



# Homeowner Maintenance Guide

Manual and CD-ROM

**SHIREY**  
**HANDYMAN**  
SERVICE

  
**HomeCare**  
Manager™



Dear Homeowner,

Thank you for choosing the Shirey Group for your recent home improvement project. For most of us our home is our largest single investment. As such it is critical to maximize its value and reduce its cost. One of the keys in doing this is to properly maintain it. Specifically, good routine home maintenance should result in:

- ✓ **Reduced Repair Costs:** For instance, water intrusion can silently cause significant damage to the structure of a home.
- ✓ **Delayed Replacement Costs:** By carefully following maintenance guidelines, the owner might extend the useful life of components that in time will wear out and need to be replaced.
- ✓ **Maximized Resale Potential:** Just as a well-maintained automobile will command a premium price, a well-maintained home should sell more quickly and for a higher price.
- ✓ **Avoidance of Insurability Issues:** Failure to properly maintain a home may lead to insurance claims which might make it difficult for the owner to sell the home and expensive to get insurance for a future home.

Shirey Handyman Service can help you maximize your home's value. Since proper maintenance is such a critical factor, we have provided you with a copy of our home Maintenance Manual and Maintenance Logs and our Home Care Manager CD-ROM which includes:

- ✓ **Maintenance manual** that includes detailed written procedures and visual guides.
- ✓ **Audio-visual presentations** to facilitate maintenance of critical components of the home.
- ✓ **Website and phone contacts** for manufacturers of components in the home.
- ✓ A Planner that organizes maintenance tasks on annual, seasonal, and ongoing schedules.
- ✓ **Maintenance logs** to keep track of tasks to be performed.

It is our hope that you diligently protect your investment and minimize your cost of homeownership whether you are able to perform the tasks yourself, or wish to hire a professional to help you. The Shirey Group has the resources to assist you with this all the way from routine maintenance, minor and major repairs to a full scale remodel project. You can rely on the "Shirey Assurance".

Thank you and best wishes!

April Bettinger, CGA  
Shirey Handyman Service

Jon Elkins  
Shirey Handyman Service



# OWNER MAINTENANCE MANUAL

## Introduction

The Home Care Manager is being provided to help you plan and schedule regular maintenance for your home. Much like a car, your home requires periodic care and maintenance in order to protect your investment and ensure that it functions well.

Giving your home the care it deserves requires that you take a step back and take a deep breath. If you haven't done so already, it is time to establish a maintenance program. A maintenance program enables you to develop a plan that gives you a new perspective and the confidence necessary to maintain and increase the value of your investment.

Here are important steps that will help:

- **Have a Plan** - proper maintenance saves money in the long run. You should develop a plan that is respectful of your limited time and money.
- **Timing is Important** - effective maintenance is largely a matter of doing the right thing at the right time. If you're not sure what is right, ask someone who knows.
- **Keep Written Records** - keep notes, lists, schedules and records. This helps you keep track recognize all the issues and problems clearly.
- **Take Action** - refer to the lists and schedules and do what needs to be done. Most of us are too busy get it done ourselves, so hire qualified home care assistance.
- **Preventative Maintenance** - a maintenance program puts you in control of what happens to your home so that you avoid damages that could impact you health, safety and pocketbook.

By following the Home Care Recommendations, and other commonly accepted maintenance procedures, you can preserve the value and beauty of your home and minimize larger, more costly maintenance issues.

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# INTERIOR PRODUCTS, MATERIALS & COMPONENTS

## APPLIANCES

The appliances include items such as your security alarm, dishwasher, dryer, garbage disposal, garage door opener, gas burning fireplace, microwave oven, refrigerator, freezer, range, oven, stove exhaust fan, trash compactor, smoke detectors, fire sprinklers, water heater, and washer.

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

The appliances are warranted by the manufacturer. If an appliance does not perform as intended within the applicable manufacturer's warranty period, contact the appliance manufacturer directly for repair.

Read the manufacturer's warranty and operating instructions for each appliance, and follow the manufacturer's care and maintenance instructions.

You must complete the warranty registration cards for each appliance within the time specified by the manufacturer and return the warranty registration cards to each respective manufacturer.

## BATH, SHOWERS

Bath and shower areas include tile, cultured marble, and fiberglass tub and shower enclosures and the materials that attach or connect with this area.

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

The grout around your bathtub and shower should be inspected on a regular and ongoing basis. Clean and seal the grout as needed to preserve its integrity. Replace any loose or cracked (including small cracks) grout immediately.

On a regular and ongoing basis inspect caulk (especially where the tub and tile or tub and floor join together) and immediately replace any loose or cracked caulk (preferably with silicone caulk or if painting is necessary, acrylic-latex caulk). It is very important that the caulking be properly maintained to avoid water intrusion into flooring and walls. Do not use bleach or colored grout.

Inspect and clean tracks and weep holes on glass doors and use non-abrasive cleansers on bathtubs and showers.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

It is important when using your tub and shower to ensure (particularly when using a shower curtain) that water does not leak onto the floor (which can and will cause damage).

When using sliding glass panel doors for your shower/tub enclosure, the doors must be closed properly to prevent leaks. The door nearest the showerhead must be inside the other shower door. Do not reverse the sliding glass panels or water will leak outside the enclosure.

It is important that you do not direct the showerhead at the door(s), shower curtain or at the joint between the door and the fixed panel. It is normal for fiberglass and acrylic bathtubs and showers to flex and squeak.

## **CRAWL SPACE (ATTIC & UNDER FLOOR)**

The crawl space is not intended as a storage area for items that could be damaged by moisture. Wood or other materials stored in a crawl space can attract pests.

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Inspect the attic and under floor crawlspace (raised foundations) seasonally during the spring and fall each year for standing water or excessive dampness. Homes with foundations on grade may not have under floor crawl space areas that require maintenance. Slight dampness in the under floor crawl space is not uncommon. Landscaping that is correctly graded and installed helps prevent excessive amounts of water from entering crawl spaces. Standing water or excessive moisture requires immediate attention and may require the assistance of a professional.

The attic crawl space is neither designed nor intended for storage. Access, if provided, is for seasonal inspections and for the maintenance of mechanical equipment that may traverse the attic space.

After severe weather events it is important to inspect the attic and under floor crawlspaces. Standing water or excessive moisture requires immediate attention and may require the assistance of a professional.

## **CABINETS**

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Repair or replace any broken drawer or door hardware immediately.

Inspect hinges and retighten as necessary. Minor adjustments of door hardware may be necessary on occasion to ensure doors close properly.

Cabinet/Vanity finishes are not waterproof and they age quickly when exposed to sunlight and moisture. Dry cabinets whenever they get wet. Cabinets in wet areas (around sinks) will deteriorate more rapidly than other cabinets in your home.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

All cabinet finishes fade or yellow with time depending on exposure to sunlight and moisture. Do not slam or overload drawers. Wood is a natural product. Variations in color and texture are normal. Do not slam, hang or lean on doors. Do not use chemicals or solvents on your cabinets.

## **COUNTERTOPS**

### CERAMIC TILE

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Clean and seal the grout as needed.

Inspect all countertop grout on a regular and ongoing basis. Clean and seal the grout as needed. Replace any loose or cracked (including small cracks) grout immediately.

On a regular and ongoing basis inspect caulk and immediately replace any loose or cracked caulk (preferably with silicone caulk or if painting is necessary, acrylic-latex caulk).

**Other Care Considerations:**

Do not sit, stand, or place heavy objects on the countertop surface. Do not use bleach on colored grout. Do not use abrasive cleaners to clean the countertop. Avoid dropping objects on the countertop surface.

The grout joint locations and size are determined by the tile setter at the time of installation and are governed by the actual size and shape of the tile and the dimensions of the countertop and backsplash. Layouts will vary significantly.

Small hairline cracks will appear in grout joints, particularly where there are changes in the plane of the tile surface and where tile abuts a backsplash, sink or wall. Replace any loose or cracked (including small cracks) grout immediately.

Variations in color between trim tiles and flat, field tiles and height variation between tiles should be expected.

**GRANITE, MARBLE AND OTHER NATURAL STONE****Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must follow all care recommendations provided by the manufacturer or industry care and maintenance recommendations.

Replace any loose or cracked (including small cracks) grout immediately. Clean and seal the grout as needed.

On a regular and ongoing basis inspect caulk and immediately replace any loose or cracked caulk (preferably with silicone caulk or if painting is necessary, acrylic-latex caulk).

On a regular and ongoing basis seal granite, marble and other stone as needed or recommended. Anticipate that some household materials and foodstuff will permanently stain and damage your countertops. Regular cleaning and sealing will minimize this impact.

Repair and fill any voids that appear in the surface of the stone. Granite, marble and other stone (i.e. slate, limestone and travertine) have naturally occurring voids and are filled during the manufacturer's finishing process. This fill may dislodge and come loose or even fall out under normal wear and tear. This is not a flaw or defect in the stone.

**Other Care Considerations:**

Natural products such as granite, marble and other stone (i.e. slate, limestone and travertine) countertops are subject to variation in appearance (i.e. color, veining, surface variations, texture, shading, markings, pattern etc.).

You should expect grout shade variations or discoloration. Do not sit, stand, or place heavy objects on the countertop surface. Do not use abrasive cleaners to clean the countertop. Avoid dropping objects on the countertop surface.

Seam locations are determined by the fabricator at the time of installation and are governed by the actual size and shape of the slab and the dimensions of the countertop and backsplash. Layouts will vary.

The grout joint locations and size are determined by the tile setter at the time of installation and are governed by the actual size and shape of the tile and the dimensions of the countertop and backsplash. Layouts will vary significantly.

Small hairline cracks will appear in grout joints, particularly where there are changes in the plane of the tile surface and where tile abuts a backsplash, sink or wall. Replace any loose or cracked (including small cracks) grout immediately.

## SYNTHETIC SURFACES

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must follow all care recommendations provided by the manufacturer or industry care and maintenance recommendations.

On a regular and ongoing basis inspect caulk at sink area or joints and immediately replace any loose or cracked caulk (preferably with silicone caulk or if painting is necessary, acrylic-latex caulk).

### **Laminates**

Do not sit, stand, or place heavy objects on the countertop surface. Avoid dropping objects on the countertop surface. Do not use abrasive cleaners to clean the countertop.

Do not place dishes, hot pans, or pots directly on the countertop surface. Laminate surfaces can be damaged by heat.

### **Solid Surfaces (Corian or similar surfaces)**

Do not sit, stand, or place heavy objects on the countertop surface. Do not use abrasive cleaners to clean the countertop. Avoid dropping objects on the countertop surface.

Do not place hot pans, pots or dishes directly on the countertop surface. It can be damaged by heat.

## **DOORS (INTERIOR)**

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

On a regular and ongoing basis, adjust door hardware, tighten screws, and lubricate hinges and door latches to ensure proper operation. Minor adjustment of door hardware may be necessary to ensure doors close properly.

You must follow all manufacturer cleaning and maintenance recommendations for door hardware. Use of any product not recommended by the manufacturer can cause damage.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

Do not hang anything heavy on doors or doorknobs.

It should be expected that normal settling of the home and seasonal changes in temperature and humidity will cause doors to temporarily stick, warp, shrink or swell.

It is normal for the finish on doorknobs and hardware to tarnish, flake or deteriorate with use.

## **ELECTRICAL**

It is important that the repair or modification to your electrical system or cable television distribution box be made by a licensed electrician as a building permit may be required.

## CIRCUITS

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Inspect and test GFI (ground fault interrupter) outlets monthly by pressing the red test button and then resetting the outlet.

Office equipment can cause excessive amperage and wattage to be used. Do not overload circuits with multiple appliances and/or additional outlets.

Do not use or replace a fuse or circuit breaker with one that has a higher or lower rating or one made by a different manufacturer due to risk of fire.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

GFI outlets should NOT be used for freezers, refrigerators or other appliances requiring constant electric power

## SMOKE DETECTORS

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Smoke detectors require regular and ongoing maintenance to operate properly. You should test the smoke detectors' operation regularly and replace the batteries annually. It is recommended to replace batteries in ALL the detectors in the home at the same time. Clean the smoke detectors regularly, following the manufacturer's instructions.

## FIXTURES

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Clean and polish fixtures routinely according to manufacturers' recommendations. Metal light fixtures, especially those with a brass finish, will tarnish and require regular and ongoing cleaning and maintenance.

## **FLOORING**

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must follow all manufacturer cleaning and maintenance recommendations for flooring. Use of any product not recommended by the manufacturer can cause damage.

Floor squeaks result from separate parts of the floor moving relative to each other and rubbing against nails. These cannot be avoided. You should expect that there will be some vertical separation between different flooring surfaces at the transition.

It is important that you do not overload floors. Never exceed the load capacity of the floor.

## CARPETING

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must follow all care recommendations provided by the manufacturer or industry care and maintenance recommendations.

When cleaning do not replace furniture or other items on carpet until carpet is completely dry. Promptly and properly clean spills and do not allow carpet to remain wet for any period of time. Clean carpet only with products recommended by the manufacturer. Vacuum carpet routinely (weekly, or daily is best).

Note: Carpets are not stain proof. Although some carpets have stain-resistant properties, this will not prevent staining and the stain-resistant treatment will need to be reapplied after each carpet cleaning. You must refer to the manufacturer's recommendations for frequency of cleaning, cleaning methods and other information on maintenance.

**Other Care Considerations:**

It is important to protect carpet from sunlight. Carpet fading is unavoidable, particularly in areas exposed to sunlight.

Note: the number and location of seams is determined by the carpet installer at the time of installation. Layouts will vary significantly. Seams will be more visible in certain types of carpet (i.e. carpets with short nap or pile, or Berbers), and shade variations may be visible at seam areas.

It is common for loose fibers to be found during the first few months of use with a new carpet.

CERAMIC TILE FLOORING

**Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must follow all care recommendations provided by the manufacturer or industry care and maintenance recommendations.

On a regular and ongoing basis inspect caulk and immediately replace any loose or cracked caulk (preferably with silicone caulk or if painting is necessary, acrylic-latex caulk). It is extremely important that the caulking be properly maintained to avoid water intrusion into flooring and walls.

Inspect and clean the grout and tile on a regular and ongoing basis. Replace any loose or cracked (including small cracks) grout immediately.

Seal grout and tile as needed or recommended. Expect that some household materials and foodstuff will permanently stain and damage your grout and tile. Regular and ongoing cleaning and sealing will minimize this impact.

**Other Care Considerations:**

Ceramic and clay tiles are easily cracked, chipped or broken by placing or dropping heavy objects on them. Unglazed clay tile is a natural product that is porous and prone to staining

The grout joint locations and size are determined by the tile setter at the time of installation and are governed by the actual size and shape of the tile and the dimensions of the countertop and backsplash. Layouts will vary significantly.

Small hairline cracks will appear in grout joints, particularly where there are changes in the plane of the tile surface and where tile abuts a backsplash, sink or wall. Replace any loose or cracked (including small cracks) grout immediately.

Variations in color between trim tiles and flat, field tiles and height variation between tiles should be expected. Grout shade variations or discoloration is normal. Expect to find hollow-sounding tiles. This is normal. The use of a vacuum to clean tile floors can cause damage. Do not use abrasive cleaners to clean the floor.

## HARDWOOD AND WOOD LAMINATE FLOORING

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must follow all care recommendations provided by the manufacturer or industry care and maintenance recommendations.

It is important that you not use water or detergent unless specifically recommended by the manufacturer.

Immediately clean spills and do not allow floor to remain wet for any length of time. Prolonged exposure to moisture will cause the boards to swell and become uneven.

You should expect your hardwood floor to show normal wear and tear in the form of scratches, dents, scuffs, etc. Minimize this impact by taking simple precautions – for example, placing furniture pads under tables and chairs, avoiding high heel traffic on the floor and keeping pets off the floor.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

Hardwood floors are subjected to variations in temperature and humidity. These variations can cause gaps between boards, minor cupping and/or crowning, and pops and squeaks.

It is important that area rugs used over hardwood be “breathable”. Rubberized or solid vinyl backed rugs will trap moisture and will damage your hardwood floor.

Color variation between wood boards is natural. Direct sunlight will cause floorboards to change color. Floorboards will vary.

## GRANITE, MARBLE AND OTHER STONE

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must follow all care recommendations provided by the manufacturer or industry care and maintenance recommendations.

Repair and fill all voids that appear in the surface of the stone. Granite, marble and other stone (i.e. slate, limestone and travertine) have naturally occurring voids that are filled during the manufacturer’s finishing process. This fill may dislodge and come loose or even fall out under normal wear and tear.

On a regular and ongoing basis inspect caulk and immediately replace any loose or cracked caulk (preferably with silicone caulk or if painting is necessary, acrylic-latex caulk). It is extremely important that the caulking be properly maintained to avoid water intrusion into flooring and walls.

Inspect and clean the grout on a regular and ongoing basis. Replace any loose or cracked (including small cracks) grout immediately.

Seal granite, marble and other stone as needed or recommended. Expect that some household materials and foodstuff will permanently stain and damage your floors. Regular and ongoing cleaning and sealing will minimize this impact.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

Natural products such as granite, marble and other stone (i.e. slate, limestone and travertine) flooring are subject to variation in appearance (i.e. color, veining, surface variations, texture, shading, markings, pattern etc.).

Natural stone is susceptible to staining and etching by household products and cleansers containing ammonia. Do not place heavy objects on the flooring surface. Avoid dropping objects on the flooring surface.

The location and size of the grout joints are determined by the tile setter at the time of installation and are governed by the actual size and shape of the material and the dimensions of the floor. Layouts will vary significantly.

Small hairline cracks will appear in grout joints. See maintenance recommendations above. Grout shade variations or discoloration is normal. Do not use abrasive cleaners to clean the floor.

#### RESILIENT FLOORING (vinyl)

##### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must follow all care recommendations provided by the manufacturer or industry care and maintenance recommendations.

On a regular and ongoing basis inspect caulk (especially at tubs, toilets, sinks, etc) and immediately replace any loose or cracked caulk (preferably with silicone caulk or if painting is necessary, acrylic-latex caulk). It is extremely important that the caulking be properly maintained to avoid water intrusion into flooring and walls.

##### **Other Care Considerations:**

Promptly clean up any spills. Do not allow liquids to remain on vinyl flooring for any extended period of time. Vinyl flooring is not waterproof.

Do not allow chemicals or any products that stain to come in contact with the floor. Do not use abrasive cleaners to clean the floor. They can damage the protective gloss coating.

The number and location of seams is determined by the installer at the time of installation. Layouts will vary significantly. Seams will be more visible in certain patterns.

You should expect your vinyl floor to show normal wear and tear in the form of scratches, dents, scuffs, etc. You can minimize this impact by taking simple precautions – for example, placing furniture pads under tables and chairs, avoiding high heel traffic on the floor and keeping pets off the floor. Use caution when moving furniture and appliances on vinyl surfaces because vinyl is prone to tearing.

## **FINISHES – INTERIOR WALLS, TRIM, STAIRS**

##### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Painted, stained and varnished surfaces must be maintained clean and free of debris.

It is important to inspect and maintain painted, stained and varnished surfaces periodically and touch up or repaint/revarnish as needed and prior to deterioration.

##### **Other Care Considerations:**

If touch-up painting or other repairs are needed, the sheen/luster/finish/color will vary. Exact matches cannot be guaranteed for paint or wallpaper. Paint and stains will fade with time and sun exposure. Color variations in stained woodwork is a normal condition.

## **FIREPLACES**

### WOOD BURNING

You must follow all manufacturers' cleaning and maintenance recommendations. Use of any product not recommended by the manufacturer can cause damage.

The fireplace manufacturer may require owner to "cure" new refractory panels by building a series of small, low-heat fires. Please follow all manufacturers' instructions.

Refer to Exterior – Chimney section.

#### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Clean and sweep the fire box periodically according to manufacturer's guidelines. Do not alter vents or block the flue pipe.

The glass doors will get very hot. Do not touch the glass doors directly. Keep small children away from the fireplace when it is in use. Fireplaces are intended to be decorative and not the primary source of heat for your home. Do not build large fires or high heat fires in your fireplace.

Burn fuels that are recommended by the manufacturer. Do not burn hard, composite or treated woods. Do not burn manufactured, synthetic or composition logs, such as Duraflame or other presto logs.

Open the damper before starting a fire in the fireplace and open a window in the same room as the fireplace. Operate fireplace with glass doors in the closed position only.

The refractory panels will crack with improper use (such as logs thrown into the fire box). Replace any cracked panels before using fireplace.

Sometimes wind driven rain will enter the fireplace and this condition is normal. Expect the damper to rust.

Your fireplace may be a "Direct Vent" type. Direct Vent fireplaces may vent out the side of the building. These vents are very hot. Do not store anything near the vent termination.

### GAS & NON-WOOD BURNING

You must follow all manufacturers' cleaning and maintenance recommendations. Use of any product not recommended by the manufacturer can cause damage.

Natural gas burning fireplaces are considered decorative and are not designed to burn anything other than natural gas. It is critical that you NOT place or burn wood, logs, paper or other combustible materials in a unit of this type. Doing so could cause a fire in your home and result in serious damage or loss of life.

#### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Do not alter vents or block the flue pipe. Glass doors will get very hot. Do not touch the glass doors directly. Keep small children away from the fireplace when it is in use.

Fireplaces are intended to be decorative and not the primary source of heat for your home. Always be sure to open the damper before starting a fire in the fireplace and open a window in the same room as the fireplace. It is normal for wind driven rain to occasionally enter the fireplace. Expect the damper to rust.

On a regular and ongoing basis inspect the gas supply lines, fittings and connections to verify there is no leakage present. If you suspect a gas leak, notify your local utility company or fire department immediately.

## **HEATING & VENTILATION, AIR CONDITIONING**

### **Owner Care Requirements:**

Read and follow all the manufacturer's warranty and operating instructions, and follow the manufacturer's care and maintenance instructions.

You must change the furnace filter per the manufacturer's recommendations but in any event not less than every 3 months. A dirty filter will reduce airflow, causing the system to use more energy and discolor the carpeting.

Use kitchen and bath exhaust fans frequently to remove excess moisture and to maintain regular fresh air exchange.

Inspect and replace batteries as necessary in the thermostat. Please refer to the manufacturer's operating instructions for programming information.

If you have an air conditioning system, maintain the manufacturer's recommended clearance between the condenser and landscaping or other structures. If your condenser unit is located in the attic, you may have a secondary condensate line. Locate and periodically monitor the primary and secondary condensate lines. If the secondary condensate line drips have the unit serviced immediately.

Run systems twice in the off-season to prevent mechanical parts from sticking (i.e., if you have an air conditioner, run the system in the winter.) Replace fuses as necessary.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

The manufacturer warrants the furnace and other components directly. For warranty issues involving your heating and air conditioning unit, please contact the applicable manufacturer directly.

The design and size of your heating and ventilation system was established by the local or State Energy Code. If you use the setback feature of your thermostat, allow plenty of time for the unit to return your home to the desired temperature. Downstairs rooms will be cooler in both the summer and the winter because warm air rises.

Modification to the heating and ventilation system must be done by a licensed mechanical contractor and must be in compliance with the State Energy Code.

Uniform temperature throughout the home is not possible to achieve. Multiple factors control the interior temperature of a home, including the size of the home, the window coverings, placement of furniture, the number of windows and the ceiling height or volume of the rooms.

Do not impede or otherwise block the air flow from the vents or the return air grill. There will be noise from the heating and cooling system. Ticking and crackling sounds are normal as is the noise from the air handler fan or blower.

## MOISTURE & MOLD

### Owner Care Recommendations:

As a result of tightened State and Federal standards implemented 15 to 20 years ago, homes today are built to be almost airtight. Although this saves energy dollars, it also means that how a home is used and maintained, and the lifestyles of its occupants, can significantly influence the moisture level (and condensation) in a home.

Inspect your home on a regular and ongoing basis for signs of heavy condensation ("sweating") of windows, exterior walls or other cold objects. These are some common indications of excessive moisture and inadequate venting. If your home is not properly maintained and ventilated, or if condensation, humidity or moisture is allowed to accumulate in and around your home, mold and mildew growth will occur. It is important to take the steps necessary to monitor moisture levels (and condensation) and prevent mold and mildew growth in and around your home.

Mold needs to have moisture on which to grow. In most cases household mold is due to excessive moisture in the home. Mold also needs food and nutrients. Most materials found in homes will support the growth of mold and mildew if they become damp.

Mold and mildew are simple, microscopic organisms that can grow virtually anywhere if they have adequate moisture, nutrients and appropriate temperatures. Most molds are not harmful. In fact, molds have important roles in the environment and in living systems.

Molds and mildews can be destructive to materials on which they grow, and are usually unwelcome and unhelpful in homes. Some of the by-products of excessive mold and mildew are irritating to skin, eyes and respiratory tracts.

### Other Care Considerations:

Factors that can contribute to elevated moisture levels in your home: flooding, leaking water pipes or fixtures, plumbing leaks or back-ups, damaged or leaking roofs, use of humidifiers, extensive use of hot water indoors (laundry, cooking, bathing) without adequate exhaust venting for steam, running or dripping water, backed-up sewers, excessive dampness of basements or crawlspaces, maintenance of drainage and irrigation systems around the home, houseplant water or aquarium leakage, indoor clothes drying, and unvented combustion appliances are all important sources of indoor moisture, and can encourage mold growth.

Common methods to reduce moisture levels (and condensation) in your home: Use your whole house fans as recommended; Use your range hood when cooking; Use the bathroom exhaust fan when the shower or bath is used; do not hang wet laundry inside to dry; do not use a humidifier in your home; wipe up or dry moisture in bathrooms on walls, bath or shower enclosures, windows, etc.; minimize indoor plants; open windows to ventilate; immediately repair leaks.

## PLUMBING

### Owner Care Recommendations:

It is very important that you address any leak in your plumbing or sewer system immediately. Failure to promptly address a leak can result in health hazards and structural damage. To inspect for leaks, turn off all plumbing fixtures in the house. After an hour, if the water meter has moved, there is a leak in the plumbing system.

Immediately fix plumbing fixtures (sinks, toilets, etc.) that drain slowly or appear to be stopped-up (blockage cleared) to prevent back-ups or flooding.

Sometimes plumbing fixtures will “freeze up” from lack of use. If you have a fixture that isn’t used regularly, it should be turned on periodically to prolong its life. Drain traps can dry out because of lack of use. Periodically using the fixture will place water on the trap.

On a regular and ongoing basis inspect for leaks at valve where water enters the house, at outdoor faucets and at all valves and drains to toilets, sinks, dishwasher, washing machine, showers, tubs, etc. The overflow drain gaskets will dry out and deteriorate and should be inspected periodically and replaced if needed.

**Other Care Considerations:**

If you should have a water leak, damage can be minimized by turning off the water to a particular fixture or turning off the water main to your home. Removing furniture from wet carpet will reduce staining. The immediate removal of standing water from flooring materials will minimize damage.

You should expect creaking or popping sounds from expansion caused by hot water passing through pipes. You should also expect creaking or popping sounds caused by expansion of hot air passing through vent pipes.

Flow restrictors are required for showerheads and sink faucets to conserve water. These restrictors may give a mistaken impression of low water pressure. Water supply and waste piping should be protected from freezing weather conditions.

## **SINKS**

**Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must follow all manufacturers’ cleaning and maintenance recommendations. The use of any product not recommended by the manufacturer can cause damage.

If dripping is noted, washers or cartridges on sinks should be replaced as soon as possible. All sink traps should be kept clean and free of debris build-up. Periodically owner must remove debris from aerators and restrictors on faucets and showerheads to maintain proper water flow. Inspect the pullout sprayer hose to ensure that the connection to the sprayer is tight. If loose, tighten it by hand to avoid water damage.

**Other Care Considerations:**

Avoid use of heavy objects in and around sinks. Sinks are susceptible to chips, dents, gouges and scratches. Abrasive cleansers should not be used on sinks or fixtures. Sink fixtures can be easily scratched and tarnished.

## **TOILETS**

**Owner Care Recommendations:**

On a regular and ongoing basis inspect operation of toilet. Inspect for leaks in the area between the tank and bowl and around the base. It is critical that any leaks be fixed immediately.

Replace and/or adjust plastic and rubber parts (flappers, floats and valves) in the tank as required (this may be as frequently as every year depending on usage). It is important that

you only use cleaning products and water fresheners which are approved by the manufacturer.

In the event that your toilet is removed for any reason, replace the wax ring to ensure a complete seal. Do not reuse a wax ring when the toilet has been removed – use a new wax ring when reinstalling a toilet.

**Other Care Considerations:**

The use of low-flow 1.6 gallon toilets is mandated by State and Federal Law. These toilets use less water for purposes of water conservation. These toilets may require more than one flush to be effective. Flush toilet paper only in limited amounts.

The owner is responsible for sewer backups related to any clogs or debris that are not from construction debris. Any backups after the first 30 days are presumed to be caused by something other than construction debris.

## **WATER & GAS SHUT OFF**

**Other Care Considerations:**

You will find shut-offs on gas lines near their connection to each item that operates on gas. In addition, there is a main shut-off at or near the gas meter.

If you suspect a gas leak, leave the home and call the gas company immediately for emergency service.

You will find a main water shut-off valve in the house. In addition there should be water shut off valves near the connections to each item that uses water in your home. There is also a main shut-off near the water meter.

## **WATER HEATER**

**Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must read your water heater instruction manual thoroughly. You must follow the instructions for water heater lighting, operation and maintenance. Flush the tank every three (3) to six (6) months and test temperature and pressure relief valve according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Inspect the inlet and outlet pipes often. As the hot water leaves the water heater, it will cause the copper pipes to expand and contract. The expansion and contraction could cause the brass nut to become loose, and a slight leak may result. Inspect these connections and tighten if necessary.

It is important to keep the area around the heater free of flammable materials. If the water heater is located in the garage, avoid any flammable fumes in that area. You should be aware that any modification of the water heater, such as adding a water softener or solar connection may void the manufacturer's warranty on the water heater.

**Other Care Considerations:**

The water heater unit is warranted by the Manufacturer (see your water heater warranty brochure). For warranty issues concerning your water heater, please contact the manufacturer directly. If your water heater was recently installed it should be equipped with an internal insulation "blanket". There should be no need to add additional insulation.

# EXTERIOR PRODUCTS, MATERIALS AND COMPONENTS

## CHIMNEY

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

**Walking on your roof can be dangerous. A qualified contractor should perform all inspections, maintenance or repairs that require walking on your roof.**

Each year inspect, and repair as necessary, the chimney cap/spark arrestor. Every two years have the chimney and damper cleaned. Every two years, or more often if necessary, repaint the chimney cap/spark arrestor. Keep chimney free from debris and plant growth.

Inspect chimney cap seals once a year. Cracks or gaps in the mortar or brickwork of your brick chimney should be repaired immediately.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

If you have a brick and mortar fireplace, when building your first fires, start with small fires, and increase over time. It is usually necessary to break-in the fireplace and helps to minimize cracking in the mortar and brickwork.

Do not burn paper (newspaper, wrapping paper, etc.) composition (commercial preformed) logs or any type of composition wood (plywood, chipboard, oriented strand board, etc.)

## DOORS – EXTERIOR

### ENTRY DOORS (FRONT & GARAGE)

#### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must follow all manufacturers' cleaning and maintenance recommendations for door unit and hardware. Use of any product not recommended by the manufacturer can cause damage.

Since exterior doors can be particularly exposed to the weather they require regular and ongoing maintenance routines. Failure of exterior doors can occur if they are not carefully maintained when exposed to sun and moisture which destroy their finish and, eventually, the door itself. Doors with dark colored paint and significant exposure to weather and sun will require more frequent inspections and maintenance. These exposure conditions may vary from other doors in your neighborhood, which will vary the maintenance requirements and the expected useful life of the door.

It should be expected that exterior doors with a good weather-seal will be somewhat hard to open and close. The application of any material to the glass, for security, to darken or tint the window, will void the manufacturer's warranty and may cause damage to the glass unit. Hanging, swinging or slamming doors can cause the hinges to become out of adjustment and damage the door.

Moisture in the air may cause exterior wood doors to swell slightly in the winter months and shrink slightly in the summer months. Swelling and shrinking may cause the door to stick or bind. These conditions are considered normal. A door that sticks or binds can be fixed in one of several ways, including waxing the side of the door, adjusting the hinges, and lightly sanding or planing the side of the door (and resealing or repainting the edges.) As the moisture in the air decreases the door will return to its original size.

You can prolong the life of rubber weather-stripping that surrounds exterior doors by applying appropriate lubricant. The weather-stripping should be inspected twice a year and replaced every three to five years or more often if needed, in order to maintain an effective seal. Lubricate a squeaking door hinge or a sticky lock with graphite (not oil).

Inspect, maintain and repair the finish on doors (all six sides), which should include repainting with a high quality exterior paint or refinishing with a high quality exterior lacquer, as necessary, to ensure the finish remains an effective water-resistant barrier. Refinishing may need to be done on a yearly basis if the door is exposed to direct sun, weather or significant wear and tear. Heavy exposure to sun can cause paint and lacquer to deteriorate very rapidly. Because a paint or lacquer states on the label that it will last for a certain number of months or years does not mean that it will. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements. You must inspect and repair the finish on your door on a yearly basis or the useful life of the door can be severely reduced, requiring early replacement.

Adjustments to door, door hardware and weather stripping will be necessary as the house structure ages to ensure door closes properly and provides an effective weather resistant barrier.

Carefully inspect the exterior joints between doorframe and stucco, stone, brick or siding and any joints at the threshold each year. Small gaps will often develop where two different materials come together, such as brick, stucco, stone, wood, metal or vinyl. It is critical that this gap is filled with caulk (butyl-rubber caulks are preferred for exterior brick, masonry and flashing) in order to prevent water from entering the home.

It is critical that you inspect all caulk at joints on a yearly basis and replace or repair as needed. Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

#### **Other Care Considerations:**

Occasionally during extreme weather conditions, wind driven rain may enter your home when conditions exceed the standard for the design of the door– immediately wipe up this water to avoid damaging your floors. Extreme weather with high winds creates differential air pressure between the interior and exterior of your home. This will cause air and water to be “pulled” into your home during a rainstorm. To minimize this condition, open a window slightly in a protected (leeward) location to help equalize pressure.

#### FRENCH HINGED DOORS

##### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must follow all manufacturers’ cleaning and maintenance recommendations for door unit or hardware. Use of any product not recommended by the manufacturer can cause damage.

Since exterior doors can be particularly exposed to the weather they require regular and ongoing maintenance routines. Failure of exterior doors can occur if they are not carefully maintained when exposed to sun and moisture which destroy their finish and, eventually, the door itself. Doors with dark colored paint and significant exposure to weather and sun will require more frequent inspections and maintenance. These exposure conditions may vary from other doors in your neighborhood, which will vary the maintenance requirements and the expected useful life of the door.

Occasionally during extreme weather conditions, wind driven rain may enter your home when conditions exceed the standard for the design of the door– immediately wipe up this water to avoid damaging your floors. Extreme weather with high winds creates differential air pressure between the interior and exterior of your home. This will cause air and water to be “pulled” into your home during a rainstorm. To minimize this condition, open a window slightly in a protected (leeward) location to help equalize pressure.

Moisture in the air may cause exterior wood doors to swell slightly in the winter months and shrink slightly in the summer months. Swelling and shrinking may cause the door to stick or bind. These conditions are considered normal. A door that sticks or binds can be fixed in one of several ways, including waxing the side of the door, adjusting the hinges, and lightly sanding or planing the side of the door (and resealing or repainting the edges.) As the moisture in the air decreases the door will return to its original size.

You can prolong the life of rubber weather-stripping that surrounds exterior doors by applying appropriate lubricant. The weather-stripping should be inspected twice a year and replaced every three to five years, or more often if needed, in order to maintain an effective seal. Lubricate a squeaking door hinge or a sticky lock with graphite (not oil).

Inspect, maintain and repair the finish on doors (all six sides), which should include repainting with a high quality exterior paint or refinishing with a high quality exterior lacquer, as necessary, to ensure the finish remains an effective water-resistant barrier. Refinishing may need to be done on a yearly basis if the door is exposed to direct sun, weather or significant wear and tear. Heavy exposure to sun can cause paint and lacquer to deteriorate very rapidly. Because a paint or lacquer states on the label that it will last for a certain number of months or years does not mean that it will. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements. You must inspect and repair the finish on your door on a yearly basis or the useful life of the door can be severely reduced, requiring early replacement.

Carefully inspect the exterior joints between doorframe and stucco, stone, brick or siding and any joints at the threshold each year. Small gaps will often develop where two different materials come together, such as stucco, stone, brick, wood, metal or vinyl. It is critical that this gap is filled with caulk (butyl-rubber caulks are preferred for exterior brick, masonry and flashing) in order to prevent water from entering the home.

It is critical that you inspect all caulk at joints on a yearly basis and replace or repair as needed. Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

#### **Other Care Considerations:**

It should be expected that exterior doors with a good weather-seal will be somewhat hard to open and close. The application any material to the glass, for security, to darken or tint the window, will void the manufacturer's warranty and may cause damage to the glass unit. Hanging, swinging or slamming doors can cause the hinges to become out of adjustment and damage the door.

## SLIDING GLASS DOORS

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must follow all manufacturers' cleaning and maintenance recommendations for door unit and hardware. Use of any product not recommended by the manufacturer can cause damage.

Occasionally during extreme weather conditions, wind driven rain may enter the track inside the home when conditions exceed the standard for the design of the door– immediately wipe up this water to avoid damaging your floors. Extreme weather with high winds creates differential air pressure between the interior and exterior of your home. This will cause air and water to be “pulled” into your home during a rainstorm. To minimize this condition, open a window slightly in a protected (leeward) location to help equalize pressure.

You can prolong the life of rubber weather-stripping that surrounds exterior doors by applying appropriate lubricant. The weather-stripping should be inspected twice a year and replaced every three to five years or more often if needed, in order to maintain an effective seal.

Carefully inspect the joints between doorframe and stucco, stone, brick or siding and any joints at the threshold each year. Small gaps will often develop where two different materials come together, such as stucco, stone, brick wood, metal or vinyl. It is critical that this gap is filled with caulk (butyl-rubber caulks are preferred for exterior brick, masonry and flashing) in order to prevent water from entering the home.

It is critical that you inspect all caulk at joints on a yearly basis and replace or repair as needed. Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

The sliding glass door rollers and slides should be lubricated with approved window lubricant once a year and adjust the rollers as needed. Adjustments to door, door hardware and weather stripping will be necessary as the house structure ages to ensure door closes properly and provides an effective weather resistant barrier. Clean (vacuum) the door tracks monthly to ensure they are kept free from dirt or other foreign particles.

Keep moisture from condensation or water from the weep holes from collecting and remaining in the bottom door track as this water attracts dirt and can lead to significant mold growth, corrosion and damage to joint sealants.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

The application of any material to the glass, for security, to darken or tint the window, will void the manufacturer's warranty and may cause damage to the glass unit.

## OVERHEAD GARAGE DOORS

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

For metal garage doors, you must follow manufacturer's maintenance recommendations regarding painting.

It is important to consider the finish and caulk on garage doors (all six sides) must be maintained and repaired, including repainting as necessary, to ensure the finish remains an effective water-resistant barrier. Heavy exposure to sun can cause paint and lacquer to deteriorate very rapidly. Because paint states on the label that it will last for a certain

number of months or years does not mean that it will. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements. You must inspect and repair the finish on your door on a yearly basis or the useful life of the door can be severely reduced, requiring early replacement. It is critical that you inspect and repair your caulk and paint on a yearly basis.

Carefully inspect the joints between doorframe and stucco, stone, brick or siding and any joints at the threshold each year. Small gaps will often develop where two different materials come together, such as stucco, stone, brick, wood, metal or vinyl. It is critical that this gap is filled with caulk (butyl-rubber caulks are preferred for exterior brick, masonry and flashing) in order to prevent water from entering the home.

It is critical that you inspect all caulk at joints on a yearly basis and replace or repair as needed. Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

Perform annual maintenance and lubrication of the door tracks and opening mechanism. Twice a year, or more often if needed, clean the tracks and lubricate them with penetrating oil or silicone spray. Tighten the screws on the hardware and clean and lubricate the hinges and rollers. Use graphite to lubricate the lock.

Inspect the garage door springs on a regular and ongoing basis, and have any spring that is developing a bulge or is unevenly spaced replaced immediately by a licensed garage door contractor. Keep metal rods that span top and bottom of the door in a tight condition and in proper alignment.

Inspect and replace, as necessary, the gasket on bottom of doors. You can prolong the life of this rubber gasket by applying appropriate lubricant. Garage doors and their components will vibrate while operating, therefore, every six months you should inspect and tighten all of the hardware on the door.

#### **Other Care Considerations:**

You must follow the garage door and automatic garage opener manufacturer's warranty and instructions. For warranty issues involving your automatic garage door opener, please contact the manufacturer directly.

It is extremely hazardous to repair and adjust garage doors especially the rails and spring assembly as these can be extremely hazardous and should be performed by qualified door service personnel only. The garage door opening mechanism operates with a spring that is under extreme tension.

Garage doors are designed to be weather-resistant, but not airtight or water tight. Garage doors will allow some air, dust and water into the garage, especially in severe, wet or windy weather. You should take this into consideration in deciding how you will use your garage and what you will store in your garage and how you will store it.

## **DECKS & BALCONIES**

Exposure to the weather means that most balconies (upper floors) and decks (ground floor) must be carefully maintained to prevent damage and premature deterioration. The care and maintenance required will depend on the type of materials used in the construction of the deck or balcony.

## WOOD DECKS & BALCONIES

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Wood deck flooring and rails must be maintained and repaired, including refinishing with a high quality exterior paint or wood preservative/sealer, as necessary, to protect and preserve the wood. Decks exposed to direct sun or weather experience significant wear and tear and may require refinishing on a yearly basis. Heavy exposure to sun can cause paint and preservative/sealer to deteriorate very rapidly. Because paint/sealer states on the label that it will last for a certain number of months or years does not mean that it will. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements. You must inspect and repair the finish on your deck on a yearly basis or the useful life of the deck can be severely reduced, requiring early replacement.

Some decks are constructed with a combination of wood frame and composite deck materials. The wood materials will need to be maintained as described above. The composite deck materials should be maintained in accordance with the composite deck material manufacturer's recommendations.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

It is critical that you inspect all caulk on the deck on a yearly basis and replace or repair as needed to ensure a water resistant surface. Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

It is important to keep the underside of the deck/balcony free of debris or other materials to allow air circulation. Refasten loose boards and any loose or popped fasteners immediately. You must keep landscaping trimmed back from the deck/balcony by five feet. Irrigation water must not come in contact with the deck/balcony.

Prior to performing any modifications to your deck, consult a professional contractor.

## COATINGS ON DECKS & BALCONIES

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Some wood decks have a heavy finish or coating that uses elastomeric paint (flexible and water repelling). Coated decks and balconies require special maintenance precautions to preserve the integrity of the deck coating materials. Keeping the deck clean of dirt, gravel, sand and other debris is important to the performance of the deck coating material.

Drainage from deck/balcony should not be blocked or altered in any way. Inspect and clean drains if necessary (inspect primary and, if present, secondary scuppers) at the start of the rainy season and several times during the rainy season to ensure they are not blocked.

These coatings on deck and balcony surfaces must be recoated every three to five years or more often as needed to maintain a waterproof surface. The product you use to recoat the deck must be compatible with the current deck/balcony surface and carefully follow all manufacturers' instructions. You must use a professional to perform this work.

Planters or plant pots should have a self-contained drainage system. Planters or pots should be raised off the deck to allow for air circulation. Heavy loads applied directly to the

deck should be avoided. Subjecting the deck coating to continuous heavy rolling loads will damage the integrity of the deck coating material.

Avoid placing or moving sharp objects on the surface of the deck. Patio furniture must have rubber or plastic coasters on the legs. Metal or iron furniture may create rust stains on the deck's coated surface. Harsh chemicals or acids should not be used on the coated deck surface. Clean only with mild cleaning solution. Do not use carpeting, mats or any other impermeable surface on the deck surface.

It is critical that you repair any holes or damage to deck surface immediately. Irrigation water must not come in contact with the deck/balcony.

#### CONCRETE DECKS & BALCONIES

##### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

It is critical that you inspect all caulk on the deck on a yearly basis and replace or repair as needed to ensure a watertight surface. Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

Minor cracks in the surface of the concrete may be filled with any concrete grout. Because concrete is a porous material it is susceptible to staining.

#### DECK RAILING

##### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Wood deck rails must be maintained and repaired, including refinishing with a high quality paint or wood preservative/sealer. If the deck railing is exposed to direct sun, weather or significant wear and tear this may need to be done on a yearly basis. Rapid deterioration of finishes located in areas with heavy exposure to sun or weather should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the finish label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

It is critical that you inspect all caulk on the deck railings on a yearly basis and replace or repair as needed to ensure a water resistant surface. Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

Depending on exposure and maintenance, the wood rail cap trim has a shorter useful life than any other trim on your home and will need to be replaced more often – every 5-10 years.

##### **Other Care Considerations:**

Avoid placing or moving sharp objects on the surface of the deck. Patio furniture must have rubber or plastic coasters on the legs. Metal or iron furniture may create rust stains on the deck's coated surface. Harsh chemicals or acids should not be used on the coated deck surface. Clean only with mild cleaning solution. Do not use carpeting, mats or any other impermeable surface on the deck surface.

You can easily damage your deck by misuse or abuse, including all of the following: sharp objects, excessively heavy objects, hot objects, pulling or dragging objects over the deck surface, dropping objects on the deck surface and corrosive materials or liquids.

Planters or plant pots should have a self-contained drainage system. Planters or pots should be raised off the deck to allow for air circulation. Heavy loads applied directly to the deck should be avoided. Subjecting the deck coating to continuous heavy rolling loads will damage the integrity of the deck coating material. Prior to performing any modifications to your deck, consult a professional contractor.

## **FOUNDATION**

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Whether your foundation is a raised foundation (w/crawl space) or a slab foundation it is critical that you care for your foundation by ensuring proper grade and drainage. Too much water around your home can negatively impact your foundation.

Your lot should be graded to drain water away from your home and into the storm drain system. If drainage for your lot has not been properly maintained, including slopes and swales, the result can be damage to your home, your lot and to neighboring properties.

It is extremely important that you do not disrupt or change the drainage patterns around your lot, including swales that were established to drain water away from the house and its foundation. Maintain a minimum of 2% slope to the finished grade around the foundation. Inspect areas adjacent to and within 5 feet of your foundation and make sure these areas are not impacted by water coming from your roof. Inspect and clean your gutters, downspouts and drains twice a year, or more if necessary.

It is important to avoid heavy planting close to the foundation. Do not plant trees near your home. Do not use spray irrigation close to the foundation – when possible install drip irrigation. If a flowerbed is close to the foundation, and is surrounded by hardscape the drainage should be directed away from the foundation. Do not allow the installation of any raised planters attached or adjacent to the house.

Consulting with a qualified professional before installing sidewalks, patios, or other hardscape to ensure that proper drainage is maintained. It is critical that hardscape within 5 feet of the foundation should slope away from the house. Use a qualified licensed professional before you alter, delete or add on to the foundation.

If you have a raised foundation (w/crawl space), inspect your foundation vents twice a year to ensure that landscaping or other structures have not blocked them because this will restrict air circulation under your foundation and can lead to excessive moisture. Inspect the crawl space in the spring and fall, or after severe weather events for the accumulation of water or damage to subfloor.

On a regular and ongoing basis inspect irrigation, plumbing, water and sewers for leaks to prevent moisture from damaging the foundation. A leak in these areas must be reported immediately. Watch your yard for wet spots or areas that do not properly drain and make corrections immediately to avoid a problem.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

Moisture originating from irrigation, leaks in pipes (sewer, water, irrigation) and other sources can pass through the concrete and into your home. It is therefore extremely important to keep moisture away from your foundation.

Cracks in the foundation and/or concrete slab occur as concrete cures (dries out) over time. Some cracking is considered normal and is not an indication of any deficiency, structural or otherwise.

In some areas, homes are built on expansive soil. This type of soil expands when wet and contracts when dry. This expansion and contraction sometimes is responsible for cracks in foundations, exterior walls, concrete sidewalks and driveways. (Such cracks are commonplace and are not an indication of structural deficiencies.) In these areas it is particularly important to maintain good drainage around your home.

Do not cut, drill or otherwise alter the perimeter footings or concrete slab. Some foundations use a post tension concrete system contains reinforcing cables traversing through the perimeter footings and concrete slab that are under high tension. If these cables are cut it could result in bodily injury or death. Do not cut these cables.

A natural condition of the concrete is a white powdery substance (efflorescence) on the side of the foundation, or color variations and blotchiness – this phenomenon may be the result of normal moisture migration in the foundation.

## **GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS**

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

The exterior drainage system for your home carries away rain and wastewater. The system consists of the gutters, downspouts, drainage swales and the slope of grading on your lot. These components of the system work to channel water into the storm drain system. Failure to maintain any component of this system free of obstructions (leaves in gutters, obstructions on the storm sewer gates, etc.) could cause serious and expensive damage to your home or other components of the exterior drainage system.

Inspect and clean debris out of gutters and flush clean with hose twice a year; in the spring and fall. If you have trees that drop leaves in your gutters; install screen covers over your gutters. Trim back trees that overhang your roof and gutters.

Flush downspouts, underground drain lines and area drains twice a year or more frequently if necessary to ensure they are free from debris.

Annually inspect connections between gutters and downspouts and downspouts and drains to make sure they are intact and free flowing at all times. Inspect and seal, twice a year, as necessary, any fasteners or joints in the gutter or downspouts to ensure a watertight gutter.

Inspect gutters for signs of repeated or continual overflow (staining and dripping) – immediately eliminate the cause of any overflow and ensure gutters and downspouts are not clogged or backed-up.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

It is your responsibility to clear excess snow from downspouts as soon as possible to allow the gutter to drain and to prevent damage. Severe ice or snow build-up can damage gutters.

Snow plugged and overflowing gutters will cause leaks and damage in your home – carefully follow all gutter and downspout maintenance Recommendations.

## **PAINT & STAIN (EXTERIOR)**

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

It is important to maintain and repair the paint, stain and caulk on the exterior of your home with a high quality exterior product to ensure the finish remains an effective water-resistant barrier. Refinishing in some areas may be required on a yearly basis if the paint, stain or caulk is exposed to direct sun, weather or significant wear and tear. Heavy exposure to sun can cause rapid deterioration of the finish. Because exterior paint, stain or caulk states on the label that it will last for a certain number of months or years does not mean that it will. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

All exterior painted surfaces must be inspected twice a year to ensure they have airflow and airspace around them to ensure air circulation and prevent mold/mildew and deterioration. Use a high quality caulk and touch up with paint (butyl-rubber caulks are preferred for exterior brick, masonry and flashing).

All stucco, siding, wood trim, and metal surfaces should be inspected and touched up with paint annually, or more frequently if necessary to ensure that any weather, sun or other damage to the paint is immediately repaired. All metal surfaces, such as gutters, downspouts, chimney caps and flashings should be repainted every 3-7 years, or as needed, depending on the color of the paint and the sun exposure, to avoid rust and deterioration.

All trim and wood surfaces that are exposed to direct sun should be repainted every 2-5 years, or as needed, depending on sun exposure and color of paint. Inspect trim or wood surfaces deterioration and replace these materials as necessary. Exterior wood surfaces that are not exposed to direct sun must be repainted every 3-7 years depending on color of the paint and the amount of sun exposure.

Carefully inspect the joints between exterior walls or trim and window or door frames; exhaust vents (dryer & kitchen): and corner butt joints (trim) each year. Small gaps will often develop where two different materials come together, such as stucco, stone, brick, wood, metal, vinyl or at wall penetrations (such as dryer exhaust vents). It is very important that these gaps are filled with caulk in order to prevent water from entering the home.

It is critical that you inspect all caulk at joints on a yearly basis and replace or repair as needed. Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

A natural condition of the concrete is a white powdery substance (efflorescence) on the side of the foundation, or color variations and blotchiness – these are considered normal and should not be cause for concern. It can be scrubbed off if you desire.

A darker trim color will require more frequent maintenance as sun damage will greatly shorten the time between required paintings.

Inspect for mildew or mold on your paint, if present it is likely that there is poor ventilation around that area. Be sure that the landscaping is properly trimmed back from the house.

## **PLUMBING (EXTERIOR)**

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

In freezing climates, with the onset of sustained freezing temperatures exterior hose bibs which are not "Frost Free" rated will need to be shut-off and winterized. Hose bibs that are not Frost Free rated will usually exit the home from unheated areas such as garages and will need to be shut-off and winterized inside at the garage wall or other locations.

## **ROOF AREAS**

### WOOD & COMPOSITION ASPHALT SHINGLES

#### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

**A qualified roof contractor should perform all inspections, maintenance or repairs that require walking on your roof. Do not attempt to walk on your roof.**

Inspect the roof twice a year and clean when necessary to ensure that debris does not accumulate on the roof and disrupt drainage. Inspect your roof from adjacent properties to view roofing and drainage systems. Inspect for broken and loose shingles on a yearly basis. Immediately replace any broken or torn shingles and refasten any shingles that have become loose. After severe storms, a visual inspection of the roof for damages is called for. Notify your insurance company if damage is noted. Maintain the gutters and down spouts so that they are free of debris and able to quickly and efficiently drain precipitation from the roof.

Flashing must be inspected and repaired as necessary on a yearly basis. Flashing, including pipe jacks, may be made of galvanized sheet metal or lead. Inspect and repair any caulk joints around flashing. Inspect all flashing, as small gaps will often develop where two different materials come together, such as metal and tile, brick, stone or stucco. These gaps must be caulked in order to prevent water from entering the home. Metal flashings must be replaced or repainted as necessary if they deteriorate or rust.

It is critical that you inspect all caulk at joints on a yearly basis and replace or repair as needed. Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

#### **Other Care Considerations:**

The roofing material is warranted by the manufacturer directly. For warranty issues involving your roofing, please contact the applicable manufacturer directly. Do not attach items or penetrate the roofing material for any reason, including satellite dishes, antenna and holiday decorations as this will damage your roof.

### CONCRETE CLAY AND TILES

#### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Inspect the roof twice a year and clean when necessary to ensure that debris does not accumulate on the roof and disrupt drainage. Flashing must be inspected and repaired as necessary on a yearly basis. Flashing, including pipe jacks, may be made of galvanized sheet metal or lead. Inspect and repair any caulk joints around flashing. Inspect all flashing, as small gaps will often develop where two different materials come together, such as metal and tile, brick, stone or stucco. These gaps must be caulked in order to prevent

water from entering the home. Metal flashings must be replaced or repainted as necessary and if they deteriorate or rust.

It is critical that you inspect all caulk on the roof on a yearly basis and replace or repair as needed to ensure a water resistant surface. Inspect and repair any caulk joints, including those on or around flashing. Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

Inspect roofs on a yearly basis for broken and loose tiles. Immediately replace any broken tiles and refasten any tiles that have become loose. After severe storms, a visual inspection of the roof for damages is called for. Notify your insurance company if damage is noted. Inspect attics after rain for any signs of water leakage or damage. Ensure insulation or other materials do not block attic ventilation.

#### **Other Care Considerations:**

The roofing material is warranted by the manufacturer directly. For warranty issues involving roofing, please contact the applicable manufacturer directly. Roof tiles are very fragile and will break under weight. Do not walk on tile roofs for any reason – only a qualified roof contractor should perform maintenance and repairs. Do not fasten anything to roofs, including satellite dishes, antennas and holiday decorations, as this will damage roofs.

Roof tiles do not form a completely waterproof barrier and they are not designed to act as an actual moisture barrier. The designed and actual moisture barrier is the roofing felt below the tiles. The roof tiles are meant to shed most of the water that falls on the roof and to protect the roofing felt from the sun and as much water as possible. Therefore, it is critical that debris not be allowed to accumulate on the roof because it might divert water under the tiles and eventually deteriorate the roofing felt.

## **STAIRS OR ENTRIES (EXTERIOR)**

### WOOD STAIRS OR ENTRIES

#### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Wood stairs, entries and rails must be maintained and repaired, including refinishing with a high quality exterior paint or wood preservative/sealer, as necessary, to protect and preserve the wood. Wood exposed to direct sun or weather experience significant wear and tear and may require refinishing on a yearly basis. Heavy exposure to sun can cause paint and preservative/sealer to deteriorate very rapidly. Because paint/sealer states on the label that it will last for a certain number of months or years does not mean that it will. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements. You must inspect and repair the finish on your stairs on a yearly basis.

Some stairs, entries, and rails are constructed with a combination of wood frame and composite deck materials. The wood materials will need to be maintained as described above. The composite deck materials should be maintained in accordance with the composite deck material manufacturer's recommendations.

The joints in handrails, stair spindles, banisters, and other components of railing systems may become loose or separated when subjected to wear and tear. You should avoid exerting unnecessary strain on the railings (resting items on, sitting/standing, or swinging

from railings, etc.). The railings should be inspected twice a year and retightened as necessary.

#### **Other Care Considerations:**

It is critical that you inspect all caulk on the deck on a yearly basis and replace or repair as needed to ensure a water resistant surface. Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

It is important to keep the underside of the entry stairs free of debris or other materials to allow air circulation. Refasten loose boards and any loose or popped fasteners immediately. You must keep landscaping trimmed back from the entry or stairs by five feet. Irrigation water must not come in contact with the entry or stairs.

#### COATED STAIRS AND ENTRIES

##### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Some wood stairs and entries have a heavy finish or coating that uses elastomeric paint (flexible and water repelling). Coated decks and balconies require special maintenance precautions to preserve the integrity of the deck coating materials. Keeping the deck clean of dirt, gravel, sand and other debris is important to the performance of the deck coating material.

Drainage from the stairs and entry should not be blocked or altered in any way. Inspect and clean drains if necessary (inspect primary and, if present, secondary scuppers) at the start of the rainy season and several times during the rainy season to ensure they are not blocked.

These coatings on stairs and entry surfaces must be recoated every 3 to 5 years or more often as needed to maintain a waterproof surface. The product you use to recoat the deck must be compatible with the current deck/balcony surface and carefully follow all manufacturers' instructions. You must use a professional to perform this work.

Planters or plant pots should have a self-contained drainage system. Planters or pots should be raised off the deck to allow for air circulation. Heavy loads applied directly to the deck should be avoided. Subjecting the deck coating to continuous heavy rolling loads will damage the integrity of the deck coating material.

Harsh chemicals or acids should not be used on the coated deck surface. Clean only with mild cleaning solution. It is critical that you repair any holes or damage to deck surface immediately. Irrigation water must not come in contact with the deck/balcony.

#### CONCRETE STAIRS AND ENTRIES

##### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

It is critical that you inspect all caulk on the deck on a yearly basis and replace or repair as needed to ensure a watertight surface. Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

Minor cracks in the surface of the concrete may be filled with any concrete grout. Because concrete is a porous material it is susceptible to staining.

## STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

The maintenance of foundations and roofs are critical to ensure that the structural components of your home are not damaged.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

Consult with a qualified professional before altering or making additions to your home; as you may damage or compromise the structural components of your home.

## WALLS (EXTERIOR)

### SIDING

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

The exterior siding and walls of your home provide protection against most weather conditions, however, these components will fail prematurely if it is not routinely maintained. Significant damage to your home and reduced useful life of the siding will result if these areas are not properly maintained. Repair nail pops immediately. Take care not to overdrive the nail so that the head penetrates the siding. Important – do not caulk the bottom of the siding.

Carefully inspect the joints between exterior walls or trim and window or door frames; exhaust vents (dryer & kitchen); and corner butt joints (trim) each year. Small gaps will often develop where two different materials come together, such as stucco, stone, brick, wood, metal, vinyl or at wall penetrations (such as dryer exhaust vents). It is very important that these gaps are filled with caulk in order to prevent water from entering the home.

It is critical that you inspect all caulk at joints on a yearly basis and replace or repair as needed. Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

All exterior painted surfaces must be inspected twice a year to ensure they have airflow and airspace around them to ensure air circulation and prevent mold/mildew and deterioration. Use a high quality caulk and touch up with paint. The bottom edge of the siding must not be blocked in any way. Twice a year clear away any leaves, dirt, or other debris that has collected under the edge of the siding. Important – do not caulk the bottom of the siding. Do not allow irrigation water to come in contact with your siding, as this will deteriorate the siding.

Reference the maintenance Recommendations in the "PAINT & STAIN (exterior)" section.

### **Other Care Considerations:**

It is important to avoid excessive moisture or humidity in the home. This moisture can travel through the walls and damage the siding. Heavy condensation ("sweating") of windows, exterior walls or other cold objects are some common indications of excessive moisture and inadequate venting. If your home is not properly maintained and ventilated, or if condensation, humidity or moisture is allowed to accumulate in and around your home, mold and mildew growth will occur. It is your responsibility as the owner to take the steps necessary to monitor moisture levels (and condensation) and prevent mold and

mildew growth in and around your home. Refer to the MOISTURE & MOLD section for additional maintenance responsibilities.

Landscaping or hardscape should not be installed too close to the bottom of siding. Maintain a minimum clearance from the bottom of the siding to pavement (2 inches) or earth (4 inches).

Window boxes, trellises/patio covers, decorations, awnings or other structures should not be fastened to the side of your home, including. The fasteners for these items will damage the siding, wall framing and interior of the home.

## STUCCO, BRICK, STONE and OTHER WALL MATERIALS

### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

It is important to not caulk the bottom of the stucco, brick, stone or other walls where it intersects with the top (head) piece of window trim. Refer to the "Paint & Stain" section for the maintenance of exterior paint finishes.

All exterior stucco, brick, stone and other walls should be inspected twice a year to ensure it has clear airspace around it to ensure air circulation and prevent mold/mildew and deterioration. Never allow irrigation water to come in contact with stucco, brick or other walls. These walls are not waterproof and constant exposure to irrigation will damage the underlying wall surface.

Most exterior wall systems have a weep system that allows moisture to drain to the exterior of the home. It is important that you not block the weep system in any way. For stucco walls moisture exits from the "weep screed" which can be identified as a small bump between the stucco wall and the foundation. Twice a year clear away any leaves, dirt, or other debris that collect at the base of the weep system to avoid from being blocked (by soil or hardscape.) The weep system should be a minimum of 2 inches from any pavement and 4 inches earth or soils.

Carefully inspect the joints between exterior walls or trim and window or door frames; exhaust vents (dryer & kitchen): and corner butt joints (trim) each year. Small gaps will often develop where two different materials come together, such as stucco, stone, brick, wood, metal, vinyl or at wall penetrations (such as dryer exhaust vents). It is very important that these gaps are filled with caulk in order to prevent water from entering the home.

Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

A white, powdery substance that sometimes accumulates on stucco surfaces which is a normal condition. This phenomenon, called efflorescence, and can be removed by scrubbing with water and a stiff brush. Take care not to damage the wall finish.

It is important to avoid excessive moisture or humidity from penetrating the structure. Moisture that travels through the walls may damage the exterior wall. Excessive moisture can be caused by cooking, bathing, and laundry. Please refer to the "Moisture and Mold" section for information about these concerns.

Stucco, brick, stone and other wall materials are generally hard surfaces which can be affected by normal settlement of the structure as the framing shrinks and contracts and

from movement caused by soil expansion and contraction and seismic activity. You should expect to see minor cracks in these surfaces.

Stucco, brick, stone, and other wall materials are generally porous and can be stained. Dirt splashed off the roof or up at ground level from rain, winds, irrigation watering, etc. may discolor the stucco, stone, brick and other wall materials. Stucco, brick, stone, and other wall materials may change their uniform appearance where exposed to weather.

### TRIM & DETAIL

#### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

All exterior trim and detail materials should be inspected for cracks to be repaired with caulk then touched up with paint annually, or more frequently if necessary to ensure that any weather, sun or other damage to the paint is immediately repaired.

All trim and wood surfaces that are exposed to direct sun should be repainted every 2-5 years, or as needed, depending on sun exposure and color of paint. Inspect trim or wood surfaces deterioration and replace these materials as necessary. Exterior wood surfaces that are not exposed to direct sun must be repainted every 3-7 years, depending on color of the paint and the amount of sun exposure.

Carefully inspect the joints between exterior walls or trim and window or door frames; exhaust vents (dryer & kitchen): and corner butt joints (trim) each year. Small gaps will often develop where two different materials come together, such as stucco, stone, brick, wood, metal, vinyl or at wall penetrations (such as dryer exhaust vents). It is very important that these gaps are filled with caulk in order to prevent water from entering the home.

Rapid deterioration of caulk located in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

Refer to and perform all maintenance required under the "PAINT & STAIN (exterior)" section.

#### **Other Care Considerations:**

Window boxes, trellises/patio covers, decorations, awnings or other structures should not be fasten to the side of your home, including. The fasteners for these items will damage the architectural details, wall framing and interior of the home. It is important to remove debris of any kind from collecting on or around the architectural details.

Do not use exterior trim or details to stand on or fasten anything. This will cause gaps where water can pass through into your home or other types of damage. These items may not be able to withstand weight placed on it and could detach from the building causing damage and injury.

## **WINDOWS**

#### **Owner Care Recommendations:**

Carefully inspect the joints between the window frame, architectural details and siding each year. Small gaps will often develop where two different materials come together, such as brick, stucco, stone, wood, metal or vinyl. It is very important that this gap is filled with caulk in order to prevent water from entering the home. Rapid deterioration of caulk located

in areas with heavy exposure to sun should be expected. Do not assume that the stated performance claims on the caulk label will apply. Many factors and conditions impact these performance statements.

Refer to the window manufacturer's information regarding maintenance and warranty coverage for glass and operation. It is important to read and follow all maintenance requirements of the window manufacturer. Please contact the manufacturer directly for warranty issues involving your windows.

Once each year adjust and lubricate the rollers so that the windows operate smoothly. Use a lubricant approved by the manufacturer for the rollers and locks (typically silicone based, NOT oil based which attract dust and dirt). Replace any broken or cracked glass immediately.

Window tracks and weep holes should be inspected and cleaned annually or more frequently to ensure they are free from dirt or other foreign particles. Maintain air circulation around all window coverings especially where higher moisture or humidity is present, such as a bath area.

It is important to keep moisture from condensation or water from the weep holes from collecting and remaining in the bottom window track. This water attracts dirt and can lead to excessive moisture and mold growth in the home. Condensation from glass and windows may be removed by wiping with a towel or cloth as often as needed to keep these areas dry.

Do not caulk the bottom of the window or siding where it intersects with the window trim.

#### **Other Care Considerations:**

Heavy condensation ("sweating") of windows is common indications of excessive moisture and inadequate venting. If not removed, this moisture will collect dirt and debris and will eventually cause mold and mildew to grow in the window track on the window frame. If your home is not properly maintained and ventilated, or if condensation, humidity or moisture is allowed to accumulate in and around your home, mold and mildew growth will occur. It is your responsibility as the owner to take the steps necessary to monitor moisture levels (and condensation) and prevent mold and mildew growth in and around your home. Refer to the MOISTURE & MOLD section for additional maintenance responsibilities.

It is a normal condition during rain, and especially during windy rainstorms, air and water will enter the window track through the weep holes and may remain in the track for some time. Follow the instructions above to ensure the track is dry after the rain event is over.

Extreme weather with high winds creates differential air pressure between the interior and exterior of your home. This will cause air and water to be "pulled" into your home during a rainstorm. To minimize this condition, open a window slightly in a protected (leeward) location to help equalize pressure.

The application of any material to the glass, for security, to darken or tint the window, will void the manufacturer's warranty and may cause damage to the glass unit.

# YARDS AND AMENITIES

## DRAINAGE

### Owner Care Recommendations:

It is critical to maintain drainage, slopes and swales in your yard. Failure to maintain yard drainage, slope and swales can result in damage to your home, your lot and to neighboring properties. If your home was recently constructed, a grading plan for your lot was carefully engineered to standards that were established by your local government agencies to ensure proper drainage. The graded surface of your lot was established to drain water away from your home and into the storm drain system. Consult with your Homeowner's Association, if applicable before you make any alterations to your landscaping.

Please consult the "GUTTERS / DOWNSPOUTS" section of this manual to ensure that drainage that relates to your gutters, downspouts and drains are kept clear and free flowing at all times.

Inspect your yard seasonally, particularly around foundation, and maintain any depressed or sunken area with fill immediately. Spray irrigation should be directed away from your foundation or structure.

Each month inspect and remove debris from drainage swales, drainage ditches and culverts and from around the foundation of the home. After any severe weather or seismic event, inspect your lot to be sure that no damage has been done to your drainage system.

### Other Care Considerations:

It is extremely important that you do not disrupt or change the drainage patterns around your lot, including swales that were established to drain water away from the house and its foundation. Maintain a minimum of 2% slope to the finished grade around the foundation. Inspect areas adjacent to and within 5 feet of your foundation and make sure these areas are not impacted by water coming from your roof. Inspect and clean your gutters, downspouts and drains twice a year, or more if necessary.

Do not plant trees near your home. Avoid the installation of spray irrigation close to the foundation – consider alternative drip irrigation solutions. Do not allow the installation of any raised planters attached or adjacent to the house.

Before you dig or alter the soils, grades, or other drainage components it is important that you consult with a professional soil and civil engineer.

## DRIVEWAYS & SIDEWALKS (HARDSCAPE & FLATWORK)

### Owner Care Recommendations:

Your driveway, sidewalks, and other hardscape are made of concrete or asphalt. As these materials cure it will crack. Cracking is a natural characteristic of these materials, and there is no known method to entirely eliminate cracking. You can improve the performance of your hardscape by maintaining and protecting your hardscape.

Please consult the "GUTTERS / DOWNSPOUTS"; "DRAINAGE"; "LANDSCAPING" sections of this manual to avoid damage to hardscape from excessive water or landscaping planted too close to the hardscape, especially trees.

Shade variations, blotchiness and cracking in the control joints and in the concrete are considered normal. Immediately remove oil and other solvents from hardscape and flatwork (including garage floor) as they will permanently stain the cement and may pose a slipping hazard.

**Other Care Considerations:**

Heavy equipment, such as large trucks and moving vans, will damage concrete and other hardscape materials on your driveway or sidewalks.

A white, powdery substance that appears on concrete is called efflorescence. This condition is considered normal and can be removed by scrubbing with water and a stiff brush.

Before you dig or alter the driveways and sidewalks (hardscape & flatwork) it is important that you consult with a qualified professional to ensure that drainage patterns are maintained. Driveways, sidewalks, and other hardscapes within 5 feet of the foundation should slope away from the house.

## **IRRIGATION & LANDSCAPING**

**Owner Care Recommendations:**

You must maintain your landscaping with water, fertilizer, pruning, mowing and otherwise on a regular and ongoing basis. Consult with your Homeowners Association, if necessary, before you make any alteration to your landscaping. Before you alter the grade of your landscaping it is important that you consult with a qualified professional to ensure that drainage patterns are maintained.

If you have an irrigation system, make periodic adjustments to sprinkler heads and timing clocks to ensure that landscaping receives the appropriate amount of water and does not hit the house or other structures, including fences.

Avoid the installation of spray irrigation close to the structure – consider alternative drip irrigation solutions. If a flowerbed is adjacent to the foundation, and is surrounded by hardscape, provide drainage within the bed.

Inspect for excessively dry or wet conditions, or ponding areas – immediately adjust sprinkler system as necessary to eliminate these conditions. Turn off your irrigation system in the winter to avoid too much water in your yard and around your foundation. Monthly or more often, if a problem is suspected, inspect and immediately repair any damage to the irrigation system.

## **SITE, WALLS, FENCES, POSTS**

**Owner Care Recommendations:**

Maintain drainage and original clearances around retaining wall. Repair any cracks in the wall as soon as they appear.

Once each year check wood fences for loose boards, nail pops, rotting boards (especially the base boards) or other problems. Any problems should be immediately corrected. Every two to three years or as needed, apply wood seal to wooden fence or paint. Water from sprinklers should not come in contact with fences, as this will prematurely deteriorate the fence, and can also cause rust on iron and wood fences.

Annual checks for rust should be conducted for wrought iron or steel fences. Scrape off and repaint these areas with a rust resistant paint.

Consult with your community bylaws, if necessary, before you make any alteration to your site or retaining walls. Before you alter any site or retaining walls it is important that you consult with a qualified professional to ensure that drainage patterns are maintained.

**Other Care Considerations:**

A white, powdery substance that appears on concrete is called efflorescence. This condition is considered normal and can be removed by scrubbing with water and a stiff brush.

## **STORM WATER POLLUTION PREVENTION**

Unlike water that goes down a sink or toilet, rainwater, washwater and irrigation water are not treated and filtered. Water that flows down driveways and streets and into a gutter goes into a storm drain which flows directly to a lake, river or the ocean. This water may pick up pollutants along the way which are never treated. Some common contaminants include motor oil, antifreeze, pesticides, brake dust, pet wastes, paint, cleaners, fertilizers and household chemicals.

**Owner Care Requirements:**

Sediment from erosion is not allowed in the storm drain system at any time. Stockpiles of sand, dirt or other landscaping materials that could be washed into the street and storm drain system are not allowed.

Pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers should be used sparingly, according to the directions and kept in the original containers.

Do not dump washwater onto your driveway, sidewalk, street gutter or storm drain. Excess washwater should be disposed of in the sanitary sewers (through sink, or toilet) or onto an absorbent surface like your lawn. Recycle yard waste or compost it.

**Other Care Considerations:**

Try to use non-toxic or biodegradable products whenever possible, especially on the exterior of your home. Use water sparingly on the exterior of your home and when washing your car. Sweep concrete driveways and sidewalks, rather than cleaning them with a hose.

For further information regarding pollution prevention, please call your local city or county government.

**Regular & Ongoing Tasks** (daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly)  
See the Maintenance Manual for additional tasks not listed here and instructions for specific maintenance requirements for each consideration.

**Maintenance Log**

Consideration	Tasks	Notes
<b>Major Appliances</b>	Inspect and maintain appliances and connections to appliances (water, gas, electrical). See Manufacturer's instructions.	
	Dishwasher and Disposal	
	Cooktop and Exhaust Fan	
	Refrigerator & Refrigerator Drip Pans (if applicable)	
	Washer and Dryer	
	Gas Burning Fireplace	
	Smoke Detectors & Security Systems(if applicable)	
<b>Bathtub and Showers</b>	Inspect Bathrooms and Showers (with special attention to grout & caulk joints to prevent water intrusion)	
<b>Countertops</b>	Inspect Kitchen and Bathrooms (with special attention to grout & caulk joints to prevent water intrusion)	
<b>Doors &amp; Hardware (Interior)</b>	Inspect Interior Doors (with special attention to hardware, hinges, latches and adjustments)	
<b>Drainage **</b>	Each month inspect and remove debris from drainage swales, drainage ditches and culverts and from around the foundation of the home.	
<b>Electrical</b>	Inspect and test GFI (ground fault interrupter) outlets monthly by pressing the red test button and then resetting the outlet.	
<b>Finish Flooring</b>	Inspect and clean the grout and tile on a regular and ongoing basis. Replace any loose or cracked (including small cracks) grout immediately. Inspect caulk (especially at tubs, toilets, sinks, etc) and immediately replace any loose or cracked caulk.	
<b>Furnace, Ventilation &amp; Filters</b>	Inspect & change the furnace filter per the manufacturer's recommendations but in no event any less than every 3 months. Use kitchen and bath exhaust fans frequently to remove excess moisture and to maintain regular fresh air exchange.	
<b>Moisture and Mold</b>	Inspect your home on a regular and ongoing basis for signs of heavy condensation ("sweating") of windows, exterior walls or other cold objects.	
<b>Plumbing **</b>	On a regular and ongoing basis inspect for leaks at valve where water enters the house, at outdoor faucets and at all valves and drains to toilets, sinks, dishwasher, washing machine, showers, tubs, etc.	
<b>Sinks and Toilets</b>	Inspect operation of toilets and sinks. Inspect for leaks in the area between the tank and bowl and around the base. It is critical that any leaks be fixed immediately.	
<b>Maintain Other (other owner specified maintenance tasks)</b>		

**\*\* Special Attention** required after severe weather or seismic events.

**Seasonal Tasks** (spring & fall) See the Maintenance Manual for additional tasks not listed here and instructions regarding specific maintenance requirements for each consideration.

**Maintenance Log**

Consideration	Tasks	Notes
<b>HVAC / Air Conditioning</b>	If you have an air conditioning system, maintain the recommended clearance between the condenser and landscaping or other structures. For air conditioning, the condenser's Condensate Lines must be serviced at least twice per year, at the beginning of the season and at the end.	
<b>Crawl Spaces**</b>	Inspect the attic and under floor crawlspace (for raised foundations) seasonally, or after severe weather events, for standing water or excessive dampness.	
<b>Decks</b>	Inspect and clean deck or balcony drains if necessary at the start of the rainy season and several times during the rainy season to ensure they are not blocked.	
<b>Doors (exterior)</b>	The weather-stripping should be inspected twice a year and replaced every three to five years, or more often if needed, in order to provide effective weather protection.	
<b>Gutters and Downspouts **</b>	Inspect and clean debris out of gutters and flush clean with hose twice a year; in the spring and fall. Flush downspouts, underground drain lines and area drains twice a year or more frequently if necessary to ensure they are free from debris.	
<b>Irrigation / Sprinkler Systems</b>	If you have an irrigation system, make periodic adjustments to sprinkler heads and timing clocks to ensure that landscaping receives the appropriate amount of water and does not hit the house or other structures, including fences.	
<b>Paint &amp; Stain and Walls (exterior)</b>	All exterior walls, trim and painted surfaces must be inspected twice a year to ensure they have airflow and airspace around them to ensure air circulation and prevent mold/mildew and deterioration.	
<b>Roofing **</b>	Inspect the roof twice a year and clean when necessary to ensure that debris does not accumulate on the roof and disrupt drainage. Inspect your roof from adjacent properties to view roofing and drainage systems. <b>Note</b> - A qualified roof contractor should perform all maintenance or repairs that require walking on your roof. Do not attempt to walk on your roof.	
<b>Water Heater</b>	You must follow the manufacturer's instructions for water heater lighting, operation and maintenance. Typically this requires flushing the periodically and testing the temperature and the pressure relief valve.	
<b>Maintain Other (other owner specified maintenance tasks)</b>		

**\*\* Special Attention** required after severe weather or seismic events.

Annual Tasks (each year) See the Maintenance Manual for additional tasks not listed here and instructions regarding specific maintenance requirements for each consideration.		Maintenance Log
Consideration	Tasks	Notes
<b>Doors</b> (exterior)	Inspect and repair the finish on your exterior doors on a yearly basis or the useful life of the door can be severely reduced, requiring early replacement. Inspect the joints between doorframes and stucco, brick or siding and any joints at the threshold each year. Caulk around door perimeter must be inspected, repaired or replaced annually.	
<b>Drainage</b> **	Inspect your yard seasonally, particularly around foundation, and maintain any depressed or sunken area with fill immediately. Each month inspect and remove debris from drainage swales, drainage ditches and culverts and from around the foundation of the home.	
<b>Foundation</b> **	Inspect irrigation, plumbing, water and sewers for leaks to prevent moisture from damaging the foundation. If you have a raised foundation (w/ crawl space), inspect your foundation vents to ensure that landscaping or other structures have not blocked them because this will restrict air circulation under your foundation and can lead to excessive moisture.	
<b>Paint and Finishes</b> (interior)	Inspect and maintain painted, stained and varnished surfaces periodically and touch up or repaint/revarnish as needed and prior to deterioration.	
<b>Paint and Stain</b> (exterior)	All stucco, siding, wood trim, and metal surfaces should be inspected touched up with paint annually, or more frequently if necessary to ensure that any weather, sun or other damage to the paint is immediately repaired.	
<b>Plumbing</b> (winterize)	In freezing climate, with the onset of sustained freezing temperatures exterior hose bibs will need to be shut-off and winterized.	
<b>Walls</b> (exterior)	Carefully inspect the joints between the applicable wall materials (siding, stucco, brick, stone) and trim; including window and doorframes, dryer and exhaust vents, as well as butt joints at corners each year. Small gaps will often develop where two different materials come together. It is extremely important that any gap is filled with caulk in order to prevent water from entering the home.	
<b>Windows</b>	Window tracks and weep holes should be inspected and cleaned on a annually or more frequently to ensure they are free from dirt or other foreign particles. It is important to keep moisture from condensation or water from the weep holes from collecting and remaining in the bottom window track. This water attracts dirt and can lead to excessive moisture and mold growth in the home.	
<b>Maintain Other</b> (other owner specified maintenance tasks)		

**\*\* Special Attention** required after severe weather or seismic events.