

Morgan Ranch

New Home Care and Maintenance

Your new home has been built with modern materials and craftsmanship – designed with your family’s comfort in mind. It will require regular preventive maintenance on your part to preserve its beauty and value – and to prevent costly repairs and replacements later. **This preventive maintenance should begin the day you move into your new home.**

Homes by Towne® has prepared this helpful Homeowner’s New Home Maintenance Manual to help you maintain your home. In addition to valuable product information, you’ll find listed below helpful hints that will guide you in doing preventive maintenance on your new home.

Special Note: It is possible that all the features and items discussed in this maintenance guide are not present in your home. Also, your home could have features and items that are not covered in this guide.

If additional information is desired for the care and maintenance of your new home, you may wish to obtain the following published by NAHB:

Your New Home and How to Take Care of It. Home Builder Press. NAHB, original publication 2001, most recent edition 2006

For further information on purchasing this book, please contact:

Builder Books™ - National Association of Home Builders
1201 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005-2800
(800) 223-2665
<http://www.builderbooks.com>

Helpful Tools:

You will need a few basic tools and supplies to keep your home “like new”. At the minimum, we suggest you have the following:

- ◆ Medium-sized, adjustable wrench
- ◆ Standard pliers
- ◆ Screwdrivers – small, medium, large, and Phillips head
- ◆ Claw hammer
- ◆ Hand saw
- ◆ Assorted brads, nails, and screws
- ◆ Duct and electrical tape
- ◆ Sturdy penknife
- ◆ Quality interior and exterior caulk
- ◆ Matching interior and exterior paint and different sized paint brushes
- ◆ Sandpaper (medium and fine grit)

Special Note: Should a problem occur during your warranty period (see First Year Customer Care Program) and it cannot be solved by the maintenance information contained in this guide, contact our Customer Care Service Department. Other courses of action may affect your coverage under the Limited Warranty.

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Appliances – Kitchen:

Instruction manuals and other papers that were given to you during your new home demonstration accompany your new electrical or gas kitchen appliances. Look through them carefully, fill them out, and mail any return postcards necessary to record warranties.

Should you require service on any of your new appliances, please contact the following company directly to arrange for an appointment:

G.E. Appliance
(800) GE CARES = (800) 432-2737

If you're not sure who should resolve an appliance problem, the appliance company or the installer, contact our Customer Care Service Department to help determine responsibility.

Helpful Hint: Before calling for service, always check the electrical breakers and GFI switches. For gas appliances, be sure the gas is turned on at the valve.

Cabinets and Vanities:

Your kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities are factory finished and should be cared for much the same as fine wood furniture. Never clean them with harsh abrasives. Cabinet and vanity hardware will loosen with repeated use. Periodically tighten the hardware as needed.

Carpet:

The floors in the primary living areas of your home have been covered with professionally installed carpeting, per your selection.

Most carpet comes from the mill in standard twelve foot (12') widths. Every effort has been made to limit the number of seams and locate them as unobtrusively as possible. However, seaming is unavoidable. Some grades, brands or colors of carpeting may show seams more readily than others, but this is not necessarily a reflection of the quality of carpet you have chosen.

After the initial installation of the new carpet, you will notice excess yarn will appear on the carpet surface. This is normal. Do not be concerned, this will dissipate after repeated vacuuming.

Helpful Hints:

- ◆ Vacuum the traffic lanes frequently. Use short and very slow movements, about two (2) or three (3) strokes in each spot, for maximum soil removal.
- ◆ Once a week, vacuum your entire carpet, again using very short, slow movements.
- ◆ Remove spots quickly so they do not become permanent stains. Refer to your manufacturer's brochures for details on stain removal provided by the mill that manufactured your carpet. If a stain removal process is used which is not recommended, the warranty on your carpet may be invalid.

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- ◆ Shampoo as soon as soil, which cannot be removed by vacuuming, is evident. Vacuum as soon as carpet is dry to remove soil loosened by shampooing.
- ◆ Do not rely on foam cleaning products, as they cannot remove deeply imbedded soil. Some foam products leave a residue in the carpet that attracts and holds soil. To avoid this, conduct the following test:
 - ✓ Dispense a small amount of foam in a shallow dish and allow drying. If the residue is hard and sticky, the product will act the same when spread on the surface of the carpet. If the residue powders easily, the product is safe to use as a surface brightener.
- ◆ A deep cigarette burn can only be corrected by replacement of the affected area. A light burn, which has affected only the tips of the pile turf, might be treatable with the following steps:
 - ✓ Lightly rub the burnt tufts with course sandpaper.
 - ✓ Rub with a clean white cloth dampened with carpet shampoo.
 - ✓ Brush the tufts lightly to blend with surrounding tufts.
- ◆ Place wipe-off rugs on hard surfaced floors adjacent to carpeted floors. Clean frequently.

Substances which may cause permanent damage to your carpet include the following:

- ◆ Acids such as toilet bowl cleaners and tile grout cleaners
- ◆ Acne medications containing Benzyl Peroxide
- ◆ Chlorine bleaches
- ◆ Oxygen bleaches
- ◆ Insecticides
- ◆ Plant foods
- ◆ Drain cleaners
- ◆ Oven cleaners
- ◆ Urine
- ◆ Vomit

Caulk – Exterior and Interior:

Caulk has been applied to your home around doors, windows, exterior vents, the air conditioning line, gas piping, and where siding abuts brick or wood. Inside caulk has been applied around tubs, sinks, countertops, thresholds, etc. Even properly installed caulking will shrink and show surface cracks due to settlement, expansion, and contraction.

Check the interior and exterior caulking around the house twice a year and recaulk as necessary. Select a high quality brand. Generally, the silicone caulks are superior and last longer. Some caulks can be painted while others cannot be painted.

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Ceramic Floor and Wall Tile:

The ceramic tile used in various rooms of your new home provides a durable and decorative covering for floors and walls. Cracks in grouting of ceramic tile joints are common due to normal shrinkage conditions. Shade and/or color variation is inherent in all fired clay products and grout.

Ceramic tile floors are generally easy to maintain. To keep them looking like new, just wipe with a wet cloth and wet mop from time to time. Abrasive cleaners should not be used to clean tile surfaces because they can cause surface scratching. The grout used between ceramic tiles can be cleaned using a brush and mild cleanser. (See **Grout** in this section.)

Care should be taken to avoid damage to the tiles by securing shower rods too tightly on bath walls and/or dropping heavy objects on floor surfaces. Such occurrences can result in cracked and broken tiles. Stiletto or spike heels will damage ceramic, slate, and hardwood floors. Avoid this damage by removing shoes.

Concrete Foundations and Areas:

Concrete, by the very nature of the material, will crack. To date, no known prevention has been found for this problem. The major reason for concrete cracking is settlement. Also, the expansion and contraction of concrete surfaces due to temperature changes during the year can cause cracking. We provide contraction and expansion joints in the concrete in an effort to minimize and control the cracks.

Helpful Hints:

- ◆ In the event a foundation crack allows the entry of water to the inside of your home, please notify our Customer Care Service Department immediately. We will notify you of the type of action to be taken to correct this situation.
- ◆ In the future, if you decide to pour a patio or service walk at your home, make sure to keep the grade at the top of the patio or walk at least two inches (2") below the bottom course of the siding or the bottom of the stucco.

A concrete sealer, available at any home-care store, will make an unpainted concrete floor easier to keep clean. Follow the manufacturer's directions for cleaning after the sealer has been applied.

Care and Maintenance of Exterior Concrete:

- ◆ Please remember to avoid the spread of inorganic fertilizer during the spring and summer months with regard to your exterior concrete areas. Inorganic fertilizer can also cause concrete to deteriorate.
- ◆ Do not place granular materials, plantings, bark or borders of any kind, other than grass, around or along the edges of your concrete flatwork as this encourages water to get under the concrete, which can cause earth to settle. This can lead to

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cracking or breakage. Remember, try to keep water on top of the concrete, or flowing away from the concrete, to prevent the water from getting underneath.

Ceramic Tile Countertops:

The ceramic tiled countertops in your kitchen, or other areas of your home, are durable and attractive in their varieties of colors and designs.

Ceramic tiles are purchased in lots that have the same texture and color. Because an exact replacement match of ceramic tile can be impossible, we urge you to take special care to avoid breaking or damaging the ceramic tile on your countertops. Save any unused tile that you may have for future repairs.

Ceramic tile is brittle and can be broken by a sharp blow from a heavy object. Avoid broken tiles by using a cutting board and other protection for your ceramic tiles when you are at work in your kitchen. Wipe spills away promptly to avoid staining the grout. Soapy warm water, a detergent or a commercial tile cleaner can be used to keep your tile bright and shiny. Do not use abrasive cleaners on tile.

- ◆ For heavily soiled, stained or mildewed countertops, clean with a thick solution of scouring powder and hot water. Allow solution to set for five (5) to ten (10) minutes, scrubbing with a stiff bristled brush, and rinse. Repeat if necessary. If the stain remains, apply household bleach. *Do not* use on colored grout. Rinse well and dry. For stained grout, the scour-paste mix may be left for five (5) to six (6) hours. Tough stains may require special treatment.

For care of the grout between your countertop's ceramic tiles, see **Grout** later in this section.

Special Note: Care should be taken at ceramic tile areas that are exposed to water. If any grout becomes loose, or if gaps appear between the tiles, apply a waterproof caulking material to prevent water from migrating behind the tile. If water is allowed to accumulate behind the tile, damage to the walls and to the structure of the home can occur. The Builder is not responsible for this kind of damage.

Ceramic Tile – Floors and Walls:

- ◆ If you have soft water, use an all purpose cleaner. (See list of recommendations.)
- ◆ If you have hard water, use a commercial tile cleaner. You may also use a solution of equal parts water and vinegar. Be sure to first test this solution in a small area to be sure it won't etch your tile or erode the grout. Vinegar can damage some crystalline tile glazes. You may need to scrub with a nylon scrubber. **Do not** use steel wool as rusting may occur.
- ◆ Dry shower walls after each use.

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Countertops – Solid Surface:

Solid surface countertops were created for a lifetime of easy care. Just follow the simple guidelines listed here to keep your solid surfaces looking as fresh as they looked the day they were installed.

Routine Care: Soapy water or ammonia-based cleaners will remove most dirt and stains. However, slightly different techniques must be used to remove difficult stains.

- ◆ Cleaning: For most dirt and stains, use soapy water or ammonia-based cleaner.
- ◆ Water marks: Wipe with damp cloth and towel dry.
- ◆ Difficult stains: Follow recommendations of product manufacturer.
- ◆ Disinfecting: Occasionally wipe surface with diluted household bleach; one (1) part water and one (1) part bleach.

Preventing heat damages: Solid surface countertops withstand heat better than ordinary surface materials. However, hot pans, as well as some heat-generating appliances, like frying pans or crock-pots, can damage the surface. To prevent heat damage, always use a hot pad or a trivet with rubber feet to protect your solid surface countertop.

Preventing other damage: In most cases, solid surface countertops can be repaired if accidentally damaged. However, be sure to follow the guidelines here to prevent any permanent damage to your countertop.

- ◆ Avoid exposing solid surface countertops to strong chemicals, such as paint removers, oven cleaners, etc. If contact occurs, quickly flush the surface with water.
- ◆ Remove nail polish with a non-acetone based nail polish remover and flush with water.
- ◆ Do not cut directly on countertops.
- ◆ Run cold water when pouring boiling water into sinks.

Countertops – Laminate:

The laminated countertops used in your home are made of top quality plastic laminate materials. Because these counters consist of a sheet of very hard plastic laminated to a wooden base, you must be careful not to disturb the bond between the wood and the plastic. For this reason, always be sure to use a hot pad (trivets or lined hot pads) for anything that is too hot to touch by hand. Anything coming directly off a burner or from the oven will be much too hot to place directly on the plastic surface. Also, please remember that laminate tops are not scratch proof.

Here are some maintenance procedures for maintaining the beauty and prolonging the life of your laminate countertops:

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- ◆ Most spots, glass rings, etc. will usually wipe clean with a damp cloth and mild soap. For more stubborn stains, use an all purpose or bathroom cleaner following the instructions. We recommend Formica brand spray cleaner. Rinse and dry. Be careful of the inks used in marking grocery products, especially meat and produce. They are often indelible and can be extremely difficult to remove. Newspaper ink can also produce an indelible stain. When you clean your countertops, do not use any kind of abrasive cleaners.
- ◆ For very stubborn spots, rub a soft brush with mild lava soap to create a lather. Gently rub the spot in circular motion, pressing lightly. Rinse and dry.
- ◆ Never cut items directly on the countertop. They will scratch and knife marks can become unsightly hiding places for dirt.
- ◆ Countertops are not constructed for sitting. Excessive weight can cause warping, drawer malfunction, and even cause the top to pull away from the wall.
- ◆ In order to prevent leaks, be certain to monitor the condition of all caulking at countertops and recaulk if separation or shrinkage occurs.
- ◆ Keep your countertops clear of excessive or standing water.
- ◆ If laminate is in an area where only dusting is needed for maintenance, a non-oily furniture spray, such as Favor or Pledge, may be used. Be sure to clean spray off several times a year to avoid build-up. This may be done with ammoniated cleaners such as Windex.

Precautions: Even though laminated surfaces are one of the easiest to care for and one of the most durable, there are some precautions to be taken:

- ◆ Abrasive tools and cleaners will scratch the surface, marring both the beauty and the stain resistance.
- ◆ Cigarette burns may cause blistering or permanent stain.

Delaminating is when the surface edge becomes separated from the support material to which it is glued. To reglue, use a knife to scrape away dried glue from the support surface and the back of the laminate. Apply a contact adhesive evenly to both surfaces and allow to dry until shiny. Press laminate firmly and evenly down at all points. Allow drying for twenty-four (24) hours before exposing to water.

- ◆ Substances which will permanently stain or damage include:
 1. Drain cleaners
 2. Toilet bowl cleaners
 3. Dyes for hair, textiles, and food
 4. Oven cleaners
 5. Rust removers
 6. Varnish with stain

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- ◆ The greatest cause of damage is failure to rinse after cleaning. Even a small amount of cleaning solution on a countertop will be reactivated chemically when a damp dish is set on it. The chemicals act on the surface far longer than they should. The result could be a permanent scar.
- ◆ Prolonged exposure to direct sunlight could cause fading or yellowing.
- ◆ Water should not be allowed to stand on the surface for a prolonged period or it could attack the glue lines and cause the support material to swell.

Solid Surface Vanity Tops and/or Tubs:

Cultured marble is a man-made product that adds style and beauty to your bathrooms. Care for cultured marble in the same way you would care for fine wood.

- ◆ Remove spills immediately to avoid stains. Most food and drink items are acidic and can etch the finish on the marble. Do not place any items that may scratch the surface directly on the marble countertop.
- ◆ Use only mild liquid cleaning agents to clean marble vanity tops or tubs. Any good spray or paste wax will keep the shine.
- ◆ Do not use any type of abrasive cleaner to clean this surface, as it will cause scratching and dulling of the surface. Do not place cigarettes or other hot objects on the vanity tops, as the cultured top will stain much like the natural marble.

Decks:

Your new home may feature decks. They require care and are designed to last for many years. Sealing is an essential part of maintaining your deck and is considered a homeowner responsibility. Do not install heavy equipment or nail anything to your deck. The hole caused by the installation could allow water to enter your home and cause damage. Any damage would be your responsibility.

Doors:

Most door problems can be handled with minimum maintenance procedures:

- ◆ Sticking caused by shrinkage and swelling, especially during summer humidity, is the most common problem with doors. It is also a common characteristic in new homes.
- ◆ Interior doors, bi-pass and bi-folds, often stick or warp due to various weather conditions. Interior panel doors may show raw wood if panels shrink more than the frame. Exterior doors will warp, to some degree, due to a temperature differential between inside and outside surfaces. Winter conditions may change the moisture content of wood doors, causing temporary warping. These conditions are normal.

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Helpful Hints:

- ◆ **Sticking:** If swelling in damp weather causes sticking, fold sandpaper around a wood block and sand the edge that binds. Reseal any sanded edges.
- ◆ **Uneven alignment:** If uneven alignment is the cause, check to see that hinge screws are tight and holding properly. If the door is still out of alignment, sand or plane the edge that binds. Always paint or varnish areas you have sanded or planed to protect the wood from moisture and prevent further problems.
- ◆ **Weatherstripping:** To maintain a good seal, you will periodically need to adjust the weatherstripping on your exterior doors.

A well sealed door should be somewhat hard to open and close. A slight air crack is normal. Sometimes, a hard wind may cause howling. Adjusting as mentioned above will solve the problem, unless the winds are very strong.

- ◆ **Painting:** Whenever you paint the house or trim, also paint wood or steel exterior doors. Natural finished doors require more frequent recoating.
- ◆ **Adjustable thresholds:** Many exterior doors are equipped with adjustable thresholds. These are easily adjusted with a large screwdriver as the seasons and humidity change.
- ◆ **Bi-fold or sliding doors that stick:** Keep tracks free of dirt and grit. Occasional application of silicone spray will enable doors to slide easily and prolong their life. Be sure to protect surrounding floor surfaces.

Drains:

Each plumbing fixture in your home has a J-shaped pipe designed to provide a water barrier between your home and the odor of sewer gas. The trap holds water, which keeps airborne bacteria and the odor of sewer gas from entering your home.

If you seldom use a fixture, turn it on at regular intervals to replace evaporating water and keep the barrier intact. Because of their shape, traps are the point where drains are most likely to become clogged.

- ◆ **Bathtub, sink, and shower drains:** If a drain in these fixtures becomes clogged, first use a plunger. Be sure the rubber cup covers the drain opening and that the water comes well up over the cup edge. Working the plunger up and down rhythmically 10 or 20 times in succession, will build up pressure in the pipe and be more effective than sporadic, separated plunges. Be sure to plug the overflow outlet, if there is one, with a piece of old cloth, and close the other drain when working on a double sink. If the plunger does not solve the problem, use a plumber's snake if you are comfortable with its use, or call a plumbing repair person.

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Helpful Hints:

- ◆ If a plunger or snake can partially open a drain, often hot water (no hotter than 140 degrees for plastic pipe) will finish the job. If not, open the trap, putting a bucket or pan under it to catch the water. A piece of wire may help dislodge the blockage. The snake can also be run in at this point.
- ◆ Although it is sold commercially as a drain cleaner, never use caustic soda to open a drain. It will combine with the grease from soap or food wastes to form an insoluble compound.
- ◆ Potash lye or caustic potash may help finish opening a drain, but never use them on a completely stopped up drain. They may take as long as overnight to work, and if you have opened the trap, the chemicals would be a hazard.
- ◆ In order to avoid stopped up drains, never pour grease into a drain or toilet. Ordinary washing soda, not baking soda, added to a drain on a regular basis will help keep it clear of grease from soap and cooking utensils. Run hot water through the drain, turn off the water, add three (3) tablespoons of washing soda, and follow it with just enough hot water to wash it down the drain opening. Let it sit for fifteen (15) minutes and run more hot water.

Caution: Because potash lye and caustic potash are highly corrosive, always pour them slowly into the drain to keep them from splattering. Never pour water into the chemicals. Wear old clothes, rubber gloves, and goggles or safety glasses. Never use a plunger after chemicals have been added to a drain, as the water may splash and cause an injury or damage nearby surfaces. Follow label directions.

- ◆ **Washer Drain:** The wall mounted overflow drain in the washer area is intended to handle minor leaks and overflows and will not handle water flooding that is caused by broken hoses, major overflows or other major leaks from a washing machine. The Builder will not be responsible for damages that are caused by a washing machine.

Drywall – Walls and Ceilings:

The interior walls of your home have been constructed of gypsum wallboard (drywall). Slight imperfections such as shrinkage, settlement cracks, a slight lifting of baseboards, nail pops and/or seam lines do appear during the drying and settling process of your home. This is a normal condition of drywall construction.

Also, please note: “Critical lighting”, which is the artificial or natural lighting that strikes the glossy drywall surface at an oblique angle, will also accentuate even the slightest surface variations. Typically, additional patching, painting or other applications cannot improve this condition.

No attempt should be made to repair these occurrences in the drywall until your home has gone through the drying and setting period. This is usually around twelve (12) months.

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Helpful Hints:

- ◆ After you have passed your one (1) year period, and the house is sufficiently dried, use a product called “spackle” to fill in any slight imperfections. Spackle can be obtained in any hardware or home care store, in either powder or paste form. Follow the instructions on the container and follow up with the use of touch-up paint, which was provided to you.
- ◆ Putting a piece of cardboard, such as a matchbook cover, over the nail and then gently tapping with a hammer, can reset a nail pop. When redecorating, knock the loose paint and plaster off of the top of the nail pop and fill and repaint that area.
- ◆ Hairline cracks should be left until redecorating, at which time they may be repainted or filled with patching material and repainted.
- ◆ Baseboards can be easily reset, but this shouldn’t be done until you are ready to redecorate because resetting may damage the finish.

Electrical:

Your electrical system was created from Underwriter’s Laboratory Approved (ULA) components, installed to rigid specifications and inspected by the local building department.

The wiring of your new home meets the code requirements and safety standards for the normal use of electrical appliances. Ordinarily, small appliances, which require your personal attendance for their operations, may be plugged into any electrical receptacle without fear of overloading a circuit. However, the use of larger appliances or the use of too many appliances on the same circuit may cause an overload of the circuit and trip a breaker.

The wiring and equipment in your home are protected by circuit breakers. They are the safety valves of your home’s electrical system. The circuit breaker panel may be located on an outside wall of your home near the electric meter, in a closet, or in the garage.

- ◆ **Master circuit breaker:** Your home has a master circuit breaker. The compressor, electric range (if provided), and other 220-volt circuits are also located in this box. When the master circuit breaker is tripped, the electricity to the entire house is shut off.
- ◆ **Electrical outlets:** Three-holed grounded receptacles are standard in your home and will accept normal, two-prong plugs. Please note that wall switches control some outlets.
- ◆ **Ground fault interrupter (GFI) electrical outlets:** These are special circuit breakers that are designed to break the flow of electricity in the event of a short circuit, and prevent dangerous electrical shock. These electrical safety devices are installed in bathrooms and other selected areas. They may be tripped by an electrical short, as well as moisture, and

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should be checked during an electrical failure. Do not plug refrigerators and/or freezers into GFI.

- ◆ **GFI troubleshooting:** If any receptacle on a GFI circuit collects any moisture, as it may after a rain or during a period of high humidity, the receptacle may “trip” and automatically shut off all power. If this happens, the power will remain off until the receptacle dries and is reset by you. The receptacle cannot be reset until it dries. Opening any outside covers may reduce the drying time by letting the air and sun dry the receptacle.

Helpful Hints:

One (1) GFI may control several electrical outlets. Garage outlets are often required to be on GFI's, in which case it is advisable to install a separate circuit should you wish to keep a freezer or refrigerator in your garage. Appliances that need continuous power (air conditioners, freezers, landscape timers, refrigerators) should not be plugged into GFI outlets.

- ◆ **Circuit breakers:** Circuit breakers may be reset by first switching the breaker to **Full Off** and then back to **Full On**.
- ◆ **Power failures:** In the event of a loss of electrical power in your home, follow these steps:

Step #1: If the power loss is just in one area of your home, chances are an individual circuit breaker has turned off. Unplug any appliances in the area that is without power and turn other appliances off as well. Check the circuit breaker and, if necessary, reset it. Plug your appliances back in. If the circuit breaker fails repeatedly, you have either a short circuit in one of your appliances or a short circuit in the electrical system in your home. Do not attempt further repair.

Call a licensed electrician or our Customer Care Service Department if the condition is still covered under our Limited Warranty.

Step #2: If electrical power is lost throughout your home, first check to see if your neighbors are without power. If the outage is neighborhood wide, contact your power company. If just your home's power is out, check the master circuit breaker. If the master circuit breaker has tripped, reset it. To reset, turn all breakers off, turn the master breaker on, and then turn the other breakers on one by one.

Step #3: If the master circuit breaker trips repeatedly, refer the problem to a licensed electrician.

- ◆ **Electrical troubleshooting:** If electrical outlets won't work, make certain the circuit breaker has not been tripped. If it has, reset it. If not, make sure a wall switch that is in the **OFF** position does not control the outlet.

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- ✓ If individual ceiling lights or lamps don't come on, check the bulb in another fixture. If the bulb is good, check the circuit breaker to see if it is tripped, and reset if necessary. Also, check for wall switches that may be turned *OFF*.
- ✓ If an outlet sparks when plugged into, be certain the appliance is *OFF* before plugging it in. If it still sparks, try another outlet. If you get sparks from a second outlet, the problem is usually in the appliance cord. If you do not get sparks, have the receptacle inspected. Please note that sparks from wall switches should be checked by an electrician.
- ✓ If a wall switch or receptacle is hot to the touch, immediately trip the circuit breaker serving that fixture and contact an electrician.

Special Note: We highly recommend that you consult a licensed electrician to make any changes or additions to your electrical system. A permit may be required.

Caution: Respect your electrical system. Do not insert metal objects into wall outlets. Use child safety covers, available at grocery and home care stores, for outlets that are accessible to small children.

Exterior Lights:

The exterior lights on your home can have antique brass, polished brass, Verde or painted finishes.

Helpful Hints:

- ◆ Replace the light bulbs with the same wattage bulbs as those that were originally installed in the fixture.
- ◆ Protect the brass finish with a wax or protectant product to avoid corrosion and discoloration.
- ◆ Replacement globes can be purchased at home centers and lighting and hardware stores.

Special Note: Brass finishes will tarnish in time and are not warranted. Do not use ammonia-based products to clean brass.

Fencing:

Any fencing around your home must be of the type and in the location mandated by local ordinances and/or approved landscape plans. It will need regular preventive maintenance. Do not allow sprinklers to spray fences and other exterior surfaces. Please note that fencing around your home may vary from that in the model homes and from homes with different grade elevations.

If you elect to add a fence to your property, employ a professional fencing contractor. In this regard, it is your responsibility to locate the property lines and have your fencing installed according to local building codes and your Conditions, covenants & Restrictions of your Homeowners' Association. Before you install fencing, refer any questions to local

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building authorities and your Homeowners' Association before you change the paint color of your wrought iron or wood fencing.

- ◆ **Wood fencing maintenance:** Fencing made of wood, usually with cedar posts, is attractive. The natural finish of wood fencing can be preserved by regular applications of a deck or wood sealer.
- ◆ **Wrought iron fencing maintenance:** Wrought iron is subject to rusting if it is not maintained properly. Use touch-up paint on nicks and scratches and every four (4) months or as needed.

Areas with obvious rust should be sanded and repainted with water resistant primer and paint immediately. Repaint every one (1) to two (2) years. The frequency of maintenance depends on the exposure to sunlight and to dampness.

Special Note: Do not let water stand around fence posts.

Fiberglass Tubs and Shower Bases:

If fiberglass tubs and shower bases are installed in your home, here are some helpful hints that will keep them looking like new:

- ◆ Avoid using abrasive cleaners that will scratch the surface.
- ◆ For normal cleaning, use warm water and liquid detergent, such as Dow, Lysol or Mr. Clean bathroom cleaners, with sponge, nylon, polyethylene or saran cleaning pads. Do not use abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, steel wool or scrapers.
- ◆ For an extra sparkle against mild grime, smear entire surface area with a water paste using baking soda, such as Arm & Hammer. Allow effervescing a few hours, rinse with warm water.
- ◆ For stubborn stains, use a nonabrasive cleaner, such as Spic & Span. Sponge the area with the cleaner, allow standing an hour, and rinse with warm water.
- ◆ Avoid dropping objects on fiberglass surfaces, or striking the surfaces with sharp objects; chipping or cracking could result.
- ◆ For scratches and dull areas, rub vigorously with automotive rubbing compound, such as Dupont, and a white cotton rag. Then buff vigorously with a carnauba-based wax. If done twice a year, this will maintain a lustrous finish after cleaning as above.

Fireplaces:

Your home may be equipped with a prefabricated, direct vent gas fireplace. Direct vent means that no combustion air is drawn from the living environment and that all products of combustion are exhausted to the exterior.

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Helpful Hints:

- ◆ Never burn any combustible materials in your gas fireplace.
- ◆ Clean the glass front twice annually or as required in heavy usage. Use a glass cleaner or vinegar applied with crumpled newspaper. Do not use razor blades on glass.

Your gas fireplace may be equipped with a push button electric gas starter. Refer to your owner's manual for information. Also, reference your owner's manual for cleaning instructions.

When lit for the first time, the fireplace will emit a slight odor for one or two hours. This is due to the curing of the logs and "burn in" of internal parts and lubricants used in the manufacturing process. This condition is temporary. Open doors and windows to ventilate the room(s) sufficiently. **Important:** Clean inside of the glass door whenever you see dirt build-up on glass. Operation of the fireplace with dirty glass will make it very difficult to clean the glass.

- ◆ **Maintenance Instructions:** Refer to manufacturer's recommendations.

Floors – Marble:

- ◆ A patina can be achieved by buffing with marbling rouge when floor becomes dull. Marble is porous and readily absorbs liquids; therefore, it can stain. In order to prevent staining or dirt build-up, regular cleaning with warm water and a clear, nonabrasive, nonacidic soap is recommended.

Special Note: Although these methods are recommended, they should be tried in a small area, which will not show, before completing the job. If damage results, stop the process immediately.

Floors – Quarry Tile:

- ◆ Mop with a household cleaner or a vinegar-water solution.
- ◆ Easy maintenance and a natural patina can be acquired by following these steps:
 1. Thoroughly clean floor.
 2. Apply a thin film of a soapless, oil-based cleaner such as Lestoil, Pinesol, or Janitor-in-a Drum, undiluted to the floor with a soft, clean cloth. Avoid using a mop, which spreads an uneven film of oil over the floor.
 3. If the floor is "tacky", try mopping with ½ cup of Lestoil mixed with eight (8) cups of warm water to remove excess oil from the surface of the floor.
- ◆ Continue routine maintenance using a normal solution of cleaner and water. You may expect a uniform darkening of the grout.

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Floors and Walls – Unglazed Mosaic Tiles:

- ◆ Use a household scouring powder on a wet sponge or an all-purpose cleaner with a nylon scrubber.
- ◆ Heavy duty cleaning of floors requires mixing scouring powder with hot water to a paste-like consistency and mopping over floors. Allow paste to stand for about five (5) minutes. Scrub with a brush and rinse well.

Garbage Disposal:

If you have a garbage disposal in your new home, it will probably be one of two types: continuous feed, or bath feed with locking cover.

The instructions on the side of the unit will give precise directions for its operation.

Some homeowners erroneously conclude that because their waste disposal is capable of grinding up most of their garbage, the unit is also capable of eliminating grease and other substances they would not otherwise pour down a drain. In fact, you should be equally careful not to clog disposal drains with grease.

Helpful Hints:

- ◆ When grinding greasy substances, use plenty of cold water. Always use cold water when the disposal is on. Should the drain become clogged, do not put chemicals down the disposal.
- ◆ Avoid putting large amounts of fibrous material, such as banana peels, celery waste, cornhusks, etc., down your disposal.

Reset buttons: Most disposals have a reset button that works in much the same ways as a circuit breaker. Should the disposal become overloaded with a substance it cannot grind, it will turn itself off. If this happens, turn the switch **OFF**, remove the substance obstructing the disposal's operation, wait about three (3) minutes, push the reset button (see your instruction booklet for its location), and turn the switch **ON**.

If the disposal still does not start, turn it **OFF** again and check to see if you have tripped a circuit breaker. If the circuit breaker has not interrupted the flow of current, trip the circuit breaker. Using a mop or broom handle to avoid injury, turn the rotating plate in the disposal until it turns freely. Restore the current, push the reset button again, and turn the disposal **ON**. Some disposals come equipped with a special wrench that can be inserted in a hole in the bottom of the disposal, which is under the sink. Others have a two-pronged wrench that fits in the top of the recirculating plate. Turning the wrench a couple of times will usually loosen the material enough so that the disposal will turn.

Caution: Be absolutely sure that the circuit breaker is OFF before inserting your hand to remove material when the disposal is stalled. Also, be absolutely sure it is **OFF** before using the wrench or a broomstick.

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Grout:

Grout is the porous material you will find between your ceramic floor tiles and ceramic countertops in your home (see ***Ceramic Floor and Wall Tile and Countertops – Ceramic*** in this section).

The grout should be inspected periodically for cracks and holes. If either is present, the area should be regrouted. If it is not regrouted, water could cause the tiles to loosen.

Minor separation and looseness of ceramic tile grout, where it is joined with other materials, is inevitable. This is caused by the normal expansion and contraction of materials. Repairs are a function of normal home maintenance.

Routine scrubbing of the grout with warm soapy water will keep it clean and fresh. Strong cleaners, such as Lysol, can stain the grout.

You may want to consider sealing the grout once a year. This will help prevent stubborn stains from penetrating the grout and becoming unsightly. However, do not seal the grout until it has completely cured, which is about six (6) months after installation. Sealers can be purchased at your home care or hardware store. However, be aware that some sealing products can darken grout.

Stain Removal Agents (not for Colored Grout):

- ◆ ***Blood:*** Rub with hydrogen peroxide or household bleach, rinse, and dry.
- ◆ ***Nail Polish:*** Dissolve with polish remover. If necessary, apply liquid household bleach. Rinse and dry.
- ◆ ***Grease and Fats:*** Use salt, soda water, Spic & Span, or Oaklite with warm water. If stain is stubborn, apply thick paste of household cleaner and hot water, let stand overnight, and scrub vigorously. Rinse and dry, or place an electric iron on several paper towels directly over stain on tiles. Turn iron to hottest setting that ***will not char paper towels***. Let stand five (5) minutes on paper towels and blot.
- ◆ ***Inks and Dyes:*** Apply household bleach and let stand until bleach disappears, keeping surface wet continuously. Rinse and dry.
- ◆ ***Iodine:*** Scrub with ammonia, rinse, and dry.
- ◆ ***Mercurochrome:*** Scrub with household bleach, rinse, and dry.
- ◆ ***Mildew:*** Use a mildew stain remover for tile and grout or scrub tile with ammonia and scrub grout with scouring powder. Wash with bleach, rinse, and dry.

Recommended Cleaners:

- ◆ ***Soapless Detergents:***
 - ✓ Oaklite

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◆ **All Purpose Cleaners:**

- ✓ Soft Scrub
- ✓ Mr. Clean
- ✓ Top Job
- ✓ Fantastic
- ✓ Ajax Liquid
- ✓ Lestoil

◆ **Mildew Cleaners:**

- ✓ Tilex
- ✓ X-14 – Instant Mildew Stain Remover

◆ **Soap Scum, Rust Stain or Water Deposits:**

- ✓ Lime Away

◆ **Scouring Powders:**

- ✓ Comet
- ✓ Ajax

Gutter and Downspout System:

The gutter and downspout system on your new home is made of steel, which has been prefinished.

Gutters and downspouts should be kept free of tree limbs, leaves, balls, and other obstructions that will stop the system from functioning properly and which may, in time, cause leaks.

You should make sure that all downspouts are directed away from the building to eliminate pooling at the foundation, which may cause a foundation leak. Do not fix the tip-out portion of the downspout in the upright position because you may inadvertently cause water to accumulate next to your foundation.

Hardware:

Quality hardware has been used throughout your home. Optional brass hardware will gradually tarnish and take on an antique appearance. Do not use ammonia-based products.

Helpful Hints:

- ◆ Initial care requires periodic cleaning with mild nonabrasive soap and light buffing with a soft cloth.
- ◆ If peeling, spotting or discoloration occurs, you can restore the beauty by completely removing the remaining coating and hand polishing with a suitable brass polish.
- ◆ Applying a light coat of wax and buffing with a soft cloth will renew and maintain the patina of the brass surface.

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- ◆ Normal usage may loosen screws secured to the door; periodic checking and tightening is a part of homeowner maintenance.

Hardwood Floors and Engineered Floors:

You may have selected a prefinished parquet, strip or plan hardwood floor. Some characteristics of these products are:

- ◆ Streaks, spots, and color variations.
- ◆ An occasional unfilled pinworm hole not over 1/16" in diameter.
- ◆ Knots less than 1/8" in diameter.

If you selected unfinished or job-finished strip oak or parquet, there may be shade variations from piece to piece, as each piece will accept stain differently. The graining of wood will differ from piece to piece, and filled knot or wormholes may appear. These are characteristics that are prevalent in natural wood.

What You Can't Expect from your Hardwood Floors:

- ◆ A tabletop finish: Each piece of wood flooring sands differently depending on its grain type, plain or quartered, making it virtually impossible for a completely flat surface.
- ◆ Dust free finish: Since your floor is being finished in your home, it is not practical to achieve a "clean room" environment. Some dust will fall onto the freshly applied top finish. It will wear off as you use the floor.
- ◆ A monotone floor: Wood, as a natural product, varies from piece to piece. Remember, it is not fabricated. It is milled from a tree and will have grain and color variances consistent with the grade and species of flooring selected.
- ◆ A floor that will not indent: In spite of the term "hardwood", oak flooring will indent under high heel traffic, especially heels in disrepair.
 - ✓ Measured in pounds-per-square-inch (psi), a car has a load of 28 to 30 psi, and an elephant has 50 to 100 psi. A 125-pound woman, with a pair of 1/4" high-heel shoes on, has 2,000 psi. That's a problem for any floor – metal, wood, ceramic, carpet, terrazzo, and resilient.
 - ✓ Now that stiletto or high heels are back in vogue, you should be aware that the extremely high forces involved might damage hardwood floors.
 - ✓ Damage will usually occur, not from the heels themselves, but from protruding nail heads. An exposed nail head can exert a force of 8,000 psi. That's high enough to crush hardened concrete. It's difficult for any flooring material to resist that high a force.

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- ✓ The extremely high forces exerted by stiletto, or high-heeled traffic (dynamic loads of 1,000 psi or more), may visibly damage wood floors, resilient flooring, and other floor coverings. We will not accept claims for damage caused by stiletto or high-heeled traffic.
- ◆ A floor without cracks between the boards: Although your new floor will start tight together, as a natural product, it will continue to absorb and expel moisture. This natural process will cause the flooring to expand and contract from season to season, resulting in cracks between some of the boards in your floor. Some stain colors, such as white, will show this process more than others. Home humidifier systems will help to maintain a constant humidity level in your home and help alleviate the “breathing” or expansion and contraction of all the wood in your home.

Helpful Hints:

- ◆ Clean your hardwood floors frequently. Sweep the floors and mop with a soft, dry mop or cloth. Do not use water or water-based cleaners.
- ◆ When your floor becomes soiled, damp-wipe with a mixture of one (1) cup vinegar to one (1) gallon of warm water. When damp wiping, be sure to remove all excess water from the mop. Never wash or wet-mop wood floors. Excess moisture can penetrate the finish causing discoloration and warping.
- ◆ Do not flood hardwood floors with water. This will cause stains, warping, and the destruction of the flooring. Do not permit water or other liquids to stand on hardwood flooring. Wipe up spills immediately. Do not use water-based detergents, bleach or one-step floor cleaners on hardwood floors.
- ◆ Do not drag heavy appliances or furniture across hardwood flooring. Permanent scratches in the finish can result.
- ◆ Polyurethane and water-based urethane finishes do not require waxing. You may screen and coat the floor when the finish is worn. This process could be necessary frequently if the floor is in a high-traffic area. ***Preventive maintenance for all finishes is as follows:***
 - ✓ Place throw rugs in entries, in front of the kitchen sink, and in other high-traffic areas to avoid the accumulation of dirt.
 - ✓ Do not use rubber-backed mats as they cause discoloration.
 - ✓ Vacuum or dust mop on a daily basis as loose dirt will scratch your floor and dull the appearance.
 - ✓ Protection, such as protector pads, placed under furniture legs will help prevent scratches.
 - ✓ Wipe up all spills from the floor as soon as possible to prevent spotting and staining.

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- ✓ We do not recommend the use of cleaning products containing wax or oils, including Murphy's Oil Soap. If these products are utilized, additional finish coats may not adhere properly and the wood may need to be resanded to achieve a new look.

HVAC - Air Conditioning:

Your home's air conditioning system is easy to use and maintain. Just select a temperature, set the thermostat, and forget it!

Do not cycle the air conditioning system on and off. Leave the system on through the entire summer/cooling season. When outside temperatures increase through the hottest part of the summer, you may wish to increase the thermostat setting to provide a more reasonable difference between inside and outside temperatures. This avoids overworking the cooling system. The system cannot be expected to reduce and maintain an interior temperature more than fifteen (15) degrees lower than the outside temperature.

To increase the system's efficiency and conserve fuel, close windows and doors tightly. Turn off unused lights and heat-producing appliances. Cover windows in direct sunlight with shades, blinds, draperies or awnings.

If your air conditioning system fails to operate properly, follow this checklist before calling for service:

- ◆ Check the thermostat setting and the thermostat thermometer. The thermostat setting should be **below** the temperature on the thermometer to operate.
- ◆ Check the thermostat selector. It should be on **COOL**.
- ◆ Check the main electrical switch. It should be **ON**. Work the switch several times to remove any dirt from the contacts.
- ◆ Check all circuit breakers in the main switch box. They should be **ON**. Remember to work them several times.
- ◆ Inspect filters to make sure they are not clogged.
- ◆ If your unit is not operating properly after checking all of the above, call the service number provided in your move-in package.

Air Conditioning Filter:

Your air conditioning system has an air filter to help keep the air in your home clean. You were shown its location during your Final Walk-Thru/Home Orientation. For maximum efficiency, this filter should be replaced roughly every thirty (30) days. Be sure to buy the right-sized filter. The size is usually printed along the frame edge.

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Special Note: NEVER run your HVAC without the filters in place. The resulting accumulation of dust on the condenser fins could cause major damage to the unit and result in damage to the house.

Helpful Hint: Check your furnace and/or air conditioning air filters weekly for the first two (2) months after you move in because your filters may clog more frequently from accumulated construction dust.

Keys and Locks:

No key used during the construction of your home will operate the locks after you have taken possession.

Passage door hardware in any home can work loose through use. Keep a careful watch to avoid excessive play in the doorknob escutcheon plate. In the event a doorknob or privacy lock should become inoperative, it is usually because looseness has allowed the interior mechanism to slip out of place. Removal and reinstallation of the fixture, a simple process, will usually correct the problem. Doors with key type hardware are more complicated and usually require the services of a locksmith.

Helpful Hint: Periodic application of powdered graphite or silicone spray to keyholes and lock mechanisms can help to keep them operating smoothly.

Landscaping and Sprinkler System:

The sod that was chosen for this area is considered to be a strong, hardy grass that thrives in this region. Certain maintenance procedures are important for its proper growth and maturity. Refer to guidelines for sod maintenance from the sod supplier.

- ◆ **Adding soil:** If your landscaping projects require that additional soil be added to your lot, be careful that the drainage is not altered significantly. Keep the surface of the soil at least six inches (6") below the level of stucco screed or siding materials. This will aid in preventing wood rot.
- ◆ **Flowerbeds:** Flowerbeds can significantly change drainage patterns. We suggest that you consult a professional landscape contractor before you dig flowerbeds. In any case, keep plantings of flowerbeds a minimum of five feet (5') from the foundation.
- ◆ **Maintaining your yard:** The grading on your property was done by engineers and was designed to promote proper drainage. Before you undertake a project that will alter the drainage grading on your property, consult with a professional contractor or landscape architect.

Helpful Hints:

- ◆ Do not let water stand or pond near your home. If you notice standing water (ponding) after watering or a rain, correct the problem as soon as possible.

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- ◆ Take steps to prevent water run-off to neighboring properties. You could be liable for any damage.
- ◆ Clear surface drains of debris after each rainfall and whenever necessary during the rest of the year.
- ◆ **Watering:** During the first few months, your yard will require frequent watering. We recommend deep watering for long periods. This enables the root system to develop. Water in the pre-dawn hours for maximum effect and to prevent evaporation. Check your local watering restrictions.
- ◆ **Weeding:** Due to the country setting of some of our communities, weeds are a definite problem. To combat this, you should purchase a reputable weed control product and apply it to your lawn as per the manufacturer's specifications. Additional hand weeding will also be required to aid in the control of weeds.

Caution: Inorganic fertilizers are often much stronger than organic types and are more difficult to apply in the proper amounts. Improper application may result in damage to the new lawn and surrounding concrete.

- ◆ **Lawn Diseases:** Most lawn diseases happen when lawns are over-watered and under-fertilized. Adjust your watering and fertilizer schedule when rust and other diseases appear. If diseased spots persist, discuss the problem with a professional nursery person.
- ◆ **Insects:** Grasses are resistant to most insect infestations. Corrective measures should be taken only when larger numbers of insects have been seen and damage is evident. At the first sign of damage to your lawn, take a specimen of the insect to a plant nursery for advice.
- ◆ **Pests:** Due to the country setting of many homes, you're bound to encounter pests on your property, especially during phases of nearby construction. Your unwanted visitors may include snakes, ants, birds, bees, and such burrowing animals as field mice and gophers. Unfortunately, some of these animals can wreak havoc with slopes by creating tunnels or burrows that lead to soil erosion. If burrowing animals become a problem, contact a professional pest control expert.

The Builder is not responsible for the removal of pests from your property.

- ◆ **Trees and shrubs:** During the first year, your trees and shrubs will require more frequent watering. A good rule of thumb is to wait until the surface soil is dry between watering. After the first year, watering once or twice a week is normal.

Helpful Hints:

- ◆ Use a pronged tool to cultivate the soil around your trees and shrubs to promote good water absorption.

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- ◆ Forming a bowl-shaped mound of soil around the base of trees can prevent water run-off and improve the efficiency of your watering.
- ◆ Signs of under-watered plants are yellowed or brown leaf tips.
- ◆ Prune trees and shrubs as needed.

Please keep in mind that it is the homeowner's responsibility, through proper care and maintenance, to establish a lawn. You may find it helpful to contact a landscape, nursery or garden supply store to obtain literature on the various lawn products.

Helpful Hint: When you plant additional landscaping shrubbery, please remember to maintain the slope of earth away from the house and plant shrubbery six feet (6') from the foundation. This allows for the root system and future plant growth. Homeowners should also pay careful attention to the placement of trees, shrubs, fences, sandboxes, swing sets, etc., in the rear and side yards. This could interfere with the drainage swales and affect the proper flow of water off the property.

Failure to do so could allow water to swell the soil and cause foundation damage and mildew under the sod.

Sprinkler/Irrigation System:

Check your irrigation system regularly. Look for clogged, cracked or broken heads, as well as leaks. If a line is broken, consult with a sprinkler system professional. Avoid digging or trenching around the location of your irrigation lines – and avoid directing the spray at stucco and masonry.

Landscape Maintenance Tips:

- ◆ Your landscaping, whether a do-it-yourself project or one installed by a professional landscaper, should be completed in a manner that ensures proper drainage so that your property, as well as your neighbor's, is protected from surface waters.
- ◆ Maintain the drainage pattern as identified on your lot plan. From the rear yard through the side yard and/or to the street, utilize drainage pipes, rock, ground covers or grasses to prevent erosion along the side yard "swales".
- ◆ Swales that have been graded around your home or on the lot pad should not be blocked. If you have any questions regarding drainage patterns, refer to your lot plan. These shallow ditches have been put there for the purpose of quickly removing water toward the driveway, street or other positive outlet.
- ◆ Do not let water gather against foundations by use of retaining walls. These walls are built to withstand the ordinary moisture in the ground. If water is permitted to pond against them, it may cause structural damage due to erosion or expansion.

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- ◆ Do not create depressed planter boxes, areas, or install retaining walls next to foundations so that irrigation or rainwater collects in them.
- ◆ Avoid planting shrubbery too close to your foundation. Six feet (6') is a good minimum. When preparing flowerbeds or planting areas adjacent to foundations, make sure that the ground surface slopes away from the foundation.
- ◆ Never water toward the foundation of your house or water more than is necessary for the growth and maintenance of lawns, flowers, shrubs or trees. Remember, less water is more desirable than too much.

Sometimes it is desirable to install concrete patios at the rear, sides or front of the house. In order that such installations do not have a detrimental effect on your house, the following rules should be observed:

- ◆ Patio slabs should be poured up to house foundations, wherever possible, and a planting strip between the patio slab and foundation should not be left unless proper under slab drainage away from the foundation is provided.
- ◆ Since patio slabs are usually much larger than sidewalks, there is more chance that drainage patterns will be obstructed, particularly at the rear of the house. It is therefore emphasized that positive drainage is restored around the perimeter of the slab by constructing drainage swales or other means. It is extremely important that this be done in the event patio slabs are covered.

By observing the above rules, the patio slabs can be constructed as desired and yet preserve the integrity of the drainage pattern of your lot.

Lighting Fixtures:

The lighting fixtures in your new home are designed for standard wattage bulbs. To avoid excessive heat and potential damage. Always follow the manufacturer's wattage rating inside the fixture.

Liquid Propane:

Your home has been equipped with an underground liquid propane tank, provided by Suburban Propane. The tank and exterior piping is the property of Suburban Propane and will be maintained by them. The tank lid must remain accessible at all times so your tank can be filled when needed. Any questions concerning the propane equipment or service should be directed to PG&E at 800-743-5000.

Overhead Garage Doors:

The overhead garage door on your new home is mounted with rollers and tension springs for easy operation. Garage doors do not seal against the elements in the same manner as your other exterior doors, and may show some light at the edges. It is not uncommon for water to enter at the edges. This is not considered a defective installation.

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The door hardware does require periodic maintenance. You should oil the locking mechanism, pulley, and rollers at least twice per year with a light oil or silicone spray. Due to the constant use of garage doors, it is not uncommon for hardware to loosen over time. It is our recommendation that a periodic check and tightening of garage door hardware will greatly lengthen the life of your garage door.

Painting – Interior:

Your walls and ceilings have been painted with a quality, interior latex paint.

Touch-up paint for your interior walls and ceilings was provided to you at the time of your final walk-thru/home orientation. This paint should be used on only those surfaces. Do not use on woodwork or doors unless otherwise noted.

If you elect to wallpaper after your first year, you must prepare all painted surfaces for wallpapering with an appropriate sizing material. This product can be purchased at any wallpaper, paint or hardware store. Follow instructions on the container.

Special Note: Failure to prepare your walls could result in the wallpaper not adhering to the surface or the paper pulling the paint or the drywall surface material off the wall.

Painting – Exterior:

High quality paint has been used on the exterior surfaces and doors of your home.

Depending on climate exposure, some paints, particularly dark colors, will fade more than others.

Helpful Hints: Cleaning painted areas routinely will preserve the appearance of your home.

- ◆ **Oil-based paint:** Should you ever choose an oil-based paint for your home, please be aware that all oil-based paints are subject to yellowing. The action of the sun usually minimizes yellowing on exterior surfaces. However, yellowing can be noticeable on interior surfaces. The natural drying and aging of the paint can cause yellowing by exposure to certain chemicals, such as ammonia fumes and others that are found in some household cleaners. White painted surfaces and light colors are more subject to yellowing than the darker colors are.

Yellowing of oil-based paints is unavoidable in some areas. Because yellowing tends to take place over time and relatively evenly on given surfaces, it may not be noticeable until you use touch-up paint. Your paint store can assist you in selecting a touch-up paint that will be a close match for yellowed paint.

Plumbing System and Fixtures:

Your plumbing system and fixtures should serve you well for many years if properly cared for. To avoid costly major repairs, promptly take care of minor problems as soon as they occur.

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- ◆ **Faucets/Fixtures:** Most of the plumbing fixtures in your new home are plated with polished brass, bright chromium or a combination of the two. The finishes are not covered by the Limited Warranty, but may be covered by a manufacturer's warranty. These surfaces are resistant to water corrosion. However, the brass and chromium plating materials are relatively soft, which means abrasive cleaners, scouring pads and tools, and ammonia-based products can damage them.

Helpful Hints:

- ◆ Clean your plumbing fixtures with warm soapy water and a soft cloth or sponge. Rinse with clear water and wipe dry to prevent spotting and soap build-up.
- ◆ If water is permitted to accumulate and stand at the base of your fixtures, corrosion and tarnishing can result. Always wipe the area dry.
- ◆ Avoid excessive force when you turn your faucets on and off. The seals in the faucets can be damaged in a short time. Because they have moving parts, faucets are more likely than plumbing with no moving parts, to require repair from time to time.
- ◆ **Aerators:** To maintain your faucets, you will need to clean the aerators by soaking them in undiluted vinegar every three (3) to four (4) months. This attachment to the faucets adds air to the water to reduce splashing and water usage.
- ◆ **Faucet leaks:** If a faucet leaks, usually you can fix it by replacing washers. Instead of washers, some new single-control faucets for hot and cold water have cartridges that last longer, but still must be changed. Be sure to turn off the water at the shut-off valve before repairing a faucet.
- ◆ **Leaking pipes:** The copper, CPVC, and PVC pipes installed in your new home should last the lifetime of the house. If your washing machine, dishwasher or other water-using appliances seems to be leaking, check the trap to see that the drain is not clogged.

Roofs:

The roof of your new home consists of fiberglass shingles or concrete roof tiles. These materials require virtually no maintenance. However, they can be damaged.

Helpful Hints:

- ◆ Place antennas and air conditioning units where rooftop traffic is not necessary for service.
- ◆ Use a long stick or rope to retrieve items lodged on the roof.
- ◆ If it is absolutely necessary to traverse your roof, walk on the lower third of individual tiles.

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After constant exposure to the elements, the color surface of your roof will usually appear somewhat lighter than when initially installed. This effect is created by surface oxidization, the same process that dulls all exposed surfaces that we are unable to wash and polish as we do our family car.

On very dark tiles, some temporary light patterning may be caused by efflorescence. This is a natural process seen in sidewalks and brick walls when alkaline deposits gravitate to surfaces exposed to moisture. While the surface of each of the tiles has been treated to minimize efflorescence, such occurrences do happen, but are rare and should completely disappear after additional exposure.

Again, although periodic inspections of the roof, chimney, caulking around vents, etc., are necessary, do avoid any excessive foot traffic on the roof. Any examination of roof surfaces should be accomplished by a roofing professional.

Shower Enclosures:

For cleaning shower enclosures, liquid Comet will do a good job. It is also recommended that a squeegee be used on the glass after every shower. For deposits of hard water minerals, use a commercial glass cleaner containing ammonia or one (1) tablespoon of household ammonia in a quart of water.

Caution: Be sure to read the caution note on the label before using ammonia. Never use steel wool or scouring pads on the metal portion of shower enclosures. It will remove the protective finish applied by the manufacturer and will cause unsightly scratches.

Siding – Concrete:

- ◆ **Patching:** Dents, chips, and cracks can be filled using a good quality cement-patching compound, which can be found at a local home care or hardware store.
- ◆ **Mold/Mildew:** Remove using a commercial mold/mildew remover. Consult the paint manufacturer's recommendations before applying any mold or mildew remover.
- ◆ **Loose siding:** Renail using a corrosion-resistant roofing type of 6D galvanized common nail or similar type of fastener. (See James Hardie's written application instructions for further details.)
- ◆ **Caulk replacement:** When caulk is in need of replacement, carefully remove existing caulk and replace with a high-quality, paintable latex caulk. Caulking should be applied in accordance with the caulking manufacturer's written application instructions.
- ◆ **Paint maintenance:** Remove any damaged, chipped or cracked paint. Prior to repainting, make sure that the surface area is properly cleaned and sanded. Repaint immediately using a good quality 100% acrylic paint. For best results, refer to the paint manufacturer's specifications for application rates and required topcoats.

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- ◆ **Replacement:** Replacement of one or more pieces of HARDIPLANK SHOULD BE DONE IN ACCORDANCE WITH James Hardie's written installation instructions.
- ◆ Call 1(800)9-HARDIE to obtain written installation instructions or for more detailed technical information.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors:

Your home has a smoke/carbon monoxide detector in every bedroom and a smoke/carbon monoxide detector in centrally located areas on each floor. Your smoke/carbon monoxide detectors are all interconnected, so if one detector's alarm sounds, all of the detector alarms will sound. Smoke from kitchen cooking as well as water vapor from bathroom showers can set off the detectors in your home. This is normal.

Your smoke/carbon monoxide detectors are all wired into the home's electrical system. In addition, your detectors are equipped with a battery back-up system. So, if the electrical power fails for any reason, your smoke/carbon monoxide detectors will still operate properly.

Special Notes:

- ◆ The batteries in your smoke/carbon monoxide detectors should be replaced twice a year. Choose replacement dates that are easy to remember, such as when you change your clocks.
- ◆ **Testing smoke/carbon monoxide detectors:** It is recommended that you test your smoke/carbon monoxide detectors once a month to make sure they are operating properly. The test function will be explained to you during your final walk-thru/home orientation. If you ever find that your detectors are not working properly, take remedial steps immediately.

Stucco:

You might have selected a home with stucco as an exterior finish.

Stucco is a brittle cement product that is subject to expansion and contraction, given this area's environment. Minor hairline cracks will develop in the outer layer of stucco. This is normal and does not reduce the function of the stucco at all.

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

Helpful Hint: Avoid spraying water from irrigation or water systems on stucco or siding surfaces. Check the spray from your lawn and plant irrigation system frequently to make certain water is not spraying or accumulating on stucco or siding surfaces.

Toilets:

Water-saver toilets are required by local and national plumbing codes. Water-saver toilets do not have the same flushing capacity that you may be accustomed to, due to their

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design to use less water. Never flush hair, grease, lint, diapers, rubbish, etc., down the toilet drain. These wastes will clog drains and sewer lines.

- ◆ **Toilet cleaning:** Many commercial products are available for toilet cleaning. Use them as directed, but do not mix them or use them with household bleach or other cleaning products. Never use toilet-cleaning products to clean anything but your toilets.
- ◆ **Toilet leaks:** If the water chamber seems to be leaking, the dripping may be coming from condensation on the outside of the toilet tank. If this is a problem, you may want to use a cloth tank cover. If water leaks into the bowl through the overflow pipe, try bending the rod that holds the float so that the float is closer to the bottom of the tank. Flush the toilet, and if it still leaks, you will probably need to have the inlet valve washer replaced.

If the water trickles into the bowl, but is not coming through the overflow pipe, it is coming through the flush-ball valve. The rods between the ball valve and the flushing handle may need aligning so that the ball drops straight down after the handle has been pushed. Water will leak through into the bowl if the ball valve is worn or if there is dirt or rust on the ball or ball seat. If the latter, remove dirt and rust. If the ball is worn, turn off the water, unscrew the ball, and replace it with a new one.

Water Heater:

Your water heater is covered by a warranty from its manufacturer. Please read the operating instructions that the manufacturer provides. In the event of a leak in your water heater, close the shut-off valve on the top of the water heater and turn off the pilot light. Call the manufacturer listed on the front of the water heater to request service. All hot water heaters, whether gas or electric, have a control mechanism to govern water temperature. Set gas heaters on **Normal**. Do not store anything near the heater because it will block airflow and create a fire hazard.

Caution: Excessively hot water can be dangerous. Monitor the temperature of the hot water in your home and make adjustments, if necessary. The water temperature can be adjusted on the control panel of your water heater. Adjust the temperature so that comfortably warm water is delivered. This will avoid scalding and reduce energy costs.

Your water heater should be drained and flushed according to the manufacturer's suggestions. This simple procedure will remove accumulated silt and debris so that the water heater is efficient and has a long life.

Windows and Sliding Glass Doors:

Windows, of course, are a source of heat loss and you may feel cold radiating from a properly installed and functioning window.

Due to the fact that you live in a modern, energy-efficient home, you may experience ice build-up on windows when you have a combination of cold weather and high humidity.

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This is a common occurrence, and does not necessarily indicate a defect in the window or its installation. If you are experiencing an extreme ice build-up on your windows, you should definitely investigate the humidity level in your home. Water damage due to over humidification is expressly excluded from your warranty coverage.

Helpful Hints:

- ◆ Keep all windowsill channels and sliding glass door tracks free of dirt and particles for proper seal and operation. Use your vacuum's crevice attachment to remove any dirt in your sills. In the event you feel a draft from your sliding glass door or windows, make sure to check the track for build-up of dirt before requesting warranty service.
- ◆ To ensure proper drainage, you should also periodically check the weep holes in windows and doors to see that they are free of dirt.
- ◆ Use a silicone spray to lubricate the tracks. Do not use WD-40.

Caution: You will damage the finish or sealed glass unit if you use solvents, petroleum products or caustic chemicals, such as acetone or paint thinner, to clean window or door frames. This damage is not covered by your warranty.

Wood Trim – Interior:

Like other organic materials, wood is affected by heat, cold, and extreme humidity. Therefore, it may contract or expand with weather changes. As a result, minor shrinkage and swelling is unavoidable.

The primary areas that may be affected include doors, baseboards, wood floors, handrails, fireplace mantels, paneling, and shelving. Slight cracks around doorways, arches, windows, joints in door casings, and nail pops around baseboards may appear.

When cleaning any wood trim, make sure to use only a clean dry dust cloth. Use of water or chemical cleaners may affect some finishes.

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Yearly Maintenance Schedule Overview

WEEKLY:

Carpets Vacuum carpets in high-traffic areas daily. The build-up of dust and dirt in the carpet can dramatically reduce the life of your carpet. Daily to weekly vacuuming of the carpet will keep your carpet looking better and make it last longer.

MONTHLY:

Furnace & Air Conditioner For furnace safety and efficiency, inspect filter for dirt and debris monthly. Clean and/or replace filters monthly. Furnace filters are available at grocery and home care stores.

Plumbing Check under kitchen and bathroom cabinets for leaks. Check the area around the hot water heater for leaks.

Kitchen Exhaust Remove and clean the filter. Clean accumulated grease deposits from the fan housing.

Caulking Inspect caulking around sinks, tubs, and showers. Give special attention to the area where the tub meets vinyl or tile flooring. Recaulk as necessary.

EVERY THREE MONTHS:

Exterior Doors Oil hinges and locks, if required. Inspect finish for cracks and peeling. Use touch-up paint where required.

Interior Doors Lubricate hinges.

Garage Door Lubricate hardware. Inspect mechanism for free travel. Adjust if necessary.

Kitchen Tile Grout Inspect for loose or missing grout. RegROUT if necessary. Recaulk at the edge of the backsplash if necessary.

Tiled Areas Inspect caulked areas for missing or damaged caulking. Recaulk if necessary.

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Faucet Aerators	Check for proper flow of water. If the flow is reduced, clean the aerator screens. During the first two (2) months, the faucet aerators could require more frequent cleaning.
Shower Doors	Inspect for proper fit. Adjust if necessary. Inspect caulking and recaulk if necessary.
Tub Enclosures	Inspect for proper fit. Adjust if necessary. Inspect caulking and recaulk if necessary.
Front Doors	Repaint if necessary. As always, call your Homeowners Association before you change any exterior color.

EVERY SIX MONTHS:

Exterior Paint	Inspect the exterior of your home for cracked or peeling paint. Repair and repaint if necessary. Your Homeowners Association may have regulations regarding exterior colors. Please call your Homeowners Association before you change the exterior paint colors. Southern and western exposures are more susceptible to cracking and peeling. Repair and paint before water and ice can get into the wood and cause more extensive damage.
Roof	Inspect for damaged shingles or tiles after storms and high winds.
Gutters	Clean debris from gutters every six (6) months and after storms.
Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors	Replace the batteries every six (6) months, even if the unit tests okay. The unit will test okay when the batteries only have a couple of days or weeks of charge left in them.

YEARLY:

Heating/Cooling	After your first year of occupancy, it is a good idea for you to contact a heating and cooling professional to inspect your furnace on an annual basis.
Doors	French doors and wood doors should be repainted every year or two. Paint quality and the amount of use of the door will determine whether the doors should be painted annually or every other year.