



THE CONNER HOMES GUIDE

WELCOME HOME

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WELCOME HOME

Welcome to your new home!

Conner Homes has been delivering on the American dream for over 60 years. We take pride in creating great neighborhoods and customer experiences.

This guide has been created to help you through the purchase process and with your future home maintenance, so that not only you, but generations of people, can enjoy it for years to come. Please keep it handy and refer to it often.

Welcome to the Conner Homes family!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ML', with a stylized, flowing script.

Michael Lorenz

President

Conner Homes



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CHAPTER 1

Welcome to Conner Homes

Congratulations on your decision to join the Conner Homes family of over 6,000 homeowners throughout the Puget Sound. Locally owned and operated since 1959, Conner Homes has a legacy of building great homes, communities, and customer experiences.

Together we will endeavor to make your home buying experience the best it can be. Your Conner Homes Sales Representative will be your main point of contact for all information and questions you might have.

Weekly phone calls and communication with your Sales Representative will keep you informed of the steps to receiving the keys to your new home.

CHAPTER 2

Financing Your Home

Your Lender is a key component in the process. You may choose any Lender you wish to work with, but by choosing one of Conner Homes trusted lenders, you will have the benefit of them knowing our processes, timelines and people.

Regardless of which lender you choose, we will want to have a clear understanding of the status of your loan. If you choose to use your own lender, it is imperative that you are contacting them directly as well.

The following is a general idea of what documents may be required for your mortgage loan.

Loan Application Checklist

- ☐ Property Information/Address
- ☐ Purchase Agreement: Include legal description of property
- ☐ Personal Contact Information
- ☐ Social Security Number and driver's license for each borrower
- ☐ Home address for the last 2 years
- ☐ Divorce decree or separation agreements (if applicable)
- ☐ Trust Agreement (if applicable)
- ☐ Power of Attorney (if applicable)
- ☐ Documentation of current residency status
- ☐ Name, address, and phone number of landlord (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- ☐ Paystubs and/or proof of funds
- ☐ W-2 forms for the last 2 years

From the loan side, it is very important that your financial condition remain the same until closing. Large purchases or changes in your credit can often disrupt the home purchase process. In addition, lenders need a great deal of documentation and it sometimes feels daunting. This is all part of the process.

Your loan officer will give you a list of what will be needed to fund your loan, but typically there are specific additional documents that an underwriter will require closer to closing. Being quick to respond is imperative to keeping escrow and your closing on track.

Some Important Timelines



CHAPTER 3

Options and Selections

In most cases, the home you are purchasing has been completed. The beautiful features and finishes have been hand selected by a professional interior designer. However, you may have some options remaining to choose. Those options can either be paid for up front; collected at close of escrow; or financed into the purchase price of your home. See your Sales Representative to learn what options may be available to you.



CHAPTER 4

Construction and Safety

With over 60 years of homebuilding in the Pacific Northwest, Conner Homes has crafted over 6,000 homes in our region. From the very first home in 1959, the Conner brand has stood for quality, character and community. Our experience tells us what is important in building a new home locally, and we do those extra things that make a difference. Our attention to detail comes from decades of knowing what is important to homeowners. By now, you've no doubt learned that about us.

Each new home is a unique hand-crafted product with over 7,800 components. During the several months it takes to build your home, the efforts of many people come together to produce it. Because products and manufacturers are constantly making changes often due to supply chain availability, the final product may vary slightly from the model home(s) you visited or from other homes in the community. Rest assured, however, that those products or methods of construction will be of equal or better quality.

Safety is a top priority for Conner Homes – for our employees, our vendors, and for you, our homebuyer. While we are building your home, we expect and command a safe work environment at all times. Visits to homes under construction can only be done while accompanied by a Conner Homes Representative. During any visits to homes under construction, safety policies must be adhered to, including wearing a hard hat, protective eye-wear and hard-toed shoes. Children are absolutely not allowed in any area under construction.

Our vendor partnerships run very deep and long. We have a tremendous amount of confidence in and loyalty from those trades men and women who built your home, many of whom we have worked with for decades. To ensure the highest-possible standard of construction, only Conner Homes authorized suppliers, vendors and employees are permitted to perform work in the home. In addition, suppliers and vendors cannot enter into an agreement on your behalf, nor may you make any modifications or hire any contractors to perform work on the home prior to closing.

CHAPTER 5

The Conner Difference

Our Commitment to “Earth Sense”

- Construction waste recycling program and engineered lumber packages for reduced waste
- LED lighting for energy savings
- CRI Green Label carpeting, low VOC paints and whole house ventilation system for better indoor air quality
- Water-saving showerheads, toilets, and kitchen & bath faucets
- High-efficiency Energy Star appliances and Furnaces
- Low E windows and sliding doors
- Communities with enhanced buffer areas and tree retention
- Formaldehyde-free insulation
- Energy efficient water heaters

Smart Home Features

- Wi-Fi- enabled thermostat
- Smart garage door opener with battery backup
- Wireless access points
- Cat 6-E Ethernet wire for faster and more reliable internet connection
- Wi-Fi transparent Smart Panel – for stronger WiFi signal while conveniently hiding away the internet providers' equipment
- Combination USB outlets in kitchen and master bedroom for charging devices
- Optional Deako Smart Lighting Packages – allowing control of your lights from any phone, tablet or voice control
- Optional electric vehicle charging outlet space

*Disclaimer: Features will vary by community

It Starts with Detailed Preparation

- A foundation with footings at the front porch to prevent settling
- Crawlspace with added drainage measures to keep water out in the rainy seasons
- Attic and crawl ventilation designed to 150% of the code required which allows better air flow to remove excess heat in the summer and moisture in the winter
- Welded corner flashings at roof to wall which creates a waterproof assembly where the siding and roofing meet

The Use of Quality Materials

- Double corner paper during siding which creates a better water resistant barrier behind the siding
- Hardie Board siding – post consumer recycled 100% fire and insect resistant
- Added insulation around furnaces near interior walls to reduce noise
- OSB flooring and sheathing - made from recycled wood products

And Those Extra Details

- Oversized windows for plenty of daylight
- Yard drains to maintain proper drainage
- Fenced backyards
- In-wall dryer box in laundry room which allows the connection for the dryer hose to be recessed and the dryer to be installed close to the wall
- TV wall mount backing above fireplace for ease of flat screen TV installation after move in wall
- A conduit sleeve under driveway for future irrigation and low volt lighting installation
- 4 step, multi-point quality inspections by Conner Homes' Construction Managers to ensure the highest standards in delivery

CHAPTER 6

The New Home Orientation

Your Sales Representative will provide you with a date for your New Home Orientation (a requirement of the Purchase and Sale Agreement). Orientations are scheduled Monday through Friday at either 10 am or 2 pm, typically one week prior to the closing date. Our Customer Care Representative will meet you at the home at the scheduled time, and the Orientation will last approximately 60-90 minutes.

The purpose of the New Home Orientation is to present you with the completed home and familiarize you with its use and care. The Orientation is not intended to be an “inspection”. Prior to your Orientation, Conner Homes has done several quality checks to ensure your home is complete to its performance standards.

The New Home Orientation will include the discussion of detailed information related to the home that will require your undivided and at times, hands on, attention. Accordingly, it's important to limit the number of people attending

the Orientation to just you. We realize that you are excited about your new home and want to show it off to friends and family; simply put however, this is not the time. The appropriate group of attendees for the Orientation process is the primary homeowners and, if necessary for language assistance only, a translator or your real estate agent. We understand that obtaining childcare for children can be difficult; however, we strongly encourage you to make arrangements for your children to not be present during the Orientation as it will make for a much simpler and more enriching experience for you.

Our Orientation consultant will be able to familiarize you with your home, its features, and Conner Homes' service processes, but they will not be able to go into detail about items specifically related to your Purchase and Sale Agreement. Any questions regarding these items should be directed to your Sales Representative.

CHAPTER 7

Preparing to Close

As your closing date nears, be sure to stay in close contact with your lender and your Conner Homes Sales Representative for a smooth and timely closing. Your lender in particular will most likely need additional information from you to prepare the loan documents for escrow. The final days before closing are the busiest!

You will need to notify all applicable utility companies of your move so that service is provided in your name. Contact these companies as soon as possible to avoid any interruption of service. Cable and phone companies require the most lead time, especially for new home construction, so we recommend you contact them right after the purchase and sale has been mutually signed. Unfortunately, we as the builder have no ability to control or influence utility time frames.

Signing at Escrow

Once the Escrow company has all the final loan documentation, you will be scheduled for a closing appointment at the Title Company to sign the documents with an escrow agent. An escrow agent is a neutral third party

whose job is to facilitate the transfer of the title to the home under the terms and conditions of the Purchase and Sale Agreement. The signing appointment typically occurs approximately 1-3 days before the scheduled closing date and requires you to bring a cashier's check or do a wire transfer in addition to signing the documentation.

The Closing Date

On the anticipated day of closing, you will meet with a Conner Homes representative to review any items that may have needed correction from your New Home Orientation. Once your loan has funded and we receive recording numbers, you have officially closed escrow and can receive the keys to your new home. Because we have to wait for recording numbers from the County, key delivery typically occurs between 3:30 and 5:30 pm weekdays. Your Sales Representative will communicate any specific move-in restrictions or instructions specifically for your community. Be sure to have a back-up plan for moving in the event that recording does not occur in time and is moved to the next day.

CHAPTER 8

Conner Homes Limited Warranty

As part of your Purchase and Sale Agreement, you received a copy of the Limited Warranty, which outlines the warranty coverage on your new home. The Limited Warranty is separate from and excludes coverage for consumer products (such as appliances) that are typically covered by a manufacturer's warranty. These manufacturer warranties often require you to register your appliance or product, and can typically be found online – or in the package of warranty information we will store for you in your kitchen drawer.

Conner Homes takes great pride in the homes we build. Your new home is constructed with quality, energy-efficient materials and installed by trusted vendor partners under careful supervision. We stand by the quality standards we used to deliver your home,

and that shows in our commitment to warranty service. However, as mentioned earlier, it is important to remember that a new home is built from thousands of components, relies on dozens of human hands, and takes months to complete. If an error occurs, our new home warranty is our promise to you that we will stand behind our workmanship.

Warranty Service Requests are coordinated through our Customer Care Department after you log in to the homeowner portal as directed in the email you will receive from our Customer Care Team 3 days post close. It is very important that **all service requests come through the portal** so we can track them through completion. Even when you see a Conner Homes representative in your neighborhood and think it might just be a small request, it must go through the portal.



CHAPTER 9

Welcome to Your New Home

You just purchased a new home, how exciting! Now how to take care of it? This remainder of guide is intended to help you familiarize yourself with the operation and maintenance of your new home. Inspecting your home regularly and following good maintenance practices are the best way to protect the investment you've made. Chapter 10 includes important seasonal home maintenance that you should pay particularly close attention to in order to avoid costly repairs.

Please be sure to read all operation and maintenance manuals that are left in your home at closing, as this manual is meant to supplement, not replace, the manufacturers' information.

In order to maintain the warranty provided with your home, we suggest

any additional construction be performed by a licensed contractor. Always be sure to obtain guidelines from a licensed engineer, apply for necessary permits, and comply with all codes and safety requirements. You will also want to contact your homeowner's association board before making any changes to the exterior of your home (if applicable).

Most products referred to in the following pages may be found at home improvement or hardware stores. Many areas of home maintenance (such as electrical work, entering an attic, or climbing on roofs and ladders) are best left to the professionals. Always use licensed contractors for any tasks you feel uncomfortable performing. Saving a few dollars is never worth a trip to the hospital.



CHAPTER 10

New Home Maintenance

APPLIANCES

Read and follow all manufacturers' instructions for the use and maintenance of each appliance in your home. Mail warranty registration cards directly to the manufacturer or register online when possible. Keep manuals available for reference.

Manufacturer's Service

If a problem arises with an appliance, contact customer service using the information listed in the manufacturer's warranty.

When reporting warranty items to the appliance manufacturer, be prepared to supply the following details:

- Date of purchase (your closing date)
- Serial and model numbers (found on a metal plate or sticker inside or outside of each appliance)
- Detailed description of the problem

Appliances are covered under the manufacturers' warranty, not Conner Homes'.

ASPHALT/CONCRETE

Asphalt is a flexible and specialized surface. Over time, the effects of weather and earth movement will cause minor settling and cracks. These are normal reactions to the elements and do not constitute improperly installed asphalt or defective material.

Chemical Spills

Asphalt is a petroleum product. Gasoline, oil, turpentine, and other petroleum products can dissolve or damage its surface. Wash spills with soap and water, then rinse thoroughly.

ATTIC

The attic space is neither designed for nor intended for storage. Access to this area is provided for maintenance of mechanical equipment and fire suppression plumbing that may traverse the attic space, as well as inspection access. When performing needed tasks in the attic, use caution and avoid stepping off wood beams onto the drywall. This can result in personal injury or damage to the ceiling below.

The compression of attic insulation can cause a loss in energy efficiency.

CABINETS

Expect differences in grain and color between and within cabinet components due to natural variations in wood and the way stain is absorbed. After time, the sun's UV rays will affect the color of these surfaces.

Cleaning

Cabinets may be cleaned with a damp cloth and dried immediately.

Hinges

If hinges catch or drawer glides become sluggish, a small amount of silicone lubricant may improve performance.

Moisture

Damage to cabinet surfaces and warping can result from operating appliances that generate large amounts of moisture (such as a rice cooker). When operating such appliances, place them in a location that is not directly under a cabinet.

The finish material is water resistant, but not waterproof. Water spilled on the cabinets, self-edge, or back splash should be wiped off immediately. If water is allowed to sit on the lacquer, it will eventually damage the finish.

CARPET

Regular care can add years to the life of your carpet. Carpet wears out due to foot traffic and dirt particles that get trampled deep into the carpet fibers beyond the suction of the vacuum. The dirt particles act like sandpaper, wearing down the fibers and dulling the carpet. The most important thing you can do to protect your carpet is to vacuum it

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frequently, especially in heavy traffic areas. A vacuum cleaner with a beater-bar agitates the carpet and is more effective in bringing dirt to the surface for easy removal. We also recommend having your carpet regularly cleaned by a professional.

Crushing

Furniture and traffic may crush a carpet's pile fibers. Heavy traffic areas such as halls and stairways are more susceptible to wear and crushing. Frequent vacuuming in high-traffic areas and furniture cups or glides under heavy pieces of furniture can help prevent this. Rotating your furniture to change the traffic pattern in a room promotes more even wear. Some carpets resist matting and crushing because of their level of fiber, but this does not imply nor guarantee that matting or crushing won't occur. This is considered normal wear.

Fading

All carpets will slowly lose some color due to natural and artificial forces in the environment. You can delay this process by vacuuming frequently, regularly changing air filters in heating and air conditioning systems, keeping humidity and room temperature from getting too high, and reducing sunlight exposure with window coverings.

Filtration

If interior doors are kept closed for prolonged periods while the furnace, air conditioning systems, or whole house fan are operating, air circulation from the closed room will flow through the small space at the bottom of the door, forcing the air over the carpet fibers. These in turn act as a filter, catching particulate pollution. Over time, a noticeable stain will develop at the threshold. The same effect can be seen over time at walls, staircases, and floor ducting for heating and air-conditioning. Leaving inside doors open as much as possible and vacuuming the edges of rooms and stairways regularly will help prevent filtration lines from appearing. Keeping the air as clean as possible by regularly cleaning and replacing heater and air conditioner filters is another good preventative measure.

Rippling

High humidity may cause rippling. If the carpet remains rippled after the humidity has left, have a professional re-stretch the carpeting.

Seams

Carpet usually comes in 12-foot widths, making seams necessary in most rooms. The more dense and uniform the carpet texture, the more visible the seams will be.

Shedding

New carpeting sheds bits of fiber for a period of time. Eventually these loose fibers are removed by vacuuming.

Stains

No carpet is stain proof. Wipe spills and clean stains immediately. For best results, blot or dab any spill or stain, avoid rubbing, then follow manufacturer recommendations for treatment.

CAULKING

On the exterior of your home, time and weather will shrink and dry materials and caulking so that it no longer provides a good seal. All interior caulk exposed to moisture is especially vulnerable as well. Check all areas with caulking on a regular basis and make needed repairs immediately. Read the manufacturer instructions carefully to be certain that you select an appropriate caulk for the intended purpose.

CERAMIC TILE

Caulking

The caulking between the tub decks, countertop and the wall, along the joint at the backsplash and around the sink may shrink, leaving a slight gap. Maintaining a good seal in these locations is important to keep moisture from reaching the wood under the tiles and to prevent warping. If cracks develop in areas where water can penetrate, they should be recaulked immediately.

Cleaning

Ceramic tile is one of the easiest floor coverings to maintain; simply vacuum when needed. Occasionally a wet mopping with warm water may be appropriate. If you feel a cleaning agent is required, use any nonabrasive soap, detergent or tile cleaner. Abrasive cleaners may permanently dull the finish.

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CONCRETE FLATWORK

By maintaining proper drainage, you protect your home's foundation and the concrete (the basement floor, porch, patio, driveway, garage floor, and sidewalks). These are not a structural (load-bearing) element of the home and are not covered by the structural warranty.

Cleaning

We recommend blowing or sweeping to keep exterior concrete clean. If washing is necessary, do this when temperatures are moderate.

Cracks

Expansion/Control joints are installed to limit cracking, but will not completely prevent it. Cracking of concrete flatwork is normal and is the result of temperature changes that cause expansion and contraction or settling of the subsoil.

Heavy Vehicles

Do not permit heavy vehicles such as moving vans or concrete trucks to drive on your concrete walk or driveway.

Ice, Snow, and Chemicals

Driving or parking on snow creates ice, which magnifies the effects of snow on concrete surfaces. Remove ice and snow from concrete slabs as promptly as possible after snowstorms. Protect concrete from abuse by chemical agents such as pet urine, fertilizers, radiator overflow, repeated hosing, or deicing agents such as road salt that can drip from vehicles. All of these items can cause chipping and/or staining of concrete.

COUNTERTOPS

Laminate

Use a cutting board to protect your counters and knives when you cut or chop. Protect laminate counter from extremely hot pots and pans. Keep the surface dry, as moisture can cause damage to the laminated plastic. Avoid abrasive cleaners that may damage the luster of the surface.

Natural Stone Care (Includes Granite, Marble, Quartz, Slate, Travertine, & Limestone)

CARE	STONE	PRODUCT	DETAILS
Applying Sealant	ALL	511 Impregnator	Natural stone is porous. Sealant should be applied to all interior natural stone surfaces (including grout) upon move in, then every 3 to 6 months. Before application, ensure surfaces are clean and dry. Apply product in the evening to allow for curing during the night. See directions on bottle for further details.
Daily Cleaning	ALL	Dish Soap or Other Mild Detergents	Dish soap works well for daily cleaning. Towel dry counters thoroughly and squeegee after every shower to prevent water spots. Avoid products that are abrasive, contain bleach, or are highly acidic as they will strip sealant and scratch the surface.
Stain Removal	GRANITE	Bleach Wipes	Acids and oils create stains that can be lifted using bleach wipes. Wipe stained area and allow it to dry completely. Repeat as necessary. Once stain has been removed, reapply sealer to the entire surface of the countertop, not just the affected area.
	MARBLE, QUARTZ, SLATE, TRAVERTINE, LIMESTONE	Mira Clean	Follow manufacturer's instructions.

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CRAWL SPACE

The crawl space is not intended as a storage area. Crawl spaces are graded to create a positive flow, allowing water to discharge into the drainage system and the exterior of the structure. Inspect occasionally to verify water is draining properly within 48 hours after rain stops.

DAMP-PROOFING IN BASEMENT

Your basement foundation walls are sprayed with a damp-proofing material. Although we make every effort to assure a dry basement, you may notice some dampness during times of excessive moisture. Careful landscape maintenance and drainage away from the foundation will also protect your basement.

DECK

Plants and planters on decks should be kept raised or mobile to allow continued maintenance washing and equalize ultraviolet exposure. Install and replace protective covers on patio furniture feet as needed. Place a protective tray under grills to eliminate damage from hot grease. All items left in the same location for any length of time will result in permanent staining and fading.

Coated Decks

Your home may have an elastomeric-coated deck. The deck coating should be cleaned periodically. Remove dirt and debris by lightly scrubbing with a mild detergent solution and rinsing with clear water. Avoid using bleach as it will damage the coating. Cracks and/or ruptures in the elastomeric deck coating should be repaired as soon as they occur. Depending on the traffic and weather exposure, it is advisable to reseal the deck every four to seven years.

Stained Decks

It is recommended that you re-coat your wood deck with a wood preservative annually.

DOORS AND LOCKS

Weather stripping and thresholds occasionally require adjustment or replacement.

Door Locks

Some doors have a multi-point locking system. Lift upward on the handle to engage all latches and assure maximum security.

Interior privacy locks can be unlocked with a coin, screwdriver, or thin rod.

Hinges

You can remedy a squeaky door hinge by removing the hinge pin and applying a paraffin wax or spray silicone.

Stain & Finish Shrinkage

To ensure longer life for your exterior doors, maintain the finish by re-coating your wood door annually.

Panels of wood doors shrink and expand in response to changes in temperature and humidity. Use putty, filler, or latex caulk to fill any minor separations that develop at mitered joints in door trim. Follow with painting.

Warping

Doors are subject to shrinkage and warping. Due to natural fluctuations of humidity, they may occasionally require minor adjustments. If a door warps slightly, keeping it closed as much as possible often returns it to normal. Apply a silicone lubricant to the tracks of sliding and bi-fold doors to help them open and shut more easily.

DRYER VENTING

Keep dryer vents free of lint, debris and obstructions. Inspect and clean dryer duct annually.

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DRYWALL

Slight cracking, nail pops, or seams may be visible in walls and ceilings. These are typically caused by expansion and contraction of the framing to which the drywall is attached.

Repairs

We provide a one-time, year-end warranted drywall repair service. After that, care of drywall is the responsibility of the homeowner.

ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

Know the location of the breaker panel; it includes a main shut-off that controls all the electrical power to the home. Individual breakers control the separate circuits. Each breaker is marked to help you identify which breaker is connected to which major appliance, outlet, or other service. Should a failure occur in any part of your home, always check the breakers in the main panel box. If the breakers have not been tripped, check for a tripped GFCI in or near the room where the failure occurred.

Breakers

Circuit breakers have three positions: on, off, and tripped. When a circuit breaker trips, it must first be turned off before it can be turned on. Switching the breaker directly from tripped to on will not restore service.

Breaker Tripping

Breakers trip due to overloads caused by plugging too many appliances into the circuit, worn cords, defective appliances, or appliances with voltage requirements that are too high for the circuit.

If a circuit trips repeatedly, unplug all items connected to that circuit and reset. If it then trips when nothing is connected to it, call an electrician. If the circuit remains on, one of the items you unplugged is defective and will require repair or replacement.

AFCI (Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupters)

These are located in the electrical panel in the garage. Usually they have a colored test button on the individual breaker. AFCI's are attached to bedroom outlets and are very sensitive. If an electrical appliance cord is pulled out suddenly, the AFCI is often tripped. If you don't have power in a bedroom outlet, go to the garage, check the AFCI breakers and reset if needed.

GFCI (Ground-Fault Circuit-Interrupters) GFCI receptacles have a built in element that senses fluctuations in power. Quite simply, the GFCI is a sensitive circuit breaker. Building codes require installation of these receptacles in bathrooms, utility rooms, kitchens, garages, and outside (areas where an individual can come into contact with water while holding an electric appliance or tool). Heavy appliances such as freezers, power tools, or garage door openers may trip the GFCI breaker.

Do not plug a refrigerator or freezer into a GFCI-controlled outlet. The likelihood of the contents being ruined is high, as the GFCI could trip without being noticed for a period of time.

If a GFCI circuit has been tripped, push the reset button to return power. You may need to push the test button before pushing reset. Typically there is one reset button found in the kitchen, one in the garage, and one in a second-floor bathroom. Multiple outlets may be on the GFCI circuit, so familiarize yourself with their functions and locations. If a GFCI breaker trips during normal use, it may indicate a faulty appliance.

Buzzing

Fluorescent fixtures, doorbells, dimmers, and security systems use transformer action to operate. This sometimes causes a buzzing and is normal.

Light Bulbs on a Dimmer

Compact fluorescent bulbs are not designed to work in conjunction with dimmers, and may cause damage. Increasing the wattage of bulbs may also damage the dimmer.

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Outlets

If an outlet is not working, check first to see if it's controlled by a wall switch or GFCI. Next, check the breaker. If it's a bedroom outlet, see AFCI above.

Underground Cables

Before digging, always check the location of buried service leads by calling the local utility locating service (dial 811).

EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION

Changes in temperature and humidity cause building materials to expand and contract. Dissimilar materials expand and contract at different rates, resulting in separation between materials. It is normal to see the effects of this movement in small cracks in drywall and paint, especially where moldings meet drywall, at mitered corners, and where tile grout meets hardwood floors, tubs or sinks. Shrinkage of wood components occurs in every new home, especially during the first year. In most cases, caulk and paint are all that are needed to repair these areas.

FIRE SPRINKLER

Homes with fire suppression systems have plumbing located in the attic, under the insulation.

Most jurisdictions require fire sprinklers to be inspected annually. You will receive a notice from the city if this is the case for your home.

FIREPLACE

A slight delay between turning the switch on and the flame igniting is normal. If you notice a gas odor, immediately shut off the gas supply and report it to the gas company.

When the fireplace is new it can take up to three eight-hour burns to eliminate the smell of new equipment.

Be aware that the exterior vent cover for a direct-vent gas fireplace becomes extremely hot when the fireplace is operating.

Fireplaces with Electronic Igniters

Many fireplaces now have an electronic igniter rather than a pilot light. Inserting 2 D-Cell batteries will allow you to use your fireplace when the power is out.

Fireplaces with Pilot Lights

Excessive winds may cause a downdraft, which can blow out the pilot light, requiring you to relight it before using the fireplace.

FOUNDATION

The foundation of your home is installed according to the recommendations of a structural engineer. To protect your home's foundation, follow guidelines for installation and maintenance of landscaping and drainage.

Cracks

Surface cracks may develop which are not detrimental to the structural integrity of your home. If a crack develops in a foundation wall that allows water to come through, consult a damp proof professional.

Dampness

Due to the porous nature of concrete and presence of groundwater, basements and crawl spaces may be damp.

GARAGE OVERHEAD DOOR

Lubrication

Oil door rollers, bearings and hinges as needed using silicone lubricant or light oil. Avoid over-lubricating to prevent drips on vehicles or the concrete floor. Do not lubricate plastic parts. At the same time, check to see that all hardware is tight and operating as intended without binding or scraping.

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Safety

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe and reliable operation. Do not allow anyone except the operator near the door when it is in motion. Keep hands and fingers away from all parts of the door except the handle. Do not allow children to play with or around the door. For your safety, have any needed adjustments made by a qualified specialist. Have the door inspected by a professional garage door technician after any significant impact to the door. The electronic sensor on either side of the door provides a safety stop in the event someone crosses through the opening while the overhead door is in motion. If your garage door is not functioning, first check that the sensors are clear, as any obstruction will prevent the doors from operating.

GAS SHUT-OFFS

You will find gas shut-offs near the gas line connection to each item that operates on gas. There is a main shutoff at the meter, which requires a wrench for closing. If you suspect a gas leak, turn off the gas, leave the home and call the gas company immediately for emergency service.

GRADING AND DRAINAGE

The final grades around your home have been designed, built and field-inspected for proper drainage of your lot.

Drainage

The grade around your home should generally slope away from your foundation. Note that drainage swales (channels) do not always parallel property boundaries. Maintain the slopes around your home to permit the water to drain away from the home as rapidly as possible. This is essential to protect your foundation. Failure to do so can result in major structural damage and liability should your actions affect a neighboring property.

GROUT

Grout is used around ceramic and natural stone tile. Grout is porous and requires regular sealing and maintenance.

Grout Discoloration

Grout discoloration may happen with time and use.

Sealing Grout

All new grout needs to be sealed once you move in, and then reapplied every 3 to 6 months, depending on use. Although no product prevents stains entirely, it is intended to provide some resistance to stains.

Separations and Cracks

Separations and cracks in grout should be repaired immediately. These can be filled using premixed grout.

GUTTER AND DOWNSPOUTS Cleaning

Gutters, downspouts, and valleys should be checked periodically and cleaned annually. Materials that accumulate in gutters can slow water drainage from the roof, cause overflows, and clog downspouts and drain lines.

Ladders

Use caution when leaning ladders against gutters, as doing so may cause dents and/or scrape paint.

Leaks

If a joint between sections of gutter drips, caulk the inside joint using a commercial gutter caulking compound.

Snow and Ice

Clear excess snow from downspouts and gutters as soon as possible to allow the gutter to drain. Severe ice or snow build-up can damage gutters and potentially cause interior water damage.

New Home Maintenance

HARDWOOD FLOORS (Pre-Finished)

In daily care of hardwood floors, preventive maintenance is the primary goal.

Cleaning

Remove dust and abrasive particles on a daily basis or as needed. Use only floor cleaners designed for pre-finished floors. Avoid using a damp mop on hardwoods as excessive water causes wood to expand and can damage the floor. Using oil-based soap, vinegar and water, household detergents, ammonia based cleaners, bleach, or abrasive cleaners can damage the surface and should be avoided.

Dents and Scratches

Placing heavy furniture or dropping heavy or sharp objects on hardwood floors can result in dents and scratches. Apply floor protectors to the legs of furniture and remove high-heeled shoes to avoid some damage. Avoid using a vacuum cleaner on your hardwood floors as the beater bars can leave dents and damage the wood.

Expansion and Contraction of Wood

Wood will expand and contract seasonally. Your family living patterns: cooking, showers, laundry and pets also affect moisture levels in the home, and thus your hardwood floor. Keep the relative humidity in your home between 30-60% and the temperature between 60-75 degrees Fahrenheit to maximize wood stability. Expect some shrinkage around heat vents or any heat-producing appliances. Contraction occurs most frequently during the winter months when the heating system causes drying of the wood. This condition is typically self-corrected with the humidity of summer.

Mats and Rugs

Rugs or mats can be used to protect areas where repeated moisture could damage hardwood, especially in front of sinks, refrigerators, and entry doors. Do not allow moisture to saturate the rug. Expect discoloration under the rugs from lack of ultraviolet exposure.

HEATING AND COOLING SYSTEM

Proper maintenance of the furnace can save energy and prolong the life of the furnace. Carefully read and follow the manufacturer's literature. The guidelines here include general information only.

Cleaning

The furnace and all duct work should be professionally cleaned every 2 years.

Ductwork Noise

Some popping or pinging sounds are normal. This is the natural result of duct work heating and cooling in response to airflow as the system operates.

Filters

Filters should be changed every 3 months.

A clogged filter can slow airflow, cause cold spots in your home and damage your furnace. The filter is usually located in the garage, in the furnace closet, or in the ceiling of the second floor.

Furnace/Air Conditioning Testing

Plan a trial run early in the fall to test the furnace and another in the spring to test the air-conditioning (if applicable). It is much better to discover if service is needed in advance of the heating or cooling season.

Odor

A new heating system may emit an odor for a few moments when you first turn it on. An established system may emit an odor after being unused for an extended time. However, if you smell a strong odor of gas, turn off gas at the main shut off and call the gas company immediately.

On-Off Switch

The furnace has an on-off switch. This switch is located near the furnace or inside your breaker box. When turned off, this switch overrides all furnace commands and shuts off power to the furnace so that it can be serviced. If furnace is not operational, verify this switch is turned on.

New Home Maintenance

Registers/Vents

Experiment with the adjustable registers in your home to establish the best heat flow for your lifestyle by diverting the airflow to the area that needs more heat. You can accomplish this by partially closing the heat registers on one floor, thus sending more heat to the cooler floor. Never completely close a heat register.

Return Air Vents

For maximum comfort and efficient energy use, arrange furniture and draperies to allow unobstructed airflow from registers and to cold air returns. Registers are caulked to the drywall and should not be removed. Vacuum or wash in place with warm water and soap if needed.

Temperature/Thermostat

Depending on the style of home, temperatures can vary from floor to floor. Leaving the blower fan on in the manual position will help moderate temperatures between floors and continually filter the air.

The furnace will come on automatically when the temperature at the thermostat registers below the setting you have selected. Thermostats are calibrated to within plus or minus 5 degrees.

Electric Heat

Electric baseboard and fan heaters should be vacuumed and cleaned every 6 months. Ensure furniture, drapes, and other objects are located at least 12 inches away.

INSULATION

The effectiveness of blown insulation is diminished if it is uneven. Upon completion of any work in the attic, confirm that the insulation lays smooth and even.

IRRIGATION SYSTEM

Conduct operational checks to ensure proper performance of the system. Ensure sprinkler heads are operational and directed away from your home.

Winterize your system before the first freeze. Have the lines professionally drained and blown out in the fall to protect your system from damage caused by freezing. To ensure public water safety, cities require an annual test of the backflow device (located in the vicinity of your water meter) by a licensed technician. This should be conducted in the spring when you have a professional reactivate your irrigation system.

LANDSCAPING

It is the homeowner's responsibility to carefully maintain the yard in adherence to the requirements of your Homeowners Association. Check with your local building department and homeowners association regulations before designing, installing, or changing landscaping.

Backfill

The area excavated for your home's foundation was larger than the home to allow room to work. Some trenching was also necessary for installation of utility lines. Settling may occur, especially after prolonged or heavy precipitation, and can continue for several years. Inspect the perimeter of your home regularly for signs of settling and fill settled areas as needed to maintain drainage away from your home's foundation.

LOW VOLTAGE PANEL

Your home may be equipped with a centralized service panel. Data, telephone and cable services are run from this panel to locations throughout your home.

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MASONRY

Efflorescence

The white, powdery substance that sometimes accumulates on brick and stone surfaces is called efflorescence. This is a natural release of lime in the base of materials and cannot be prevented. In some cases, it can be removed by scrubbing with a stiff brush and vinegar. Commercial products to remove efflorescence are also available.

Tuck-Pointing

After several years, face brick or cultured stone may require repair of the mortar between the bricks or stones. This process is known as tuck-pointing.

Weep Holes

Small weep holes in the mortar along the lower row of bricks or at the base of cultured stone allow accumulated moisture from behind the bricks or stone to escape. Do not fill these holes or permit landscaping materials to cover them.

MIRRORS

Cleaning

Clean mirrors using any reliable glass cleaner that does not contain ammonia or dye. Avoid acidic cleaners and splashing water onto the mirror; either can cause the silvering to deteriorate.

MOLD MILDEW

Mildew and mold are living organisms that spread through the air in microscopic spores. They occur naturally and are found everywhere that life can be supported. They need moisture and feed on surfaces or dirt. On siding, they look like a layer of dirt.

Cleaning Exterior Material

Mold and mildew consist of a root system and a “bloom”, which must be completely removed or killed to stop growth. To kill the roots and remove the

bloom, use a fungus and algae remover in conjunction with low-pressure washing. Cold water washing alone will remove the bloom, but may actually drive the roots deeper into the finish, creating a stronger, healthier growth. Avoid phosphate based cleaners such as TSP (tri-sodium phosphate) when cleaning mold and mildew. Although TSP and other phosphate-based cleaners may be useful for removing dirt, mold and mildew thrive on the phosphates.

To treat stains which may remain after mold and mildew removal, apply a solution of 1 part household bleach and 20 parts clean water to the wall with a soft bristle brush. Rinse the wall thoroughly with clean water to remove all traces of bleach solution.

PAINT AND STAIN

Cleaning

Painted surfaces may be cleaned by gently wiping with mild soap and as little water as possible. Avoid abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, and scrub brushes. Flat paints show wash marks more easily than glossy paints. You may prefer the results obtained by touching up rather than washing.

Colors

Your paint colors are located on the provided paint touch up kits and listed separately in this binder.

Exterior

Over time, your home's exterior finish will fade and dull. To preserve the beauty and value of your home, check the painted and stained surfaces of your home's exterior annually. Repaint before chipping or wearing away of the original finish occurs; doing so will save you the cost of extensive surface preparation. Plan on refinishing the exterior surface of your home every three to five years, or as often as your paint manufacturer suggests for your area and climate.

Stain

For minor interior stain touch ups, furniture polish and stain treatments should blend in with the wood grain. Be aware that the same stain on different woods may not match.

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Touch Up

When doing paint touch ups, use a small brush or sponge, applying paint only to the damaged area. Touch ups may not match the surrounding area exactly, even if the same paint mix is used. When it is time to repaint a room, prepare the wall surfaces per the manufacturer's recommendation.

Store paint with the lids tightly in place and in a location where they are not subject to extreme temperatures.

PLUMBING

Shut-Offs

Your main water shut-off is usually located in your garage, entry closet, or in the basement storage closet. You use this shut-off for major water emergencies and maintenance. Each toilet and sink has individual water shut-off valves. Water can also be shut off directly at the meter.

Aerators

Even though your plumbing lines have been flushed to remove dirt and foreign matter, small amounts of minerals may enter the line. Aerators on the faucets strain much of this from your water. Occasional cleaning of the aerators on your faucets (normally every three to four months) will allow proper flow of water.

Cleaning Fixtures and Sinks

Avoid abrasive cleansers as they can scratch and deteriorate the finish.

Oil rubbed bronze is a living color finish and is subject to change over time.

Clean stainless steel sinks with soap and water. An occasional cleaning with a stainless steel cleaner will enhance the finish.

CLOGS

Garbage Disposals

Always use plenty of cold water when running the disposal and allow the water to

run 10-15 seconds after shutting the disposal off. Do not put meat or grease in the disposal.

Toilets

The main causes of toilet clogs are domestic items such as disposable diapers, excessive amounts of toilet paper, sanitary products, Q-tips, dental floss, and children's toys. You can usually clear clogged toilets with a plunger.

Sewer Ejector Pump - Toilets

Some homes require a sewage ejector pump for plumbing located below the main sewer line. Special attention should be taken not to flush thick quilted toilet paper, paper towels, sanitary products, disposable wipes, matches, or other items that could obstruct the pump. Some homes have an alarm attached to the sewage ejector pump which will sound if the holding tank is full. If the alarm sounds, verify that the sewage ejector pump has power before contacting a plumber. Never use this plumbing while the power is out.

Freezing Pipes

In unusually frigid weather, open cabinet doors at sinks to allow warm air to circulate around pipes. Never use an open flame to thaw a frozen pipe.

Outside faucets are frost-free hose bib mechanisms. In order for this feature to be effective, you must remove hoses during cold weather, even if the faucet is located in your garage. If a hose is left attached, the water that remains in the hose can freeze and expand back into the pipe, causing a break in the line. In unusually frigid weather or if you will be gone for an extended period in winter months, insulated hose bib covers should be installed as a preventative measure. For hose bibs that are located on unheated walls, we suggest that you remove hoses by October 31st. First, go outside to your hose bib and remove the hose. Open the faucet so the water is on. Then go to the garage and turn the hose bib water supply shut off to the OFF position. Open the valve next to the hose bib shut off to force the remaining water out of the pipe. Finally, go back outside to the hose bib, close the faucet, and cover the hose bib with an insulated cap.

Leaks

If a major plumbing leak occurs, the first step is to turn off the supply of water to

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the area involved. Then call a plumber. As a precaution, you may want to shut off the main water supply.

Low Pressure

Occasional cleaning of the aerators on your faucets will allow proper flow of water. Also, showers and faucets may be equipped with pressure reduction valves. Although the water department controls the overall water pressure, it is typically reduced to 60 PSI with a pressure regulator in your home.

Running Toilet

Jiggle the handle to ensure the chain has not become tangled. If that doesn't work, open the tank and look for obstructions. If running continues, contact a plumber.

Toilet Tank Care

Do not use drop-in toilet bowl cleaners in the tank because they damage the plumbing fixtures.

Waste Lines

Plumbing waste lines have a water trap that prevents sewer gas from entering the home. Depending on home and climate conditions, this water may evaporate after weeks without use. To prevent gasses from entering the home, be sure to run water and flush toilets on a regular basis.

Water Saving Devices

Current regulation requires that toilets use no more than 1.6 gallons of water per flush.

Shower heads are allowed by law to use only 2.5 gallons of water per minute. Flow restrictors are manufactured into all shower heads and most faucets.

ROOF

The composition shingles on your roof do not require any treatment or sealer.

Clean the Roof

Moss and tree debris should be removed, but DO NOT PRESSURE WASH YOUR

ROOF. Consult a professional to do the work. Neglecting this maintenance can result in interior leaks and damage.

Leaks

If a leak occurs, contact a licensed roofer.

Severe Weather

After severe storms, do a visual inspection of the roof for damages. If you find missing pieces or damage, contact a roofing company for repair.

SIDING

Siding expands and contracts in response to changes in humidity and temperature. Slight waves are visible in siding under certain weather conditions; this cannot be entirely eliminated.

Wood or wood-simulated siding requires routine refinishing. The timing will vary with climate conditions. Refer to siding manufacturer for use and care details.

SMOKE/CARBON MONOXIDE DELECTORS

Detectors are hard-wired for primary power and contain a battery backup that should be changed annually. If after replacing the batteries the detector continues to beep, push the “hush” button for 20 seconds. This will allow it to properly reset.

STUCCO

Visually inspect stucco wall systems, sealant joints, and flashing at least twice a year (Spring and Fall) and replace failed caulking.

Cleaning Stucco

We recommend using a professional stucco cleaning service. However, to remove ordinary dirt and environmental contaminants, stucco may be cleaned with a mild detergent solution or commercial-grade cleaner.

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VENTILATION

Building codes today result in homes that are built tighter than ever. This saves energy but also creates responsibilities for the homeowner. Condensation, cooking odors, indoor pollutants, radon, and carbon monoxide may all accumulate in your home if not properly replaced with fresh air. Your attention to fresh air ventilation and humidity is important to both health and safety. It's recommended that you keep at least one window open a small amount at all times.

Fans and HVAC

Always operate the kitchen exhaust fan when you are cooking, the utility room fan when washing or drying clothes, and the bath fans when bathrooms are in use.

The HVAC/Ventilation system specific to your home has unique requirements.

___Homes with whole house fan ventilation and electric heat or a forced-air gas furnace:

In addition to your whole-house fan and heat system, your home contains fresh air window ports. These additions to your windows allow fresh air to be drawn and circulated into your home when the whole house fan is running.

Your whole house fan should be operated 8-12 hours per day. Several shorter ventilation periods spread throughout the day will provide better air quality than a single long period. At least one of these periods should be during the night, as lower temperatures and additional people at home will result in higher relative humidity. The whole house fan should also be switched on manually when experiencing periods of high moisture in the home.

___Homes with forced air gas furnaces and integrated fresh air:

A timer attached to the furnace or mounted in the utility room is set based on the size of the home and the fan size of the furnace. Generally the integrated fresh air system will operate in 5 minute cycles several times per day to draw fresh air into your home. This system will be pre-set upon move-in and should not be modified. During periods of high moisture generating activities, spot ventilation fans should be turned on in areas to control higher humidity levels.

Vents to Outside

Building codes require attic and crawl space ventilation to minimize accumulation of moisture. Attic ventilation occurs through roof vents in the soffit (the underside of the overhangs) and on gable ends, as applicable. Homes with crawl spaces include vents in the foundation or wall vents. Keep vents clear at all times.

VINYL FLOORING

Avoid using cleaning or finishing agents on the new floor until the adhesive has thoroughly set. This will take about two weeks.

Moving Furniture and Appliances

Moving large furniture and appliances across vinyl floor covering can result in tears and wrinkles. Install coasters on furniture legs to prevent permanent damage. If you damage the vinyl floor, it can be patched by professionals.

No Wax

The vinyl flooring installed in your home is the no-wax type. No wax means the vinyl has a clear, tough coating that provides both a shiny appearance and a durable surface. However, even this surface will scuff or mark.

Seams

All brands and types of vinyl flooring may separate slightly due to shrinkage. Seams can lift or curl if excessive moisture is allowed to penetrate, so avoid getting large amounts of water on the floor. You can use a special caulking at tub or floor joints to seal seams at those locations.

WATER HEATER

Gas

Always keep flammables clear of gas appliances. Vacuum the area around a gas fired water heater to prevent dust from interfering with proper flame combustion.

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No Hot Water

If you discover that you have no hot water, check the pilot, temperature setting, and water supply valve before calling for service.

Flush Hot Water Tank

Review and follow manufacturer's timetable and instructions for draining several gallons of water from the bottom of the water heater. This reduces the build-up of mineral deposits from the water, prolonging the life of the tank and saving energy dollars.

Pilot

Be sure there is water in the tank before lighting the gas pilot. Always turn off the gas before shutting off the cold water supply to the tank. Wear eye protection when lighting the pilot.

Extended Absence

While away from home for an extended period of time, set the temperature to its lowest point and leave the pilot lit.

Tankless System

Check the in-line screen filter periodically for debris (time between filter checks will be dependent on water quality).

WINDOW, SCREEN, DOORS

Cleaning

Clean metal or vinyl surfaces with warm, clean water. After each cleaning apply a silicone lubricant to track locations. Clean glass as needed with vinegar and water, a commercial glass cleaner, or the window manufacturer's recommended product.

Condensation

Condensation on interior surfaces of the window and frame is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures. Your family's lifestyle

controls the humidity level within your home. If condensation appears between panes, contact a window supplier for replacement.

Sticking

If sticking occurs or excessive pressure is required to open or close a window, screen, or patio door, check for proper alignment and apply a silicone lubricant to the track locations as needed.

Weep Holes

In heavy rains, or high humidity within the home, water may collect in the bottom channel of window frames. Weep holes provide access for water to escape to the outside. Keep the bottom window channels and weep holes free of dirt and debris for proper operation.

WOOD TRIMS

Due to changes in temperature and humidity, expansion and contraction in wood trim is normal. For maximum stability, maintain the relative humidity in your home between 30%-60%.

CHAPTER 11

Seasonal Home Maintenance

A regular schedule of seasonal maintenance can put a stop to the most common and costly problems before they occur; reducing the chance of future repairs. Regular preventive maintenance pays off in peace of mind, cost savings, durability, and even resale value. The maintenance schedule presented here is a suggested general guide for the care of your new home.

While most maintenance is seasonal, you should always be on the lookout for safety hazards such as loose handrails, lifting or buckling flooring, inoperative smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and so on. Be conscious of the air quality inside your home by ensuring air vents indoors and outdoors (intake, exhaust and forced air) are clear of debris or snow, and check and clean range hood filters on a monthly basis.

FALL

MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

- Have the furnace or heating system serviced by a qualified service company every two years or as recommended by the manufacturer.
- If you have central air conditioning installed in your home, make sure that the drain pan under the cooling coil (mounted in the furnace plenum) is clean and draining properly.
- Vacuum electric heaters to remove dust.
- Remove the grilles on forced-air systems and vacuum inside the ducts.
- Check to see that bathroom exhaust fans and range hoods are operating properly.
- Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and replace batteries annually.
- Ensure windows and skylights close tightly; repair or replace weather-stripping if needed.
- Ensure all doors to the outside shut tightly and check other doors for ease of use. Repair or replace weather-stripping if needed.
- Ensure that the ground around your home slopes away from the foundation so that water drains away from your home.
- Clean leaves from roof and gutters and test downspouts to ensure proper drainage from the roof.
- Drain and store outdoor hoses. Reference the Plumbing section for details. Have irrigation systems drained by a professional to prevent damage from freezing.

WINTER**MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST**

- Keep gutters clear of ice and debris.
- Clean drains in dishwasher, sinks, bathtubs and shower stalls.
- Test plumbing shut-off valves to ensure they are working and to prevent them from seizing.
- Clean dryer ducts and surrounding areas of any lint build up to reduce the risk of fire.

SPRING**MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST**

- De-winterize landscape irrigation. Reference the Irrigation System section for details.
- Open valve to outside hose connection if applicable.
- Check for and seal off any holes in exterior cladding that could be an entry point for small pests.
- Check gutters and downspouts for loose joints and secure attachment to your home, clear any obstructions, and ensure water flows away from your foundation.
- Clear all drainage and gutters of debris.
- Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and replace batteries if needed.

SUMMER**MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST**

- Touch up paint on windows and doors as needed.
- Lubricate door hinges and tighten any loose screws as needed.
- Check for and replace damaged caulking and weather-stripping.
- Check for overhanging tree branches that may need to be removed.
- Check exterior wood siding and trim for signs of deterioration; clean, replace or refinish if needed.
- Note the condition of shingles for possible repair or replacement and examine roof flashings, especially at roof joints, for any signs of cracking or leakage.





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