

# Part Four

---

## Homeowner Maintenance Tips

Your new home will require regular preventative maintenance by you in order to preserve its beauty and value. An understanding of how to care for each of the features in your new home will prevent costly repairs and replacements later.

Your new home is exposed to various environmental conditions and temperature variations that we experience each day. These temperature variations combined with consolidating or expanding soils affect our building practices. Natural building materials such as wood and concrete are subject to constant expansion and contraction from day to day. These conditions can result in minor warping of wood materials and hairline cracking of concrete and mortar. These effects are particularly obvious in the first year after a new home has been built.

You can minimize these effects by maintaining a relatively constant temperature in your home during the first year. This allows the wood to dry at an even rate and may eliminate larger settlement cracks. Minor cracks and displacement of wood are a normal part of the aging process of your home and do not affect its structural integrity.

In the following pages we have provided an overview of the features and materials in your new home. Please study each section carefully so that you become familiar with the routine maintenance that your home requires.

The preferred method of maintaining a certain item in your home may change over time as either new products are available or practices simply change. We recommend that you stay current and informed about the preferred methods of home maintenance.

## **ALUMINUM WINDOW AND DOOR FRAMES**

Aluminum window and door frames are made to last for years, but they require routine maintenance. Perhaps the most important step is to keep the window and door tracks free of dirt and debris. The aluminum tracks are relatively soft and can become damaged if they are not kept clean. Use a broom or a brush to loosed collected debris. Vacuum thoroughly as part of your regular cleaning routine. Avoid using abrasive cleansers, which will scratch the aluminum.

Aluminum window and door frames have small weep holes at the bottom to permit water to drain from the track. Keep the weep holes open and free of debris and lint. Avoid flooding the window and door frame track with water. Excessive water can overflow the track and back up into your home.

After cleaning, apply oil-free silicone lubricant to the lock and rollers to prevent corrosion. If windows and doors do not slide freely, an oil-free silicone lubricant can be used on the tracks. Do not use any oil-based lubricant. Oil attracts dust and dirt which become embedded in the lubricant and may damage the aluminum.

Please note that your sliding glass doors are more difficult to slide during the last six to eight inches of movement. This is normal and is due to environmental requirements for a tight seal when the door is closed. We cannot make adjustments which will make doors easier to close.

During high winds, air will penetrate your windows, especially through the weep holes. This is normal. Dust will also seep through the holes. The weep holes are necessary for proper ventilation and you should keep them clear at all times.

Inspect the caulking and seals of your windows annually. Repair or replace missing caulk or damaged seals promptly. This will protect your windows, prevent fogging from moisture, and enhance the service life of your windows. For more information, see also "Windows" in this Part Four.

## **APPLIANCES**

The appliances in your new home were selected for their durability, ease of use and appearance. Information about the care and use of the appliances can be found in the literature that is supplied by the manufacturers. Copies of these booklets are provided during your new home orientation. Please read the manufacturers' instructions on usage and care before you use your appliances. Your appliances are covered by warranties from the manufacturers.

## **BALCONIES AND DECKS**

Your new home may feature balconies and decks. They require a minimal amount of care and are designed to last for many years. Do not install heavy equipment or nail anything to your balcony or deck. The hole caused by the installation could allow water to enter your home and cause damage. Such damage is your responsibility. In addition, the flat surface of your deck has been treated with a water sealant to prevent water penetration. In areas of average weather conditions it is advisable to seal the deck in the Spring and Fall seasons.

If your balcony or deck has roof drains, they should be kept free of debris. This allows proper water flow from the balcony. After a heavy rain, water may stand in small puddles for a short time before evaporating. This is to be expected of any flat surface and is normal.

## **CABINETS**

Your cabinets are made of finished hardwood and composite materials. With proper care, the beauty and utility of your cabinets will last for many years. You should follow the cabinet manufacturer's recommendations when cleaning the cabinet surfaces. Remove splashes and splatters promptly to avoid permanent stains. Polishing with a furniture polish twice a year can preserve the beauty of the wood.

The wood in your cabinets is a natural product. It is subject to drying and, in extreme cases, can warp slightly. This could cause drawers to stick and prevent doors from closing properly. If you notice sticking drawers and cabinet doors that do not close properly during the One-Year Warranty Plan Period, please notify the Brighton Warranty Department in writing. After the One-Year Warranty Plan Period, maintenance of cabinet drawers and doors is a homeowner responsibility.

Minor scratches can be covered with a putty stick that matches the finish of your cabinets. Putty sticks can be purchased at paint or hardware stores.

The hinges on your cabinet doors can be lubricated, if necessary, with oil-free silicone-based lubricant. Apply a very small drop of lubricant to the top of the hinges and work the door back and forth several times so the lubricant will penetrate into the hinge. Wipe the excess lubricant with a dry paper towel.

## **CAULKING**

Caulking is the material applied in your showers, tubs, doors, and other areas to protect against moisture damage to other parts of your home. Over time, and particularly during warm, dry

weather, caulking will dry and shrink. When this happens, it no longer provides a good seal against moisture. As a part of your routine maintenance, you should inspect the caulking around your sinks, tubs, exterior doors, door thresholds, and general exterior caulking, and make repairs annually or as needed. Caulking should be checked and replaced at least annually. Caulking compounds are available at hardware stores and home centers.

## **CEILINGS**

The ceilings in your home are easy to maintain. They do not require special attention other than an occasional cleaning and periodic painting. Remove dust or cobwebs as part of your routine cleaning. When needed and as part of your regular maintenance, you may want to repaint your ceiling.

If your ceiling consists of fluorescent light fixtures, you should follow these tips. Do not use cleaning solvents or other strong chemicals on the plastic panels or aluminum grid. We recommend that you wash the panels in a mild solution of dishwashing liquid and water. Use a soft cloth to wipe the grids using only warm water. Towel dry the panels and grids to remove any soap residue and water spots.

## **CONCRETE**

Concrete is a major structural material in your new home. It provides strength and durability for the foundation, driveway and walkways. While concrete requires minimal care, it should be kept free of accumulated dirt and debris. Oil and grease stains, as well as standing water, should be removed promptly. Concrete cleaners are available at home centers and hardware stores.

With variations of temperature and humidity, minor cracks and surface color variations in concrete are normal and unavoidable. Small cracks, which are the result of contraction and expansion of the concrete, do not affect the material's strength or durability.

The driveways and walkways in your new home are designed for residential use. Do not permit large trucks and delivery vans to use your driveway.

Remove plant growth from the expansion joints as soon as they appear. If left to grow, the roots of small plants expand and could crack or otherwise damage your concrete. If this happens, obtain patching cement from a hardware store or home center and follow the directions on the package for proper repair. Patches in concrete will vary in color from the original material. This is normal and cannot be avoided.

Post Tension Slab, If Applicable. If the concrete slab in your home is designed with post-tension cable devices to add strength, the cables are under very high tension and must not be cut or broken. Do not drill or cut your slab in any way. This could result in severe damage to your slab.

Contact the Warranty Service Department if you have any questions about the post-tension devices in your new home.

## **BASEMENT FOUNDATIONS**

Basements, which are common in some areas, are constructed using cement foundations. Cement foundations provide the necessary structural integrity for the home. Cement foundations will provide years of strength with little or no maintenance. The following is a list of some common appearance flaws in cement foundations.

HONEY COMB is an area wherein aggregate (rocks) have gathered together and formed a pocket of rocks without the cement mixture. In most cases these areas are not significant because they do not penetrate the entire foundation wall, nor are they very large in size. Cosmetically they can be repaired by applying a simple concrete coating over the exposed and affected area.

COLD JOINT is what appears to be a crack from the top of the foundation to the bottom running on an angle. This is actually the beginning and ending point of the foundation pouring process. As the newly placed concrete lies on the concrete that was poured at the beginning of the pour, it causes the cold joint. Cold joints are common in all foundation pours. This appearance deficiency varies in how noticeable it is depending on temperatures at the time of the pour.

CRACKS —As with any concrete product, cracks do and will occur throughout time. Because of the strength of the concrete most cracks are not significant.

As basement areas are finished, the concrete foundation is covered by a frame wall, insulation and drywall. These finishing touches will remove the appearance problem of honey comb, cold joints and cracks.

### **EXTERIOR CONCRETE CARE**

Since most of the damage that occurs to exterior concrete is caused by factors beyond the control of a builder, many aspects of exterior concrete are excluded from the One-Year Warranty Plan on your home.

The following concrete care guidelines will instruct you on the care of your concrete to enhance its useful life:

I. Newly poured concrete should be allowed to cure and harden before being put into use for vehicular traffic. This curing period varies with climate conditions.

Seal the surface of your concrete each autumn. Concrete sealers can be purchased from a building supply store. Be careful not to track sealers into your home while they are still wet.

Keep the surface of your concrete clean of ice and snow build-up. Maintain proper drainage and keep moisture from saturating the concrete during periods of freezing conditions. Dry concrete will not suffer winter damage due to freeze-thaw cycles.

Do not use salt, de-icers, or fertilizers on your concrete. They will cause physical and/or chemical destruction of the concrete surface. Use sand for safety and traction.

Don't park on concrete surfaces after driving on wet, salted streets. Park elsewhere until your automobile undercarriage has thawed and dried. Salt and de-icing compounds which build-up behind the wheels and inside fenders melt from the heat of the tires. The resulting drippage causes scaling and surface spalling. You will pick up this salt and de-icing mixture any time you drive on wet streets during the winter months.

Keep run-off water away from concrete surfaces. Run-off water from sprinkler systems, rain or snow melt or other sources will undermine driveways, walkways, patios and, other concrete surfaces causing settling, sinking and cracking problems.

## **COUNTER TOPS**

The counter tops in your kitchen or bathroom may be constructed of glazed ceramic tile, plastic laminate, cultured marble, acrylic, granite or other products. They are designed to provide years of use. Any flaws or damage to your countertops must be documented during the new home orientation in order to be addressed by Seller. After you move in, the care of your counter tops is your responsibility.

Counter tops are connected to the cabinets and caulked to the wall of the home. As the home expands and contracts with differing weather conditions, the walls of the home move. This movement may cause a crack to develop between the counter top and the wall. Adding additional caulking to this crack easily repairs this issue. DO NOT adjust the counter top closer to the wall. Adjusting the counter top placement may result in the counter top breaking when the wall contracts as weather conditions change.

We suggest that you follow these instructions to assure that your counter tops remain beautiful and functional for years.

- Always use a cutting board to protect your counter tops when you prepare food. While the minor scratches that result from cutting food may not be noticeable at first, in time they will dull and mar the finish.
- Wipe up spills immediately. Some liquids, particularly hot ones, can cause almost imperceptible stains on ceramic tile grout, plastic laminate and cultured marble. In time, the stains can accumulate and become unsightly.

- Be careful to avoid dropping pots and pans and other kitchen items on your counter tops. This can break or chip the counter's surface.
- Here are more suggestions for caring for your ceramic tile, cultured marble, plastic laminate, granite and Corian and similar counter tops.

## **CERAMIC TILE**

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 counter tops. The best way to avoid broken tiles is to use a cutting board and other protection for your ceramic tiles when you are at work in your kitchen.

Ceramic tile is relatively brittle and can be broken by a sharp blow from a heavy object. 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 shiny and bright.

Because the grout between the tiles is porous, you may want to consider sealing the grout once a year. This will somewhat inhibit stubborn stains from penetrating the grout and becoming unsightly. Scrubbing of the grout with warm soapy water will keep it clean and fresh. Strong cleaners such as Lysol can stain the grout. Sealers and cleaners can be found at your local hardware store.

## **CULTURED MARBLE**

Proper maintenance of cultured marble is similar to the maintenance need of fine wood. Remove spills immediately to avoid stains. Do not use abrasive cleansers on your cultured marble counter tops. Most foods and drinks are acidic and can etch the finish on the marble. Do not place any items that may scratch the surface directly on the counter top.

Routine care of cultured marble counter tops requires warm water and a soft cloth or sponge. If the surface of your cultured marble counter tops becomes dull, you might consider having the marble polished by a professional who specializes in marble polishing.

Cultured marble products provide homes with an easy care quality product that will last for years. Please use the following Care and Cleaning guidelines:

- Avoid gritty abrasive cleaners, such as dry powders.
- Wipe or rinse with a soft cloth
- Clean often for best results and minimum effort
- Use a hot pad under curling irons on vanity tops
- Avoid using objects and toys with sharp edges which may scratch surfaces

- Scratches can be buffed out using a proper buffing compound.

Shower and tub panels are caulked at the joints of the bottom and side panels. This caulking keeps water from penetrating the cultured marble and reaching the glues and drywall behind the marble. Periodic maintenance of this caulk is required to maintain the quality of the drywall and the cultured marble installation.

- These care and cleaning guidelines are provided by the manufacturer and should be used at the buyer's own risk.

## **GRANITE**

Granite creates a beautiful countertop. Although a very hard surface, granite must be carefully maintained. Care should be taken not to scratch or mar the surface. Granite can be broken or cracked by a sharp blow from a heavy object. Homeowners should contact a qualified professional for the best cleaning and maintenance techniques.

## **LAMINATE**

Laminate counter tops are very common in many areas. These tops will provide years of enjoyment when properly cared for. Laminate tops are especially susceptible to hot pots and pans. Always provide a hot pad or some form of insulator between pans and the laminate top.

Laminate tops will scar if cut with a knife or scraped in the process of cleaning. Clean laminate tops with a solution of liquid soap and hot water.

Laminate tops may, as your walls expand and contract due to varying weather conditions, show a crack between the counter top and the wall. This is easily repaired by caulking this crack with flexible caulk. DO NOT un-screw-the counter-top and push-it-toward the-wall. If the wall returns to its previous position, it will crack your counter top.

All laminate tops have joints or seams. These joints or seams are susceptible to water intrusion which can cause expansion of the wood underneath. It is the homeowner's responsibility to keep these joints or seams clean and dry. It may be necessary to maintain the seam sealer or counter top caulk to keep water from causing damage to the seam.

## **SOLID SURFACE COUNTER TOPS**

The solid surface countertop (i.e., Conan" and other brands) provides a high quality, luxurious surface that will provide many years of service with minimal care. Solid surface gets its name from its characteristics. It is a solid, acrylic-based product free of voids or porosity and because it is solid, it can be manufactured to include a variety of edge treatments, inlays and special

shapes. Incidental damage may be repaired easily to maintain a new appearance indefinitely. Although naturally tough, the product can be damaged by abuse or misuse. Please review these care and cleaning instructions so that you can prevent damage that may require professional repair.

### **NORMAL CLEANING**

The nonporous surface can easily be wiped clean with a damp cloth or sponge and general purpose, nonabrasive cleaner. If the product has a factory matte finish, then abrasive cleaners may be used. To even up the surface appearance or matte finish, a plastic (not metal), abrasive household sponge pad may be used on the entire surface. Abrasive cleaners may also be used for this purpose.

### **SPILLS AND STAINS**

Prompt cleanup of spills will minimize even stubborn stains such as food dye, tea, fruit drinks, and some juices. Stubborn stains may require more aggressive cleaning than that described above. On polished surfaces, full strength bleach for two to five minutes followed by general cleaner, then flushed with water will remove most stains. On a matte finish, the same procedure may be used, or a bleach abrasive cleaner may be used.

### **CIGARETTE BURNS**

What may appear as a burn on the surface caused by a cigarette is usually a nicotine stain or scorch, which can be easily removed by cleaning with an abrasive cleaner or buffing with a plastic (not metal), abrasive, household sponge. Polished surfaces can be restored by polishing with fine pumice or automotive polishing compound.

### **GENERAL PRECAUTIONS**

Hot pans should never be set directly on solid surfaces. Use a trivet or potholder to protect the top. Using your counter top for a cutting board will result in unnecessary damage that may require professional repair. Strong acids or solvents such as those found in drain cleaners should be used with caution. Any spills should be wiped up at once.

### **REPAIRING SCRATCHES**

Superficial scratches can be removed by sanding with 350-grit sandpaper or buffing with a plastic (not metal), abrasive, household sponge. Glossy surfaces can be restored by polishing with fine pumice or automotive polishing compound. Deep scratches or chips should always be corrected professionally.

# **DOORS**

Many of the doors and door frames in your new home are made of painted or varnished wood. Wooden doors are subject to expansion and contraction due to local weather conditions such as heat and humidity. The result can be warping and sticking. This is normal and may correct itself as moisture is absorbed. You should allow your home to go through at least one dry and one damp season before you plane the wood or make other permanent changes.

Small cracks may also develop during a dry season, and again, they may disappear during wet, winter months. If the cracks do not disappear over time, they can be easily filled with wood putty or filler obtained at your local hardware store or home center.

The hinges and locks on your doors may require lubrication from time to time for proper maintenance and to prevent squeaks. A silicone spray lubricant should be used rather than an oil-based lubricant. Oil is not recommended because it accumulates dust and grease. Remove the hinge pin and spray it with a small amount of silicone spray.

Teach children not to hang on the doorknobs or swing back and forth. Swinging or hanging on the door will cause the door to sag and the hardware to come loose.

## **INTERIOR DOORS**

It is a good idea to keep duplicate keys for the bathrooms and other locking doors. Children may accidentally lock themselves into a room and be unable to work the lock. You may find that some locks can be opened with a small screwdriver or nail.

Remove finger smudges from painted or varnished interior doors by washing with warm water and a soft cloth or sponge. Use a mild detergent solution on stubborn smudges. Dry the surface thoroughly with a soft cloth or towel. Check your interior doors frequently and use touch-up paint or varnish when necessary. These simple steps will keep your interior door beautiful and in top condition.

If your closets feature sliding doors, keep clothes and other items away from the doors so they do not obstruct its proper operation. The roller and tracks should be greased periodically with an oil free silicone-based spray lubricant.

## **EXTERIOR DOORS**

Check the finish on your exterior doors several times a year. Weather stripping should form a reasonably tight seal to prevent air and water from entering. Normal contraction of wood doors can leave a small gap in the weather stripping. This is normal. The small gap will be closed when the humidity increases and the door expands. Re-glue or replace rubber and synthetic weather stripping that has worked loose. Use an appropriate weather stripping cement or glue. Do not use "super glue" type adhesives.

Metal weather stripping components can become unfastened. If this happens, carefully reshape the metal to its proper position and fasten it with small nails or tacks. Replace metal weather stripping that has been damaged beyond this simple repair procedure.

## **GARAGE DOORS**

Your garage door is the largest piece of moving equipment in your home. Given the proper maintenance, it will give you many years of safe service.

Lubricate the hardware on your garage doors every six months or so. Lubrication of the rollers can be accomplished by spraying a small amount of silicone-based lubricant on the shaft of the roller. Lubricate the springs and moveable lock parts by using a spray lubricant every six to twelve months. Wipe away the excess lubricant.

For your protection, you should never attempt to repair, replace, or make adjustments to the door system, including the springs, cables, and/or bottom corner fixtures. The spring mechanism is under substantial tension. Tampering with it is extremely hazardous. Repair or adjustments to these parts should be made by a qualified technician.

The screws and bolts that fasten the hardware to any wood area should be tightened after a year or so because the wood shrinks as it ages.

If a garage door opener was installed, an electronic infrared eye was placed at the base of your garage door. This device is meant to prevent accidents from happening. In order for the eye to operate correctly, damage to wiring and lenses should be avoided by not keeping tools and other objects near the electronic eye.

## **ELECTRICAL SYSTEM**

The electrical system in your new home was designed by professionals to comply with stringent local, state and national standards. It is intended for normal residential use. Any changes or additions to your electrical system can result in damage or fire to your home. You must consult a licensed electrician to make such changes and additions. Please note that a permit may be required for changes and additions to your electrical system.

The following information and suggestions are intended as guidelines for the proper use and care of the electrical system in your new home.

### **CIRCUIT BREAKERS**

During the orientation of your new home, the Brighton Representative will point out the location of the circuit breaker panel. There will be one master circuit breaker and several individual circuit breakers. Each circuit breaker will be identified on the chart that is mounted in the panel. Circuit breakers trip under excessive electrical load. Reset tripped circuit breakers by

moving them to the OFF position and then to the ON position. We suggest that you inspect and become familiar with the individual circuit breakers soon after you move in.

In the event of a loss of electrical power in your home, follow these steps:

- If the power loss is in one area of your home and power is available in other areas of your home, it is likely that an individual circuit breaker has turned off. Unplug any appliances in the area that are without power and turn other appliances off. Check the circuit breaker 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 call Brighton if you are in the One-Year Warranty Plan Period.
- If electrical power is lost throughout your home, check the master circuit breaker. If the master circuit breaker has tripped, reset it.

If the master circuit breaker trips repeatedly, refer the problem to a licensed electrician. If the master circuit breaker has not tripped, take a look around your neighborhood. If you notice a general electrical failure in your neighborhood, call your electrical company to report the problem.

#### **GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPT DEVICES**

During your walk through, the Brighton Representative will point out the location of ground fault interrupt devices ("GFCI" or "GFI" outlets). Usually, GFI outlets are located near tubs, bathroom sinks, in the kitchen, garage and exterior of home. These are special circuit breakers that are designed to break the flow of electricity in the event of electrical shock. When this occurs, the GFI outlets must be reset according to the manufacturer's instructions. Do not plug appliances such as air conditioners and refrigerators into GFI outlets. The electrical surge that occurs when these appliances cycle will trip the GFI outlets and break the circuit. Timing devices such as those for sprinkler systems should not be plugged into GFIs.

#### **LIGHTING**

The lighting fixtures in your new home are designed for standard wattage bulbs. To avoid excessive heat, you should not exceed 60-watt bulbs in most enclosed fixtures. Fan lights should not be added to existing light fixture outlets that have not been properly prepared for fan lights.

#### **OUTLETS AND SWITCHES**

Convenient electrical outlets can be found in every room in your new home. Most of the outlets are designed for two plugs. Do not exceed the capacity for which the outlets were designed. Devices which increase the capacity of electrical outlets and multiple extension cords, can cause a fire.

If an electrical outlet does not have power, there are two possible explanations:

- Some outlets are controlled by a wall switch. Plug an appliance into the outlet and turn on nearby wall switches to see if the problem is corrected. If you find that a wall switch controls an outlet, you might point this out to others who live in your home.
- Check the circuit breaker. If the circuit breaker has been tripped, reset it and try the outlet again. If the circuit breaker trips repeatedly, call the Brighton Warranty Service Department if within the One-Year Warranty Plan Period. Otherwise, call a licensed electrician.

**CAUTION:** Small children can be injured by poking small metal objects into wall outlets. You may consider installing outlet covers on all floor level electrical outlets. These covers are available in grocery stores and drug stores, as well as home centers and hardware stores.

## **EXTERIOR FINISHES**

The primary finishes on your new home are wood, stucco, brick, stone, aluminum, and vinyl. These finishes were chosen for their beauty and durability. Because they are exposed to constantly changing weather conditions, the exterior finishes on your new home require routine maintenance and care. We recommend that you inspect the exterior surfaces of your home every three months.

### **STUCCO**

Stucco is a brittle cement product that is subject to expansion and contraction due to the environmental conditions existing in your area. Minor hairline cracks can develop in the outer layer of stucco. This is normal and does not reduce the function of the stucco in any way. Seller will not be responsible for normal hairline cracks in stucco. Stucco will absorb water and remain wet for a period of time after a rain storm. The vapor barrier under the stucco helps keep moisture from penetrating the home.

Because stucco is not a water barrier, avoid spraying water from irrigation or watering systems on stucco surfaces. Check the spray from your lawn and plant irrigation system frequently to make certain that water is not spraying or accumulating on stucco surfaces.

To ensure proper drainage, keep dirt at least four inches from the stucco screed and concrete flatwork a minimum of two inches from the stucco screed. Do not pour concrete or masonry over the stucco screed. The screed is the galvanized sheet metal trim that separates the stucco wall from the foundation.

The white, powdery substance that sometimes accumulates on stucco is called efflorescence: This is a natural phenomenon that cannot be prevented. Consult your local home center or hardware store for commercial products to remove efflorescence.

## **WOOD**

Wood is found throughout your home. Because wood is a natural, porous material, it requires protection with paint if it is exposed to the elements. Inspect your exposed wood surfaces frequently. If you find cracking or peeling of the paint, sand the area and repaint it promptly. The exterior wood on your home will require repainting every two to four years. Surfaces that receive direct sun in the morning and mid-afternoon could require more frequent painting. Inspect these areas every six months and repaint every year or as needed.

Split or damaged wood, particularly on the ends of beams, should be repaired or repainted to avoid further damage. "Small splints" on the ends of beams is called "checking." This is normal and does not affect the integrity of the beams. The natural drying of wood can result in gaps and splits in wood molding and trim parts. Nails can work loose. Reset all popped nails and reposition trim parts. Fill any cracks with a commercial wood filler and use touch-up paint.

## **ALUMINUM SIDING**

Aluminum siding offers years of basically maintenance free exteriors. Although the siding will not chip, it is very susceptible to scratches. Aluminum siding is susceptible to dents caused by objects-that hit-the siding. Strong winds may also catch a seam in-the siding-and-tear it loose from the home. Damages from winds should be submitted to your homeowner insurance carrier.

## **VINYL SIDING**

Although vinyl siding is not as susceptible to dents as is aluminum, it is a plastic product and therefore is affected by changes in temperature. During periods of extreme heat your vinyl siding may appear to be warping. This warping is normal and should be relieved as the temperatures subside. Vinyl siding may also shatter in cold temperatures if struck with a blunt object. Heavy winds may also catch seams and tear vinyl siding from the home. Damages from excessive winds should be submitted to your homeowner's insurance carrier.

## **FENCING**

If fencing is included with your home, types and heights of the fence may vary from lot to lot. It will need regular preventative maintenance along with the other components of your home. Do not allow sprinklers to spray fences and other exterior surfaces.

If you choose to add a fence to your property, we urge you to employ a professional fencing contractor. It is your responsibility to locate the property lines and to have your fencing installed according to local building codes, your homeowners' association, and your CC&Rs. Refer any questions to local building authorities and your homeowners' association. Certain cities require permits to install fencing. In order to avoid damaging buried utility lines, always contact the local utility company to identify the location of the lines.

## **FIREPLACES/GAS FIREPLACES (IF APPLICABLE)**

### **WOOD-BURNING FIREPLACES**

The fireplaces in your new home are designed to add beauty and style. They are not designed to heat the entire home. We suggest that you use small fires, which will lend a sense of warmth to the room while supplementing the heat from your heating system.

Here are practical suggestions for getting the maximum benefit from your fireplace:

Your new home is practically airtight. Because fireplaces need a draft to function properly, you should open a nearby window about one inch before you light a fire. This is especially true if your heating system is operating at the time your fire is lighted. Failure to open a window and provide a draft could cause a down draft and smoke may fill your home.

Always use a fire grate or irons in your fireplace to allow air to circulate around the fire. Never place the fire directly on the floor of the fire box.

Be sure the damper is in the open position before you build a fire. Become familiar with the operation of the damper before you light the fire. Damper clips are necessary when using gas logs.

Use firewood that is intended for a residential fireplace. The logs should not be too long for the fire box. Do not use green or water soaked wood. Do not use construction lumber or other wood which has a high creosote or pitch content. The pitch will condense on the chimney and, in time, build up enough to become a fire hazard.

Store wood outside as it may be a home for unwanted insects.

Close glass doors or fireplace screen when the fire is burning.

Never leave the fire unattended. Extinguish the fire before going to bed and when leaving your home.

Never use your fireplace as an incinerator to burn trash. Never burn Christmas trees or holiday decorations in a fireplace.

After the fire is completely out and the embers are cold, close the damper to prevent heat loss through the chimney.

Remove built up ashes after you are certain that they are cold. Hot coals in ashes can ignite if the ashes are dumped in a garbage can or other receptacle.

If a gas line was included with the fireplace, it will include a "Jones valve." A Jones valve is usually located in the floor or wall near the fireplace. This valve opens and closes the gas to the fireplace. The valve requires a special "key" to turn off and on.

We suggest that you have your chimney inspected annually. Cleaning by a professional chimney cleaner is recommended.

### **SEALED UNIT (GAS-ONLY) FIREPLACES**

Sealed gas fireplaces offer efficient gas heat. Depending on the unit installed in your home, you may have a pilot light on the fireplace. These units work on a low voltage switch that activates the pilot and lights the gas causing the flame.

These units are sealed and should remain sealed so as to continue to provide their designed heating efficiency. The pilot light may be turned off in the summer. These units may vent directly out of the home or through the roof. -Units vented directly out of the-home may leave a black soot residue on exterior house materials. This can be cleaned with a commercial soft cleaner. Adjusting the flame may prevent excessive soot from accumulating on the exterior of the home.

Most sealed unit fireplaces do not include a "Jones valve". The gas shut off valve is located within the fireplace unit itself. —Please consult the manufacturer's manual for more detailed information.

## **FLOORS**

The flooring in your new home will last longer if you provide routine maintenance and care. Our obligations under the One-Year Warranty Plan and the Limited Warranty extend only to flooring materials that were provided and installed by Seller. If you choose flooring from another source, all warranty and service claims must be directed to that vendor.

**Squeaky floors are usually caused by a change in the weather or settlement of your home. This is normal and may correct itself over time. We will attempt to eliminate any floor squeaks in your home, on a one-time basis, and only during the first year.**

Please inspect your flooring carefully during your new home orientation. Subsequent damages including broken tiles, cracked grout, scratched or damaged wood flooring, torn carpeting and scuffed or torn vinyl are your responsibility after the orientation.

Accumulated dirt and grime are the most common causes of damaged flooring. We suggest the following routine maintenance for the flooring in your new home:

### **CARPETING**

Vacuum your carpet frequently to avoid the buildup of dirt and grime. Use a fixed brush attachment on your vacuum cleaner. If your vacuum cleaner has a beater-type attachment, the beater should barely touch the tops of the carpet fibers.

Eliminate carpet shedding fibers as they appear. Loose carpet fibers will work their way to the surface for quite some time. This is known as fluffing or shedding. Vacuum these fibers as a part of your routine cleaning. If a tuft of carpet appears which is longer than the surrounding carpet, do not try to pull it out, it is probably attached to the backing and simply needs to be trimmed to the height of the surrounding tufts.

Do not be alarmed by visible carpet seams. Most rolls of carpet are produced in 12-foot widths. This dictates that most of your rooms will have at least one seam. Professional installers lay your carpet with the minimal amount of seams without excessive waste. Seams are most visible in a new home before it has been furnished and occupied. As your carpet wears, the fibers will meld together eliminating many of the seams. Visible seams are not a defect unless they have been improperly made or the material is defective.

Remove spills immediately. Stain removal is easier if it is done promptly. Consult a home center or a carpet professional for stubborn stains. Cleaning products should be tested on a section of carpeting that is not obvious. Do not use cleaners that have not been tested and certified for the carpeting materials in your home.

Thoroughly clean your carpets at least once a year. While do-it-yourself carpet shampoo devices can be effective, consider employing a professional carpet cleaner. The professional equipment, materials and experience will add years of life and beauty to your carpets.

Professional carpet cleaners may be able to apply stain protection which may assist you in your effort to prevent carpet stains.

### **CERAMIC TILE**

Ceramic tiles are available in a wide variety of colors and sizes. There are two types of ceramic tile: glazed and unglazed.

Glazed ceramic tile is recognized by its shiny, smooth finish. It is cared for in the same manner as ceramic tile counter tops. Wash glazed tile with warm water and vinegar to eliminate spotting and hard water build-up, or use a commercially prepared product. Like your counter top, the grout will need sealing to be a stain inhibitor.

Unglazed ceramic tile is noted for its uneven and porous finish. It is a beautiful tile which adds a look of style to any room. Because the tile is porous, it should be sealed to prevent moisture

penetration and to aid in proper cleaning. Periodic buffing of the floor will restore its beauty and luster. A professional flooring contractor should be sought for more extensive cleaning.

## **HARDWOOD**

Clean your hardwood floors as often as you vacuum your carpets. Sweep the floors and mop with a soft, dry mop or cloth. Do not use water-based cleaners.

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. High-heeled shoes can dent hardwood flooring.

Waxing and buffing hardwood floors should be done according to the manufacturer's instructions for materials and procedures. Consider having this done by a professional.

Burns from cigarettes can be difficult or impossible to remove from hardwood floors. Small burns can be removed by sanding lightly and staining with a commercial wood stain. Large burns should be referred to a flooring professional.

## **VINYL FLOORING**

Modern, resilient vinyl flooring adds beauty and comfort to your home. The infinite variety of patterns and colors combined with its easy care finish make vinyl floors desirable. The following are tips for proper care of your new vinyl floor.

Do not drag heavy appliances or furniture across vinyl flooring. Because of its relatively soft texture and perimeter gluing, vinyl flooring can be damaged by heavy appliances, dropped tools and rough use. This damage is permanent and cannot be repaired. Ladies' high-heeled shoes can be particularly damaging to vinyl. Such shoes can cause permanent dent and gouges.

Do not use abrasive cleaners or full strength bleach on vinyl floors. Abrasives will dull the finish and cause permanent damage. Full strength bleach can etch and destroy the surface of the flooring.

Clean vinyl flooring with a solution of warm water and a commercial vinyl flooring cleaner.

Remove spills immediately to avoid staining. Use a sponge or soft cloth. Dry the floor after removing the spills.

Utilizing large quantities of water to clean vinyl floors is likely to penetrate seams and cause mold or underlayment damage.

Vinyl floors, like other home furnishing products, may discolor or fade when overexposed to the sun. Draw drapes and blinds during peak periods of strong sunlight.

### **LARGE VINYL AREAS**

Large areas of vinyl installed in the home are more susceptible to damage caused by normal wear and tear. These large vinyl areas require more seaming than smaller pieces. Large vinyl areas will not be addressed under the One-Year Warranty Plan if installed in other than the standard locations as indicated on the approved standard plans.

## **GARBAGE DISPOSER**

Like any appliance, we recommend that you read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper operations of your garbage disposer. For best results, do not load the disposer with food items before turning it on. For proper operation, turn on the cold water and start the disposer. Then, drop the food items slowly into the unit. When the unit sounds clear, turn the disposer off and leave the water running for an additional 30 seconds. This allows the food waste to be carried into your drainage lines.

Only foods that are non-fibrous and easily pulverized should be placed into the disposer.

Examples of foods not to be placed in the disposer are cornhusks, celery, onion skins, olive pits, bones, and solid or liquid grease. These items may cause your unit to overload or jam. If this happens, follow these corrective measures.

1. Turn off the disposer and the cold water.
2. Wait three minutes for the unit to cool, and then press the reset button usually located on the bottom of the disposer. Continue with proper use of the disposer.

If this does not correct the problem, your unit is probably obstructed. Follow these steps for proper removal.

1. Unplug the disposer and any other appliance before attempting a repair yourself.
2. Check the circuit breakers. An overload of this type may have tripped the circuit. Reset any tripped circuit breakers.
3. If your disposer has a service wrench, insert one end of the wrench into the bottom of the unit. Work back and forth until the disposer turns freely. If your disposer does not have a service wrench, insert a broom handle or mop handle into the throat of the unit and rotate the impeller back and forth. The obstruction will be loosened so that it can be removed.

4. Remove the obstruction, plug the disposer in, press the reset button and proceed with the above steps for proper use.

Heavy use of the disposer, especially with non-disposer items, may cause the disposer to come loose. Periodically check the disposer fitting.

## **HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING**

Your new home is equipped with a high quality heating system and possibly an air conditioning system that complies with local and state energy codes. With proper care, the system will provide many years of enjoyable, dependable service. Please read the instructions and become familiar with the heating and air conditioning system before you use it.

Your heating and air conditioning system can play an important role in the first year after your move in. By maintaining an even temperature, you can minimize the contraction and expansion of the materials in your home.

For maximum efficiency, set your thermostat to 68 degrees in the winter and 78 degrees in the summer.

The following suggestions are intended to assist you in getting the maximum usage and enjoyment from your heating and air conditioning systems:

Change filters according to the manufacturer's directions. In areas with heavy dust more frequent changes may be in order. Fresh filters can significantly reduce operating costs and will prolong the life of your system.

Check the operation of your system well in advance of peak operating seasons. Notify Brighton of problems before seasonal demands are the greatest.

Keep all vents and registers clean and free of dust, cobwebs and debris.

Keep plants and grass trimmed well away from the outdoor unit.

## **HEAT CIRCULATION**

Heating and cooling of the home can be more effective by utilizing the register vents in the floors and ceilings. By closing and opening different vents at certain times of the year you can direct the hot or cold air to the rooms that need the most.

In order for heating and cooling systems to work, the air in the home must be able to move freely. Closing room doors in the winter will prevent effective air circulation and the room will

remain colder than the rest of the home. In the summer, closing the door to an unused room that has direct sunlight through the windows can help keep the rest of the house cooler.

Adjusting heat vents and opening and closing doors will help make your heating and cooling system adjust to the extremes that may be present at any given time during the year. These minor adjustments will also help conserve energy and increase your energy efficiency.

### **EVAPORATIVE COOLERS**

Seller does not install evaporative (or "swamp") coolers in homes, and does not recommend such coolers being installed after closing. Evaporative coolers cause increased moisture and humidity in the home that can lead to mildew and mold growth and other moisture related issues in the home. The homeowner is responsible for any issues related to the use of an evaporative cooler in the home.

## **INTERIOR WALLS**

The walls in your new home are constructed of wood and other materials which are subject to normal expansion and contraction. Molding and trim can shrink and warp in some cases. It is your responsibility to perform routine maintenance on molding, trim and wall boards. Replace badly warped molding and trim. Reset nails that have popped out of position. Use touchup paint to complete the repairs.

Use care when you hang pictures and other decorative items. The wallboard is brittle and will break if hit with a hammer. Costly repairs can be avoided by using picture hooks and other supplies from a home center or hardware store. Always repair nail holes with spackle or putty.

Some or all of the walls in your home may be textured for beauty and style. The texturing material is relatively soft and can be damaged by scrubbing with abrasive cleansers and rough brushes or cloths. Small finger smudges may be removed from walls with a solution of warm water and a mild soap. Wash gently with a soft sponge or cloth. Rinse and dry the excess water carefully. Do not permit the wallboard to become soaked with water. Large spots that are not easily removed by cleaning will require paint touch up.

## **LANDSCAPING, GRADING AND DRAINAGE**

Maintenance of landscaping is your responsibility after escrow closes. If landscaping has been provided with your new home, it was designed in conjunction with the grading and drainage to provide proper water flow over your lot. You become responsible for this maintenance immediately after you close escrow. ***Your lawn and other plants could be damaged very quickly if not properly watered.***

***Your lot was graded to provide proper drainage. Any changes to the grading of your lot can result in substantial water damage to your property and to nearby property. Natural settling***

***can change the original grading. It is your responsibility to maintain the original grading of your lot and to preserve good drainage. Any damage to your home or neighboring property that is a result of changes to the grading or drainage features is entirely the homeowner's responsibility.***

The goal of the grading plan is to provide a proper setting for your home and to give the maximum protection from water erosion and damage. The grading plan may use small hills and valleys called "berms" and "swales" to direct the water away from your home and from adjacent properties. These contours must be maintained to avoid severe water damage during heavy rains.

Landscaping can change the grading of your lot. We suggest that you consult a professional landscaper when the time comes to landscape your lot. Provide ample room for growth between plants and your home. The ground next to your home should always slope away to prevent standing water. If water is allowed to stand or pool next to your home, damage to the foundation will result and plantings may be ruined. The water could also seep into your home. ***Irrigation lines and sprinkler heads should be installed at least two to three feet away from the foundation of the home. For any vegetation closer to the home than two to three feet, only a drip irrigation system should be considered.***

Observe the flow of irrigation water after each planting. If you notice pooling water of excessive levels in one area, construct drainage features to direct the flow of water. Consult with a landscape gardener before such drainage features are begun. Always keep drains free of debris, leaves and lawn clippings.

To reduce the waste of water, consider using a drip irrigation system. These systems provide water directly to the root of the plant where it provides the most nourishment. In most cases, the amount of water used is significantly less than regular sprinkler systems. You may also conserve water by using drought resistant or drought tolerant plants. Your landscape professional can provide advice on plant selection, watering needs, and proper placement in your yard.

If your landscaping projects require that additional soil be added to your lot, be especially careful that the drainage is not altered significantly. The level of the soil should always be at least six inches below the level of the weep screed. This will assist in preventing wood rot and termite infestation.

***In addition, other changes and additions can alter the drainage of your lot and cause water damage and degradation of the chemical termiticide barrier around your home. These changes include walkways, patios, spas, pools, fences, walls, planters and play structures. Before you make any changes or additions to your lot, give careful consideration to the effect on water drainage. If you have any questions, consult a professional before you begin the project. See the "Termite Barrier" section below.***

Flowerbeds can significantly change drainage patterns. We suggest that you consult a professional gardener before you dig flowerbeds. In any case, keep flowerbeds to a minimum of two to three feet from the foundation. Many gardening books have plans for constructing flowerbeds that will enhance the beauty of your home and promote the proper drainage of irrigation and rainwater.

Please consider that any changes you make in the grading and drainage of your lot could affect neighboring properties. Damages to other property will be your responsibility.

## **"MOLD" AND MILDEW PREVENTION**

Molds are a certain category of fungus. They are simple, microscopic organisms that are virtually everywhere, indoors and outdoors. They are part of the environment. Much of the mold found indoors comes from outdoor sources. Some molds grow on material common in a home, such as fiberboard, gypsum board, paper, dust, lint, and plant materials. Controlling excess moisture is the key to stopping indoor mold growth. The homeowner's use of a humidifier in the home may result in excess moisture and lead to mold growth. The home's bathroom facilities, windows, and some other parts of the home have been caulked or sealed to prevent moisture from building up in corners and seeping behind walls. The caulking and sealing needs to be maintained and replaced, at least annually, as a normal homeowner's maintenance item. Weep holes in window frames, which are natural vents, should be kept cleared so that water is not allowed to accumulate. Window sills should be kept clean. A homeowner's failure to keep the home clean and to maintain the seals and caulking and other items in the home will increase the possibility of water intrusion and mold growth.

Carpet that becomes wet should be dried out as soon as possible. When people enter and exit a shower or bathtub some water is likely to get onto the floor outside the shower or tub: If these areas are carpeted, then homeowners should place a bath rug next to the tub and shower so water is not accumulated between the floor and the carpet. Failure to do so may result in mildew growth under the carpet.

The standard flooring of kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms and wash rooms in homes is hard surface flooring such as tile or vinyl. Any change to carpet material in these areas increases the risk of moisture accumulation and mold growth. Any replacement of the hard surface flooring in these areas with carpet is entirely at the homeowner's own risk and responsibility. Homeowners must maintain these areas and be careful to keep them dry.

During your ownership of the home, small cracks may appear in walls, floors, or other surfaces as a result of normal settling. The home at some point may experience a plumbing leak or drip. If such a matter occurs in your home, regardless of when, it is very important that the homeowner address these items immediately with proper maintenance to prevent moisture in the home and possible mold growth. Seller shall not be responsible for any issues regarding water damage, mold, or mildew that are related to the homeowner's failure to properly

maintain the home, to eliminate improper moisture, or failure to act in a timely manner to correct the issue.

It is important to dry water damaged areas and items within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth. If mold is a problem in your home, clean up the mold and get rid of the excess water or moisture. Fix leaky plumbing or other sources of water. As of the writing of this document, information from the Environmental Protection Agency internet website recommends that smaller areas of mold can be washed off hard surfaces with detergent and water, and then the area dried completely. Absorbent materials (such as ceiling tiles and carpet) that become moldy may have to be replaced.

## **PATIOS**

Patios and other structures that you add to your home after the close of escrow are not the responsibility of Seller. We suggest that before you begin any addition to your home, you check with your homeowners' association and local building officials to make certain that your plans comply with the building codes, CC&Rs and other applicable laws. It is likely that a building permit will be required. A licensed contractor is best qualified to perform this work.

## **PESTS AND RODENTS**

If your yard includes slopes, you may find that gophers, ground squirrels, mice and other burrowing animals are present. Unfortunately, these animals can wreak havoc with slopes by creating tunnels or burrows. These burrows, while only a few inches in diameter, allow soil erosion to begin deep in your slope. During a rain or with the use of irrigation, water will enter the burrow and carry loose soil away. Over time, the burrow can enlarge and collapse, destroying your slope. It is important that a professional pest control expert be contacted for proper removal of burrowing animals.

During construction of nearby neighborhoods, other animals may attempt to invade your home. Typically, these are mice, ants and birds, bees and snakes. Seller is not responsible for removal of these animals.

## **PLUMBING SYSTEM**

The plumbing system in your new home features modern materials. With care, it will provide trouble-free service for many years. We recommend that you become familiar with your plumbing system as soon as you move in. You should know the location of the main shutoff and individual shutoffs in the bathrooms and the kitchen. In the event of a plumbing emergency, you must close the main water shutoff at once. Flowing water can cause severe damage to your home and its contents.

The main water shutoff is usually located where the water pipes enter the house. Another water shutoff is located at the water meter. The Brighton Representative will identify the water shutoffs during your new home orientation.

Other water shutoffs are located under the sinks in the bathrooms and the kitchen. Each toilet has a shutoff valve behind the toilet bowl. Another water shutoff is located on the top of the water heater. It controls the flow of water to the heater and should be closed in the event of a leak in the water heater. You and others in your home should know where these water shutoffs are and how they work.

Each plumbing fixture in your home has a drain specially designed to provide a water barrier between your home and the sewer. The drainpipe or trap is the U-shaped area of pipe directly under the sink. The trap holds water, which prevents the airborne bacteria and odor of sewer gas from entering your home. If any faucets are used infrequently, we suggest that they be turned on occasionally to replace the water in the trap lost to evaporation. Because of their shape, the traps are the most likely area to become clogged.

In case of extremely cold weather, your pipes can be subject to freezing. This is most likely to occur where the pipes are exposed to the weather. You should consider wrapping your exposed pipes to withstand most of the cold weather that we receive in this area. Your home center or hardware store will be able to provide the materials and advice for proper use.

It is absolutely necessary to remove hoses from outside hose bibs in cold weather. Seller is not responsible for broken hose bibs.

The following suggestions will provide long and enjoyable service from your plumbing system:

#### **ACRYLIC BATHTUBS AND SHOWER STALLS**

Fiberglass is lightweight, durable material that adds beauty and style to bathroom tubs and showers. It requires minimal care.

You can preserve the original high gloss finish by regular cleaning with a liquid soap or detergent. Do not use abrasive cleansers. Always rinse the walls and the door of the shower after each use. Occasional applications of automotive type wax will add luster and beauty to your fiberglass. Most stains can be removed with a solution of bleach.

#### **FIXTURES**

Faucets and other plumbing fixtures are designed to add beauty and trouble-free use. Most of the fixtures are plated with bright chromium, a material which is impervious to water corrosion. It is, however, relatively soft and can be damaged with abrasive cleansers, scouring pads and tools. Clean bright fixtures with warm soapy water and a soft sponge or cloth. Rinse with clear water and wipe dry to prevent spotting.

Hard water can spot and damage bright chromed plumbing fixtures. While this is not entirely preventable, you can minimize the staining and discoloration by drying the fixtures after each use.

Avoid excessive force when you turn your faucets on and off. The seals in the faucets can be damaged and will require a replacement in a short time.

Faucets are equipped with aerators that mix air with the stream of water to prevent splashing. They need to be cleaned occasionally to remove buildup of mineral deposits. When you notice that the stream of water has lessened, unscrew the aerator from the mouth of the faucet. Remove the debris and rinse the washers and screens. Replace the parts in their original order and screw the aerator onto the faucet. Perform this homeowner maintenance as needed, usually every several months.

## **TOILETS**

Toilets are made of vitreous china, a material that is almost impervious to staining. Clean your toilets with a toilet bowl cleaner and a brush or cloth. Vitreous china is brittle and will easily break or shatter if hit with a hard object.

Always keep a plumber's plunger on hand to use in the event of stoppage of a toilet. If a stoppage occurs, close the shutoff valve on the backside of the toilet. Usually, a few vigorous pumps with the plunger will free the obstruction. Seller is responsible for stoppages that occur within the first 30 days and are construction-related. Stoppages that occur after 30 days or that are not construction-related are the responsibility of the homeowner. If you are unable to clear the obstruction yourself, we suggest that you call a plumber.

Do not use drain cleaners in toilets. The harsh chemicals in drain cleaners can damage the toilet seals and flood your bathroom.

The flush valve in your toilet should last for many years. If it fails or begins to leak, you can purchase a new flush valve at a home center or hardware store. If you are not entirely comfortable with this do-it-yourself project, call a plumber.

## **LOW VOLUME TOILETS**

In an effort to help conserve water, new low volume toilets are now required by federal law. These toilets use much less water on each flush than the older models. With the lower volume of water, they are not as effective in washing down large amounts of toilet paper. Using less toilet paper will help these toilets serve their purpose in conserving our water resource. These toilets also work better when the handle is held down until all available water has been allowed to leave the tank. In some cases these toilets may require two flushes to effectively remove the waste.

## **ROOFS**

The roof on your new home may be made of concrete tile. It is extremely durable. A tile affords the maximum protection against fire and adds beauty and quality to your home for many years.

Access to your roof is not necessary under normal conditions. Do not walk on the tile roof of your home. The weight of a person can easily break tiles and destroy the masonry seals on the roof. Leaking may occur and costly repairs could be necessary. If access to your roof is required, call a professional roofing contractor for advice and assistance.

Remove fallen limbs and other debris from your roof promptly. If large limbs have fallen onto your roof, inspect the nearby tiles for signs of damage. A professional roofing contractor should make repairs.

Rain gutters and downspouts, where applicable, should be kept free of debris such as leaves, twigs, and litter. Inspect the gutters and downspouts twice each year and after every heavy rain storm or windstorm, and remove debris promptly. ***Downspouts should be directed so that water is directed away from the house and so that erosion of the soil is prevented. This may require the installation of extensions of the downspouts, which is the responsibility of the homeowner.***

### **ASPHALT OR FIBERGLASS ROOFS**

Asphalt or fiberglass shingled roofs provide a variety of colors and textures to help beautify your home. These shingles are designed to provide years of protection and beauty. As with other roofing materials, they are not designed to be walked on after installation. Frequent walking on the roof will shorten the life of the shingle.

Over time, asphalt or fiberglass shingles will need to be replaced. Hot temperatures will shorten the life of these shingles. Shingle manufacturers sometimes rate shingles as "20-year" or "30-year" shingles. These ratings refer to the longevity of the shingle material itself under certain specific climate and temperature conditions defined by the manufacturer. The rating does not refer to how long the shingles will remain intact or on your roof in your area's conditions.

Shingles that come off or loose during high winds are not the responsibility of Seller and are the homeowner's responsibility. In some cases, depending on the policy and actual cause, this damage may be covered by a homeowner's insurance policy.

## **SMOKE DETECTORS**

At least one and probably several smoke detectors have been installed in your new home. The selection of the smoke detector, the installation procedure and the location of the smoke detector were performed within the requirements of local and state building codes. Please do

not move or disable the smoke detector. If you feel the need for additional protection, consider purchasing another smoke detector to be installed at an additional location.

The purpose of your smoke detector is to detect the possible presence of fire in your home so that you will have time to call for help and evacuate the home. At the first indication of fire, evacuate your family and call the fire department from a neighboring home. Smoke detectors have battery power backup. A small chirping sound indicates a low battery. Detectors should be tested frequently and batteries should be replaced every six months.

## **SWIMMING POOLS**

Unless otherwise evidenced by a written prior agreement, Seller does not install swimming pools and spas. If you choose to have a pool or spa installed, we suggest that you give careful consideration to the eventual drainage problems that could be created. Your swimming pool contractor can assist you in deciding the best location for the pool or spa and if new drainage features are needed. You may be required to install additional fencing to meet city or county ordinances for the installation of pools or spas. Seller does not routinely install fencing to meet pool-code requirements.

It is recommended that you conduct a soils survey of your property prior to installing a pool to ensure the ability of the soils to carry the weight of a pool and to determine the impact that introducing moisture to the soils may have. The property owner is totally responsible for damage to his or others property caused by water that may be introduced into the soils because of a pool installation.

During construction of pools, customers should be aware that they are responsible for any damage caused to the public utilities surrounding their property. These damages include but are not limited to asphalt surfaces, curb and gutter, sidewalk, open space, landscaping improvements, water meters, sewer and water lines, power and gas lines, asphalt, fire hydrants and storm drain inlet boxes.

## **TERMITE BARRIER**

A "termite pretreatment" is the creation of a chemical barrier of termite repellent between the soil and the concrete floor of a home during the construction process. The original pretreatment company is generally responsible to provide a five-year warranty from the time of the initial pretreatment. Most chemicals used in the pretreatment process are designed to repel termites, not kill them. Any modification to the home that requires breaking or cutting into the concrete slab, or disturbing the soil, or that touches the outside foundation needs to be reported to a pest control company. The disturbed area should be re-treated in order to maintain the integrity of the chemical barrier. Allowing water (from sprinklers or other sources) to pond near the home may also affect the chemical barrier.

If you add any concrete for patios, room additions, garages or carports, make any landscaping alterations near the home, or make any other alterations to your home, these areas should also be treated. Failure to do so could void any applicable warranty for the pretreatment. Further, making cosmetic changes can inadvertently disturb and destroy the treated barrier. Other modifications that may void any applicable warranty for the pretreatment are: landscaping or irrigation installed too close to the house; fence posts, trellises, or any other wooden decor that touch both the ground and the structure; changing the grade level of the soil outside the foundation to create drainage toward the house; and "cool-decking" installed against the foundation of the structure.

Subterranean termites depend on soil moisture as their primary source of water. Moist soil at or near the surface encourages termites to forage upward, bringing them close to the wood in the man-made structures. The subterranean termites' need for constant moisture is a characteristic that can aid in the control of these insects. By reducing the moisture in the surface soil, the environment is made less attractive to termites. Irrigation systems and their water should be kept away from the house (for the purposes of the chemical barrier, a minimum of 24 inches) to avoid disruption of the chemical barrier. Surface water drainage should drain away from the home. Soil, gravel, grass or any other surfaces should not be permitted to come into contact with the wood structure. A clearance of six inches minimum is recommended between the top layer of the ground and the stucco or wood surfaces.

To make your own inspection in the spring of each year, look for possible remains of winged insects, search the sides of your exterior stem walls for the earthen tubes that termites build to reach the wood above the foundation, and look for any holes or other disturbances to the interior walls and ceilings throughout the home. If you suspect the presence of termites, consult the original pretreat contractor.

## **WATER HEATER**

Your water heater is covered by a warranty from the manufacturer. Please read the operating instructions that the manufacturer provides. In the event of a leak in your water heater, close the shutoff 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.

While some water heaters do not require additional insulation, we suggest that you consider an inexpensive water heater blanket when it is appropriate. This will save significantly on the cost of operating the water heater. These products are available at home centers and hardware stores. Check the operating manual that came with your water heater before you add an insulating blanket.

## **WATER ISSUES**

A crucial part of your homeowner maintenance responsibilities is to avoid water damage to your home. Water damage can occur in many different ways, both inside and outside your home. Below are some suggestions for avoiding these problems.

### **INSIDE**

Water heaters should be checked at least annually for signs of leakage.

Hoses on washing machines should be inspected regularly and replaced at least every five years.

Control valves on washing machines should be checked annually. If they are locked up, remove and replace them.

Be sure all the occupants of the home know where the turn-off valve is for the main water line going into your home. You should all know how to operate it.

If your water bill is abnormally high for no apparent reason, do a complete inspection of your water system.

Do not pour grease of any kind down your sink or disposal.

If you leave your home for longer than two days, turn off the water to the house, if possible. At the very least, turn off the control valves to the water heater, washing machine, etc.

Avoid the continued use of humidifiers in your home. The increased humidity may cause moisture to accumulate in certain areas and cause mold or mildew problems.

Periodically check the pipes underneath the sinks and other fixtures in your home for leaks, and make any necessary repairs.

Annually re-caulk the showers, tubs, and others areas of the home exposed to water. Caulking is a regular homeowner maintenance item.

Make sure your windows are completely closed in a rainstorm to avoid staining to the window sills or other water damage.

Place bath mats next to where you enter and exit the tub and shower.

Make sure the exhaust fan in the bathroom is turned on while you are bathing or showering to avoid high humidity levels in the room.

## **OUTSIDE**

Make sure the spray from your sprinkler system does not hit the house. Over time, the continual exposure to the spray may damage or discolor the exterior surface of the home.

Make sure the grading on your lot is maintained so that water runs away from your house rather than towards it.

Water from sprinklers or run-off should not be allowed to pond near the home. Ponding may affect the chemical termite barrier and may cause other soils and erosion issues.

If you have rain gutters, you should make sure that the ends of the gutters extend away from the house rather than running directly to the foundation of the house.

If you have rain gutters, in the fall and spring you should make sure the gutters are not blocked by debris.

## **WINDOWS**

A few simple maintenance tips will help your windows to provide years of trouble-free service.

Do not apply window-tinting materials made of film to double-glazed windows and doors. The use of these materials can cause a buildup of heat between the panes of glass. This excessive heat may destroy the seals and permit water condensation to form between the panes. If you notice moisture between the panes, then the seal has probably been broken. This seal may be broken by natural expansion and contraction and the windows should be re-glazed immediately. After the One-Year Warranty Plan Period, contact the window manufacturer for service to the windows.

Aluminum foil also causes a heat buildup between windowpanes and should not be used.

Allowing direct sunlight through the windows will increase the temperature inside your home. On a hot summer day, the increase may be dramatic. This heat buildup, similar to a greenhouse effect, will increase the load on your air conditioner, and will make your home seem warmer than the actual temperature.

A high room temperature caused by direct sunlight or a lack of window coverings does not indicate an air conditioning problem. We will not evaluate the performance of an air conditioning unit until after window coverings are installed and the room temperature has had a chance to stabilize.

Direct sunlight will also fade your carpet and furnishings. To minimize the effect of bright sunlight, you should install window coverings as soon as possible. If you like the sunshine in the winter, consider blinds or other coverings that can be adjusted for more or less light.

## **VINYL WINDOWS**

Your home may have been provided with high quality vinyl frame windows. These windows may come with an independent warranty from the manufacturer that is separate from the warranty provided by Seller. Please contact the manufacturer for additional information regarding this warranty. Although these windows are nearly maintenance free, proper cleaning of the frame and window will allow the window to function properly.

## **LUBRICATION OF SLIDING WINDOWS**

You must be careful not to use a lubricant that will attract dust particles. The easiest product to use is a silicone spray that can be purchased from a hardware store or home center. Spray the frame and the rollers of the window. Turn the window, in the frame, back and forth several times and wipe off the excess silicone.

## **WROUGHT IRON**

Your home may have wrought iron railings or fencing that add beauty to your home. Wrought iron is subject to rusting if it is not maintained properly. Use rust inhibiting primer and touch-up paint on nicks and scratches as needed. Use caution to not let water pond around the footings of the fence or railing.