

CASABLANCA HOMES LTD.

**NEW HOME
MAINTENANCE
BOOKLET**

EVERY MONTH CHECKLIST

HEATING

- Check air filters of the furnace and HRV system and clean or replace as necessary.
- Vacuum air supply and air return registers to remove dust and lint.

INTERIOR CAULKING

- Check for cracks or separations around sinks, bathtubs, toilets, faucets, countertops, and back splashes, ceramic tile walls, ceramic floors, windowsills, and any other areas caulked by your builder. To repair these areas, use appropriate caulking compound and follow the caulking instructions on the relevant sections of this manual.

RANGE HOOD FAN

- Clean and replace dirty range hood filters.

SMOKE DETECTOR

- Test smoke detectors.
- Clean and/or vacuum all rooms.

AFTER MOVE-IN CHECKLIST

BATHROOMS AND MAIN FLOORS

- If you have ceramic tiles in your home, apply grout sealer if you wish to give the grout additional protection against discoloration from spills and stains.

ELECTRICAL

- Locate the main circuit breaker in the electric panel box and show family members how to turn off in case of an emergency.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER

- Purchase a general-purpose fire extinguisher for each floor of the home and one small kitchen extinguisher to use for grease fires. Demonstrate proper usage to family members in case of an emergency.

FIRST AID KIT

- Keep first aid materials and a book on first aid procedures in a conveniently accessible location.

FLOORING

- Attach furniture protectors underneath furniture legs to protect floor finishes.

HOUSEHOLD TOOLS

- Acquire basic tools to help you with the normal home maintenance chores, including pliers, adjustable wrench, flat-blade and Phillips-head screwdrivers, claw hammer, hand-saw, tape measure, caulk and caulking gun, putty knife, paint roller and brush, power drill and drill bits, assorted nails, brads, screws, nuts, bolts, sandpaper, utility knife, toilet plunger, flashlight and batteries.

PLUMBING

- Locate the main water line shut-off valve and all individual plumbing fixture valves and show all family members how to close them in the case of a plumbing emergency.

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WARNING

TO MAINTAIN YOUR NEW HOME WARRANTY, TELEPOSTS MUST BE CHECKED REGULARLY & ADJUSTED ACCORDINGLY.

IMPROPER TELEPOST MAINTENANCE WILL CAUSE CRACKS IN WALLS.

AIR CONDITIONING AND HEATING EQUIPMENT

Note: Window coverings should be installed to maintain consistent room temperatures. Direct sunlight entering the house will increase the temperature in the affected area and will also fade both furnishings and carpet.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Before calling for service:

1. Check to see that the thermostat is properly set.
2. Check the circuit breaker in the panel box. If tripped, reset by switching the breaker to full "Off," then fully back to the "On" position. If the circuit breaker will not reset, contact the contractor.
3. Check the electrical disconnect switch, located on or near the air handler reset.
4. Check the exterior disconnect switch located outside the home, near the compressor and reset.

Note: Unnecessary service calls may result in a charge to the homeowner.

FURNACE AND HRV AIR FILTERS

The air filter of the furnace, located adjacent to the air handler unit or in the return air grille, helps reduce the flow of dust within the air. As the filter collects dust, it reduces the system's efficiency and must be either cleaned or replaced. The HRV filter must also be cleaned regularly to ensure proper function. The filter is located inside the unit; the bottom panel of the HRV can be opened to access the filters, which are then removed and cleaned. After the final walk-through, the regular cleaning, replacement, and maintenance of air filters is the homeowner's responsibility.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Monthly cleaning or replacement of the furnace and HRV filters will provide cleaner air, improve airflow, and help reduce utility costs. To remove, clean, or replace furnace filters, turn the furnace and fan off using the thermostat control, then carefully remove the old filter and clean, or insert a new one. Replacement air filters are available through hardware stores. To clean the HRV filters, turn the HRV off using the control on the main floor, then open the latch at the bottom of the HRV unit, remove the filters and wash under hot water with mild soap. Rinse thoroughly and let dry completely before reinstalling.

THERMOSTAT/ HRV CONTROL

The thermostat controls the entire heating and cooling system. The thermostat provides a fan switch to circulate the air when either heating or cooling is needed. The HRV control is installed beside the thermostat and should always be on. The HRV and furnace are interconnected. To maximize energy efficiency and minimize utility bills, the thermostat should be set to a comfortable level (normally between 68F and 71F for heating) and left there. The fan switch should be set to either "ON" or "AUTO" position. The less you change the thermostat setting, the more comfortable you will be, the lower your utility bills will be, and the less wear and tear on the system's compressor will occur. Changing the settings frequently will cause the supplemental heater to run more often, and turning the system on or off expends extra energy to bring the temperature back to a comfortable level.

AIR DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

Duct Work: Ducts carry and distribute heated or cooled air to each room.

Registers: Two kinds of registers are used: air supply registers, located on the wall or floor, that deliver warm or cooled air into the room; and air return registers, located on walls or floors, or under the air handler access door, that return air from the room back into the air handler to be reheated or re-cooled.

To regulate temperatures on different floors, or rooms during different seasons, adjust the air supply registers by partially opening or closing them, thus restricting or moving additional air into each room.

Vacuum supply and return registers to ensure they remain dust free. Check that registers are not blocked by draperies, furniture or other obstructions that restrict normal airflow. Interior doors in each room are undercut to allow return air to circulate throughout each room where the doors are closed. Do not close doors to regulate room temperatures.

ATTIC

INTRODUCTION

The attic space below the roof is part of the roof truss system. When inspecting the attic, walk on the wood members only. The drywall ceiling of the room is not designed to support any weight whatsoever.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

The attic truss system is not engineered to support additional weight and should not be used for any storage purpose. Materials stored can also be a fire hazard. Do not cover any vents with insulation or any other material. Insulation on the attic floor is for thermal protection of the rooms below. If the insulation is moved, it will leave gaps between the insulation panels and may obstruct the attic vents. Always replaced moved insulation back to its original position.

BATHROOM MAINTENANCE

MILDEW: Moisture and mildew problems will occur in any room where water vapour is present. To reduce mildew, make sure the HRV switch is always "ON". If there is a window in the bathroom you may also want to slightly open the window when bathing. Wipe off wet surfaces when done, and then hang up towels and washcloths to dry. To clean mildewed surfaces and reduce mildew odours, apply a liquid mildew agent in a well ventilated room, followed by a disinfectant and thorough rinsing with clear water.

RUST STAINS: The contact of wet metal on sink surfaces, for example, the bottom of a shaving can, may produce rust stains. To remove them, apply a powdered rust remover following the manufacturer's instructions.

CABINETS

INTRODUCTION

Kitchen, laundry room and bathroom vanity cabinets are all selected for their attractive appearance, durability and ease of care. With proper maintenance, the cabinets will remain serviceable and attractive for many years.

WOOD CABINETS: Wood tone and grain color variations are a normal part of wood's beauty and reflect the natural characteristics of real wood. Clean wood cabinets with the same gentle care you would give an fine wood furniture. A light coat of wax or lemon oil applied once or twice a year will protect the finish and enhance its appearance. Cabinet-mounted coffee makers are not recommended since the rising steam will damage solid wood and wood veneer, causing fading and delaminating. For the same reason, position regular coffee makers out from underneath the upper cabinets and near the front or the counter.

LAMINATE CABINETS: Clean laminate cabinets with a soapy cloth or sponge, using non-abrasive liquid household cleanser for more stubborn stains. There are one-step cleaning products available for laminates that can clean, reduce streaking, and leave surfaces polished. As with all cleaning products, carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions.

SHELVES: Shelves are not designed to hold weight that exceeds 20 pounds per square foot. Keep canned goods, flour, sugar, and heavier products on the bottom shelf of the base cabinets. If desired, apply contact paper to shelves to protect against scratches and stains.

DRAWER AND HINGE CARE: Check the hinges at least once a year for proper alignment and tightness, using a screwdriver to make necessary adjustments. Check the drawers for easy movement and apply a silicone spray to the drawer guides, should sticking occur.

NICKS AND SCRATCHES: Hardware stores offer putty stains, and polymer fillers to cover and repair cabinet nicks and scratches.

CERAMIC TILE

INTRODUCTION

You may have ceramic tile walls in your bathrooms or as a backsplash in your kitchen. Ceramic tile walls are easy to maintain, and if properly maintained, will be mostly impervious to water. The seams, joints, and sealers are not waterproof and require proper maintenance to prevent water seepage and damage to materials adjacent to and underneath the tile. Cracks in the caulking joints between the tile and tub, in the shower stall corners, and the floor, are perfectly normal and are caused by the high degree of moisture present in every bathroom, as well as from normal shrinkage of caulking material. Separations between the tub and wall tile are caused by weight of the tub when filled with water.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Caulk cracks and separations of seams adjacent to tile can be repaired with a top quality flexible caulk, taking care to wipe the tile clean once caulking is completed. Do not use clear silicone based caulk since it yellows with age and stains easily.

GLAZED TILE SHOWERS: Use an all-purpose bathroom cleaner. Let stand for five minutes, rinse and dry. Use a mixture of equal parts water and white vinegar or a commercial tile cleaner. For stubborn stains, use chlorine bleach or scouring powder containing bleaching agent. Let stand for four to six hours, then scrub and rinse thoroughly. To remove mildew, use a commercial tile cleaner, or chlorine bleach, or ammonia – DO NOT MIX!

UNGLAZED TILE WALLS: Sponge with a diluted solution of water and soap-less detergent. For deep cleaning, use scouring powder paste. Let stand five minutes, and then scour with a brush. Rinse and wipe dry.

1. Never use abrasive cleaners or harsh chemicals or solvents on ceramic tile.
2. Unglazed tiles may need to be sealed on a regular basis
3. Wipe off spills immediately.
4. Never use harsh cleaning agents such as steel wool pads, which can scratch and damage the surface of your tile.
5. Do not use a cleaning agent that contains color on unglazed tile. The pores in the ceramic could absorb the color.
6. Test scouring powders in a small area before using overall on tile.
7. Never combine ammonia and household bleaches.
8. If continuous staining is a problem on grout joints, use a sealer.

CONCRETE

ONE ASPECT GUARANTEED ABOUT CONCRETE IS THAT IT WILL CRACK!

It is important to understand that concrete is a porous material that will expand, contract, and even crack as a result of temperature changes, shrinkage, stress, and settlement. “Hairline” cracks that may appear on foundation walls and be visible on garage and basement floors are common and are usually cosmetic, as opposed to structural.

Shrinking occurs from the normal curing process of concrete varies with the time of year and the moisture conditions that exist when the concrete is poured. Slab stress and settlement are caused by soil conditions and loads such as the weight of walls. These forces can create a variety of stresses which, in combination with seasonal temperature variations, can cause concrete and masonry foundations to develop non-structural stress cracks.

HOME SLABS AND GARAGE SLABS: Due to the large size of concrete home and garage slabs, “hairline” cracks less than 1/4 inch in width are common, and are caused by the slight home settlement, or expansion and contraction. These cracks are normal and it is best to leave them alone, since attempts to fill the cracks will not stop the expansion and contraction.

Long “hairline” cracks in slabs, patios, garage floors, sidewalks, and driveways are common and require no additional attention. They are cosmetic in nature and do not affect the integrity of the concrete. Any attempt to repair chips or cracks in concrete will result in product and color variation.

HOMEOWNER’S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Clean concrete with a solution of five tablespoons of baking soda to a gallon of water. Before using the cleaning solution, wet the floor with clear water and loosen the dirt with a steel brush or scraping blade.

A concrete sealer may be applied to the floor, in accordance with the manufacturer’s directions, approximately six months after you move in. This will make it easier to clean and will reduce concrete dusting, but may make the floor slippery when wet.

CONDENSATION

INTRODUCTION

Condensation, or the appearance of moisture that occurs when moist air comes into contact with a colder surface, is most prevalent in new homes, especially during the first year. This is caused by the larger quantities of water used to build the new home, from the concrete foundations, to the paint on the walls. As this water evaporates, and the drying out process occurs, the moisture takes the form of condensation on interior windows.

Another source of indoor humidity is everyday water usage. For example, a family of four doing laundry, bathing, and using the dishwasher, puts approximately two to five gallons of additional moisture into the air every day. Window condensation is produced by conditions beyond your builder’s control.

HOMEOWNER’S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Proper ventilation is the safest and best way to reduce indoor humidity and condensation.

1. Ensure that the clothes dryer is properly vented to the outside and that the vent is clear of any obstructions or lint. Do not push the dryer too far back or the vent hose may become kinked and therefore obstructed.
2. Make sure the HRV system is turned on at all times in your home to ensure proper air circulation which aids in eliminating excess moisture.
3. Adjust the registers to maintain even temperatures throughout the home. Do not try to speed up the evaporation process by creating extremely high temperatures in the winter. This will cause the house to dry out unevenly, creating cracks and other problems.

COUNTERTOPS AND VANITY TOPS

INTRODUCTION

Kitchen and bathroom countertops are covered with laminate material, or marble. For ceramic tile countertops, see section on “Ceramic Tile.”

Please note: It is normal for a countertop and its integral backsplash to separate from the wall, especially in the first year of your new home. This is caused by a climatic condition known as thermal bow; the result of an extreme difference in the temperature of the wall from the inside to out during cold conditions.

LAMINATE COUNTERTOPS: Clean the laminate countertops with a soapy cloth or sponge or use a non-abrasive liquid household cleaner for more stubborn stains. There are in-step cleaning products available for laminates that clean, reduce streaking and leave surfaces polished. As with all cleaning products, carefully follow the manufacturer’s instructions.

Caution: Keep standing water away from the backsplash, side splashes, seams and seal around the sink. These areas are prone to water damage, since excessive moisture will eventually break the seal and cause swelling or delamination of the countertop. Check the seams periodically and re-caulk as required.

MARBLE VANITY TOPS: Clean cultured marble with a damp cloth and a non-abrasive detergent. When re-caulking, use a flexible caulk. Use of a gel-gloss or aerosol spray may be used for further polishing.

Countertop Precautions:

1. Keep countertop dry at all times.
2. Excessive heat can cause charring, burning, lifting, or blistering. Do not place hot pans, coffeepots, baking dishes, hot irons, or burning cigarettes directly on countertop surfaces. Use protective hot pads or trivets under countertop electrical appliances.
3. Always use a cutting board since knives will cut the counter surface.
4. Steam from an open dishwasher may cause swelling and delamination. Allow time for the dishwasher to cool before opening the door. To further reduce moisture damage, apply silicone spray to the underside of countertops, directly over the dishwasher and two feet left and right of the dishwasher.

DOORS

INTRODUCTION

Your new home comes with a variety of doors, which may include interior doors, French doors, louver doors, bi-fold and bi-pass doors, sliding glass doors, exterior doors, and garage doors.

A. INTERIOR DOORS: Interior doors expand and contract in reaction to temperature and moisture changes, and will be wider in humid summer periods and narrower during dryer winter months.

HOMEOWNER’S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

STICKING DOORS: Home settlement or damp weather may cause swelling that puts the doors out of alignment. In some cases, this may only be temporary due to seasonal variations, and sticking will tend to correct itself without any manual adjustment. If door adjustment is required:

1. Check hinge screws for tightness.
2. Fold sandpaper around a wooden block and sand the edge that sticks. A small plane can also be used, but be careful not to remove too much material from the door. Also, the use of a bar of soap on the door top and frame may help.
3. Always paint or varnish sanded or planed areas to protect the wood from future moisture penetration and sticking.

Door precautions: Interior doors have a hollow core and are not designed to support attachments and hanging accessories. Hanging heavy items on doorknobs, or at the top of the door, can damage the hardware and hinges. These doors are also undercut to allow air movement.

B. BI-FOLD AND BI-PASS DOORS: Keep the door tracks free of paint and dirt, and periodically apply a small amount of silicone spray to the guide edges of the tracks.

C. SLIDING GLASS DOORS AND FRENCH DOORS: Keep sprinklers away from sliding glass doors and French doors when watering the lawn. The doors have been sealed against water, but occasionally, high winds and driving rains can create a vibration that causes some leakage. Neither this, nor the water that accumulates in the tracks can be prevented. This is also true for French doors. Clean glass with a spray glass cleaner and wipe the frames with sudsy water and a soft cloth. Periodically clean the bottom of the door track, and check to ensure that drain holes are clear of obstructions. To keep the doors moving freely, apply a silicone spray to the tracks. Do not use oil, which may cause premature deterioration of the rollers.

D. EXTERIOR DOORS: An exterior door that is properly aligned, fitted, weather-stripped and maintained, will help control energy costs. Exterior doors are typically steel clad or fibreglass to prevent warping and to maximize insulation. An exterior door will warp to some degree, due to temperature differences between the inside and outside surfaces. Warping should not exceed 1/4 inch measured diagonally from corner to corner. Watch for ice build up underneath and around the door, and remove immediately. If this is not done, there is a chance of the door warping next winter.

PAINTING: Steel clad or fibreglass doors are maintenance-free and require little attention except for painting and upkeep from dents and scratches. Please read manufacturer's instructions carefully before painting.

WEATHER-STRIPPING: Weather-stripping on exterior doors helps maintain the home's energy efficiency, preventing the loss of conditioned air and reducing the infiltration of outside air. Weather-stripping must remain in place to operate effectively.

1. Replace weather-stripping that becomes loose or damaged
2. Prolong the life of vinyl and rubber weather-stripping by applying a silicone spray.
3. The sweep weather-stripping at the bottom of the door may require replacement from time to time. To replace, remove the sweep and match with a replacement available at any hardware store.
4. To raise or lower the threshold, adjust the screws on the wood or metal portion of the threshold. Keep threshold caulked at all times.
5. Keep sprinklers away from doors
6. By spraying WD40 on the weather-stripping around the door, you can prevent sticking in winter.

DOOR HARDWARE/LOCKS

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

The door locks, door handles, hinges, and stoppers used throughout the home are exposed to both inside and outside elements such as: pollution, extreme elements, and common everyday use. This may cause them to discolour or become pitted. The manufacturer does not guarantee the finish of any of these products. Clean these with a damp cloth and do not use abrasive cleaners or solvents. Periodic polishing, following manufacturer's recommendations, will help maintain their original appearance.

DRIVEWAYS & SIDEWALKS

INTRODUCTION

In most cases, exterior concrete cracks are due to temperature variations, soil movement and slight home settlement. Driveways are not designed to handle the extreme weight of heavy trucks and dual axle vehicles.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Lawn fertilizer left on the driveway or sidewalk will stain the concrete and cause rust spots. This can be prevented by immediately hosing down the driveway and sidewalk after applying fertilizer. Water used to irrigate lawns may also cause driveway and sidewalk staining and mildew and continuous contact should be avoided. Keep excessive weight, such as sand, lumber, and moving vans off the driveway to prevent cracking. Removal of rust and grease stains is the homeowner's responsibility.

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

The electrical system in your home is designed for safe, trouble-free service and meets both local and national electric code requirements. Any additional alteration to the original electrical system installation will void all applicable warranties.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

ELECTRICAL SAFETY CAUTIONS: Do-it-yourself electrical wiring is not recommended. Improper electrical repairs can endanger lives of your family and jeopardize your homeowner's insurance in the event of fire or electrical injury. Always use a licensed electrician to make electrical repairs, adjustments and additions.

Caution: It is recommended that you unplug all television sets, computers, and telephones during electrical storms.

POWER FAILURE: If the electrical power goes out, check first to determine if neighbours are also without power, and if so, contact the utility company. Before attempting to reset the circuit breakers, check that power has been restored to the area. If the neighbours have power, check the main circuit breaker in the panel box.

Be aware that not every electrical power problem is due to problem within the home's electrical system. Utility companies experience a variety of situations that effect power supplies, including power surges and interruptions, peak overload periods, and even total shutdowns.

ELECTRIC METER: The utility company installed an electric meter to measure your electric usage for billing purposes. Their invoice is based in kilowatt-hour used over a given period, with a kilowatt-hour being the energy expended by 1000 watts for one hour. Should you have any questions about the meter functions, please contact the customer service department of Manitoba Hydro.

CIRCUIT BREAKERS: Electrical wiring and appliances are protected by circuit breakers to stop circuit overloading. The main circuit breaker is located in the electrical panel box, and if tripped for any reason, entirely cuts off all electricity to the house. The smaller circuit breakers within the panel box control the appliances, wall switches, lighting, and each switch should be clearly marked as to what it controls. Do not tamper with the electrical service entrance cable that provides power to the service panel.

CIRCUIT TRIPPING CAUSES AND REMEDIES: Thunderstorms, lightning, and power failures can cause circuit breakers to trip. If only your home is affected, try to reset by switching the breaker to full "OFF" then back to full "ON" position. If this does not reset the breaker, or the breaker continues to trip, do not continue resetting the breaker as this can damage the panel box, wiring, or the appliance that it controls. Call a licensed electrical contractor for a service inspection. Overloaded circuits can also cause tripping. This occurs when too many appliances are used on one circuit. To reduce the load, remove plugs of appliances that may cause the overloading, and then reset the breaker as described above. If you install a microwave or other appliances that require large electrical loads, you may need a licensed electrical contractor to add additional power capacity to accommodate the load.

OUTLETS AND WALL SWITCHES: If an electrical outlet does not work, check first to make sure that the outlet is not controlled by a wall switch. If the outlet still does not operate, contact the electrical contractor.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Interior and exterior lighting fixtures require periodic homeowner maintenance to preserve the finish. Carefully review and follow the instructions if provided for these fixtures. Interior and exterior fixtures will tarnish and this is not warranted by the manufacturer. Do not use indoor light bulbs in outdoor lighting fixtures if the light bulb is to be exposed to the weather. Do not use light bulbs with a higher wattage than the maximum wattage stated on the light fixture.

EXTERIOR WALL FINISHES

INTRODUCTION

Exterior finishes are applied once the exterior framing and concrete block is complete. The exterior of your home is usually finished with stucco or siding.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Painting: When painting the exterior of the home, use acrylic masonry house paint. Before painting, fill the "hairline" cracks with flexible caulk. Read the manufacturer's instructions before painting.

FLOORING

A. CARPETING: The carpet is quite durable and requires minimal care. Color variations and shading may not be noticeable and may depend upon the surface texture and pile fibre of the carpet.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Frequent vacuuming and immediate stain removal are the primary carpet care steps. When using carpet cleaners, always follow the manufacturer's instructions. While normal vacuuming will remove only the loose fibres from your carpet yarns, an occasional tuft may be lifted above the surface. Do not pull out the tuft; just snip it off the length of the other tufts using scissors. Color fading and spots caused by sunlight are normal and can be minimized by using shear draperies to reduce incoming sunlight. Some colors may fade faster than others. Change the filters in your heating and air conditioning systems on a regular basis or when dirty. Dust, pollen, and smoke will settle on your carpets and increase staining or soiling. When a spill occurs, immediately blot it firmly with dry, white paper towels or rags. Do not rub the spot as it will damage your carpet's tufts and may permanently alter your carpet's appearance. If stain remains, spray with cold water and blot again. Repeat if necessary.

NOTE: NEVER APPLY DETERGENTS OR STAIN REMOVAL DIRECTLY TO CARPET!

This could cause permanent discoloration. For recommended cleaners and solvents, always call the carpet manufacturer. When a stain reappears after cleaning, it means all the stain and cleaners were not removed completely. Recleaning is necessary. Always rinse your carpet thoroughly to remove any detergent residue.

B. CERAMIC TILE FLOORS: Ceramic tile is easy to maintain and almost impervious to water. The grout joints are not waterproof and require special attention to prevent water seepage.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Vacuum regularly to remove gritty particles. Use a damp mop with a solution of water and soap-less detergent. If stained, use scouring powder paste. Let stand five minutes, brush and scrub. Rinse and dry.

1. Never use abrasive cleaners or harsh chemicals or solvents on ceramic tile.
2. Unglazed tiles may need to be sealed on a regular basis.
3. Wipe off spills immediately. Never use harsh cleaning agents such as steel wool pads, which can scratch or damage the surface of your tile.

C. HARDWOOD FLOORS: Most hardwood floors are pre-finished at the factory with a baked-on wax or urethane coating. Wood floor tone, grain and color variations are normal, and reflect the natural characteristics of real hardwood. Some squeaking or separating of hardwood floors is normal and is caused by seasonal weather and humidity changes. It is normal to expect surface nailing to occur around the perimeter area of pre-finished hardwood floors, and around any repair areas as well.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Prior to cleaning your hardwood floors, carefully read and follow the manufacturer's instructions and recommendations. Use entrance rugs or mats to protect wood flooring from dirt and water spots. Do not use rubber-backed mats, as they will remove the finish. Mop up water spills immediately. Do not set potted plants directly on a hardwood floor, as moisture can leak through and cause permanent staining and warping. Attach furniture protectors to the bottom of furniture legs to protect the hardwood flooring from scuffing and surface damage. High heel shoes and constant moving of chairs can damage hardwood floors.

D. LAMINATE FLOORS: Prior to cleaning your laminate floors, carefully read and follow the manufacturer's instructions and recommendations. Vacuum the laminate first to eliminate any traces of tocks and sand. This will prevent the laminate from being scratched. You may wash your laminate with a damp cloth or mop for small cleanings. Avoid using water on the laminate as it may soak into the gaps between the panels and cause swelling. For more thorough cleanings and disinfecting, you can use special laminate floor cleaners found at the local flooring supply stores.

INTERIOR WALLS AND CEILINGS

INTRODUCTION

Your home has two types of walls; load bearing and non-load bearing.

1. Any alteration of bearing walls may reduce the strength of the structure by altering its unit load capacity, its load or its support capacity.
2. Interior wall construction begins with the placement of studs set vertically at 24-inch intervals. The drywall is then screwed to the studs.

DRYWALL: Drywall is screwed to the studs of the ceiling and wall surfaces. The seams where sheets of drywall come together are taped, spackled with a joint compound, allowed to dry, and then sanded to prepare them for finishing. Both nail pops and small drywall cracks are simple to repair.

DRYWALL NAIL POPS AND CRACK REPAIR:

1. Reset the protruding nail slightly into the gypsum board surface or remove it entirely. Place another drywall nail two inches above or below the popped nail, and gently hammer it slightly below the paper surface. Then cover the area with spackling compound, allow to dry, sand smooth, then refinish the surface.
2. For drywall joint cracks, press and small "V" shaped indentation using the back of a putty knife along the length of the crack, about 1/8 of an inch wide. Spackle, allow to dry, sand, and refinish as with nail pops.
3. To prevent cracks wider than a 1/4 inch from reopening, first apply the spackling compound over the crack. With a strip of drywall tape, add another top layer of spackling feathering the edges well, allow to dry, sand to a smooth finish, and then refinish.
4. Deep scrapes and indentations in drywall surfaces can be filled with two or three applications of spackling compound. Allow to dry thoroughly, and sand between each application.

MIRRORS AND SHOWER ENCLOSURES

A. MIRRORS

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Clean bathroom mirrors and shower enclosures with an ammonia-free glass cleaner and a soft cloth, wiping several times to remove all glass cleaner residue. Most mirror failures are at the edges where "spillover" solutions attack the backing. By applying cleaner to the cloth rather than the mirror, this can be prevented. Do not use abrasive cleaners that will permanently scratch and mark mirror or glass surfaces. Humidity, heat, and dampness can cause permanent damage, therefore, provide adequate ventilation in rooms with mirrors.

B. SHOWER ENCLOSURES

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Shower enclosures create extreme amounts of moisture; therefore, frequent checking of joint areas is recommended. Check the caulking periodically to ensure against leaking. The homeowner is responsible for re-caulking as needed. The use of clear silicone is recommended.

PLUMBING FIXTURES

A. FIXTURES

Kitchen and bathroom sinks, toilets, and bathtubs are made with cultured marble, plastic, stainless steel, or steel finished with porcelain.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

To clean, use a non-abrasive spray cleanser and sponge. Dropping heavy objects into porcelain can chip or crack the surface, and may produce permanent staining. Do not leave steel wool pads on sink surfaces, as they will rust and stain the surface. Be aware that continuous action toilet bowl cleaners, placed in the toilet water tank, will prematurely wear out the rubber tank flapper and may discolour the bowl.

B. STAINLESS STEEL KITCHEN SINK AND CAST IRON

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

For routine cleaning, use non-abrasive household cleanser with warm water and a sponge. Do not scrape the surface with utensils, pots or pans. Do not leave leftovers in the sink or strainer, particularly tea bags and coffee grounds, which contain harmful acids. Regular washing soap, not baking soda, should be added to the drain to keep grease and soap free. Do not clean stainless steel sinks with steel wool or metal brushes, and do not leave rubber mats in the sink since they trap water and produce surface discoloration; to restore lustre to stainless steel, apply a small amount of mineral oil with a soft cloth then wipe dry.

C. BATHROOM SINKS

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Sink surfaces can be easily chipped and stained, so treat them accordingly. Prevent hair accumulation clogs by periodically removing the stopper for cleaning or purchase a rubber hair collector. Avoid setting lit cigarettes on the edge of the sink, as they will burn and permanently damage the surface.

D. BATHTUBS, SHOWERS, AND TUB-SHOWER COMBINATIONS

CLEANING: Clean porcelain-on-steel bathtubs, cultured marble tubs and sinks, fibreglass showers and tub-shower combinations, and shower stall floors with warm water and a non-abrasive cleanser. Clean glass shower doors with a commercial glass cleaner. Check bathtub stoppers and shower floor drain grates for hair accumulation. Do not use ammonia-based cleaners. Do not step into a bathtub or tub-shower with shoes on. Gritty particles adhere to shoe soles that will scratch the finish.

RE-CAULKING OF THE TUBS AND SHOWERS: Over time, cracks and separations between tub and shower stall and wall surfaces or bathroom floors will appear. Maintaining these areas is critical since excessive moisture can severely damage underlying materials. It will be necessary to re-apply a tub and tile caulk when the previous caulking has dried out or eroded. To re-caulk the area, use a tub and tile caulk available in local hardware stores. Do not use clear silicone caulk. Begin by removing the old caulk and cleaning the area. Once the area is dry, apply fresh caulking to fill the vacant space and then smooth out the finish with a wet finger.

A. INTERIOR FAUCETS: Interior faucets are either single-lever or washer faucets.

SINGLE –LEVER FAUCETS: The single-lever kitchen and bath faucets are low maintenance, washer-less faucets. Should the cartridge ever need to be replaced, turn off the water supply, remove the handle assembly, and pull the cartridge out. Take the cartridge to a local plumbing supplier and match accordingly, being sure to follow installation instructions.

CHROME FAUCETS: Chrome faucets should be cleaned with a soft, damp cloth and a commercially accepted cleaner. Dry the faucet with a soft cloth. Never use an abrasive or ammonia-based cleaner.

WASHER FAUCETS: A washer faucet has a shut-off feature that requires light closing pressure to stop the flow of water. Do not apply too much pressure since washers can be damaged.

WASHER REPLACEMENT: Dripping faucets can dramatically increase water bills and represent the loss of a valuable natural resource. Over time, all washers will wear out and must be replaced. Neglecting to change washers may cause damage to the valve seat or to the entire faucet. Many homeowner's prefer to do this simple replacement procedure themselves.

1. Turn off the water supply intake valve.
2. Using a wide-jaw wrench, remove the hexagonal cap from the top of the faucet assembly. This may take a turn or two.
3. Remove the inside part, turn it upside down and you will see a fibre washer held by a screw through the center. This is the source of the leak. The screw will remove easily, but the washer itself may take a little prying to remove.
4. Match the new washer to the worn out washer and replace it. Re-use the same screw if it is in good condition. Then reassemble the faucet.

PLUMBING SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

A licensed plumbing contractor installed all plumbing pipes and systems in your new home. These have been tested and inspected. In most cases, minimum homeowner maintenance is all that the plumbing system requires. Attending to small problems as they occur keeps them from becoming larger, more costly problems.

A. WATER LINE: Your home is served by a city water supply. The pipes that carry water into the home are designed to resist rust and corrosion.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Noisy Pipes: Noisy water pipes should be corrected immediately since the resulting vibrations can damage plumbing line fittings and cause them to leak.

Noisy pipe problems can be identified and corrected as follows:

1. The water heater temperature may be set too high, producing steam in the pipes. To resolve, gradually reduce the water heater temperature until the steam is reduced.
2. Abruptly turning off a faucet in areas with high water pressure can produce a pounding or knocking sound. To resolve, slightly close the main shut-off valve.
3. Air can get into the plumbing pipes. To resolve, open all interior and exterior faucets and run for a few minutes, allowing all air to pass through the system.

B. MAIN SHUT-OFF VALVE

This is the center of the plumbing system, the point at which the main water line comes into the home. If a major plumbing problem occurs, turn off the main shut-off valve to prevent flooding. It is a good idea to show every family member where the shut-off valve is, explain how to close in case of an emergency, and to mark it with an easy-to-locate identification tag.

C. DRAIN TRAPS

Every plumbing fixture in the home is equipped with a drain trap, an S-shaped pipe that holds water and acts as a barrier to keep airborne bacteria and sewer gas odours from coming back into the home. If a sink or bathtub fixture is not used frequently, turn it on periodically to replace evaporating water and to keep the water trap barrier intact.

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Drain traps can be cleaned by putting three tablespoons of ordinary washing soap (not baking soda) into the drain. Add a little hot water, let stand for 15 minutes, and then flush with hot water. Use a rubber plunger to unclog a blocked toilet. *Caution:* Do not pour grease into drains or toilets, or use caustic cleansers to open plugged drains. Do not use a plunger with any drain cleaning chemicals. When using a chemical drain cleaner, carefully follow the manufacturer's safety precautions and product directions.

WINDOWS

INTRODUCTION

Typically, the windows in your new home are Dual Low "E" glass and are framed in aluminum. The manufacturer has sealed all the glass to the frame and the frame has been attached to your home.

CLEANING WINDOW GLASS:

Clean windows with a commercial glass cleaner or a cup of vinegar mixed with a gallon of warm water. Apply with a sponge or lint-free cloth, and then dry with paper towels. A rubber squeegee passed over the glass surface will speed the drying and eliminate streaking.

WINDOW CONDENSATION:

The appearance of moisture that occurs when moist air comes in contact with a colder surface is called condensation. While moisture may appear on windows, this does not indicate a window problem. The most common cause is humid air outside the home hitting the cold surface of the window glass. Wipe up condensation as quickly as possible in order to avoid staining the drywall, windowsill, or caulking.

WINDOW SCREENS:

Window screens are provided with every new home, and their sole purpose is to help prevent insects from coming inside when the windows are open. Window screens may be washed and rinsed using a mild household detergent.