spring and fall routine to carefully examine the outside of your home. You'll be glad you took the time. (See the Semi-Annual Checklist section for more information).

Applying sealant to decks is a homeowner maintenance responsibility. The decision to proceed with such treatment commits the homeowner to regular maintenance with the sealant application.

### **Interior**

The interior trim in your home is a manufactured product called MDF (Medium-density fiberboard). The advantages of this product are as follows: smoother, more consistent finish; longer lengths (which means fewer seams); and a more consistent profile. Please treat it just like a piece of furniture. Do not set a drink on MDF without a coaster or swelling of the product may occur. As with any wood product, if liquid is spilled on or near it, it is imperative that you wipe it up quickly.

Slight color variations in stained wood products can occur in some finishes. These variations are a normal part of the wood finish and are not a defect.

## **Windows**

Condensation or “window sweating” may occur on windows as a result of humidity. Windows will collect condensation on their interior surfaces when extreme temperature differences and high humidity levels occur. Moisture that may drip from the windows must be promptly removed to avoid swelling of the window sills. When the warm, moist indoor air meets the cooler glass pane, water droplets (condensation) occur. Any window treatments that are fully closed for any duration may cause excessive condensation. It is recommended that the window treatments be partially opened to allow for air flow to help eliminate excessive condensation.

Occasional window condensation in the kitchen, bath or laundry area is common. It is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain a proper relative humidity level in the house. If a humidifier is installed on the furnace or used in any room, the manufacturer's recommendations for proper operation must be closely followed. Condensation usually results from humid conditions created within the home by the owner or during the curing process in a new space.

## **Wire Shelving**

Caring for your wire shelving system in your new home is easy. Light dusting should keep your shelving systems looking good for a long time. Please do not overload your shelving system. Your shelving system is set to hold an allowed weight per lineal foot based on

design. Please refer to your New Home Performance Guidelines manual for further information and specifics. If this capacity is overloaded, it will pull out and fall. The shelving system is not a warrantable item.