

# HOME MAINTENANCE TIPS

*from 2-10 Home Buyers Warranty*

## **Roof:**

- Do not walk on the roof, but rather inspect it from the edges. If you must walk on the roof, do so very carefully.
- Snow, ice and high winds can damage a roof. Every spring and after a heavy storm, you should check for water stains under the overhang and in the attic. Loose or damaged shingles should be replaced.
- Check for water stains in the attic, and also under the overhang after heavy storms and each spring.
- Check the flashing around the chimney, in the roof valleys and against any walls to see that it's secure and watertight.

## **Gutters and Downspouts:**

- It is very important that you provide or maintain splash blocks and downspout extensions so they are in a position to carry roof water a minimum of five (5) feet away from the foundation.
- Make sure the gutters are sloping properly, allowing water to flow freely to the downspout.
- Keep the gutters and downspouts clear of leaves and debris.
- Keep gutters and downspouts in good repair.

## **Floors:**

- Wood floors should be mopped or vacuumed.
- Vinyl floors should be swept, mopped or vacuumed regularly. You can clean these floors with diluted detergent or a recommended floor cleaner.
- Slate or clay tile should be sealed to protect and prevent staining. Use a diluted detergent or tile cleaner to clean.
- Carpeting should be vacuumed regularly and shampooed when needed. Avoid excessive wetting when shampooing.

## **Windows:**

- For lightly soiled windows, use a solution of one cup of vinegar to one gallon of warm water.
- For heavily soiled windows, use a solution of one tablespoon of household ammonia and three tablespoons of denatured alcohol or vinegar to one quart of warm water.

## **Doors:**

- If you have a door that sticks, check to see if the hinges are aligned and tightly screwed to the frame and door. If they still stick, wrap a piece of sandpaper around a block of wood and sand those edges that stick. Seal or repaint the sanded area. This will prevent moisture, which can cause warping from being absorbed by the wood. Tops and bottoms of doors should be sealed or painted.
- Inspect all exterior doors each spring and fall. Check for wear and to see that weather stripping is tight and free from defects.

**NIBLOCK**  
**HOMES**

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### **Cleaning Walls:**

- Some painted surfaces may be cleaned with a mild solution of detergent and water. If you are not sure about the washability of the paint, try washing in an inconspicuous place.
- Glazed brick or tile should be washed with soap and water. Use a non-abrasive household cleaner to remove stains.

### **Drains:**

- Never pour grease down your drains. Keep hair and food out of the drain. Do not use any kind of lye if you have a plastic pipe system.

Every month or so you should:

- Run hot water down the drain.
- Add three tablespoons of baking soda.
- Add a little hot water and let stand for 15 minutes
- Flush with hot water.

### **Garbage Disposal:**

- Always use only cold water when the disposal is operating.
- Occasionally grind some ice cubes and lemon peels to clean and freshen the disposal.
- Always read the manufacturer's maintenance manual.

### **Cabinets:**

- Do not clean with abrasive cleaners; use a "soft-scrub" type cleaner.
- Wood cabinets should be cleaned and waxed just like fine furniture.
- Plastic-coated cabinets may be cleaned with a detergent solution.

### **Counter Tops:**

- Counter tops should be cleaned with a "soft-scrub" cleaner.
- Although most counter tops are heat and stain resistant, you should not place hot objects directly on the counter top.
- Formica tops can be cut easily, so a chopping block should be used.

### **Bathroom:**

Regular cleaning of fixtures prevents a soap scum build-up. Never use a harsh cleaner, but rather:

- Use a glass cleaner for chrome or brass.
- Use a "soft-scrub" cleaner for marble and cultured marble.
- Use a stiff brush to clean grout. For heavy stains, use a commercial grout cleaner.
- RegROUT if necessary to prevent water from seeping behind the tile and into the walls.

### **Heating and Cooling Systems:**

Today's energy costs are high enough, so by following the guidelines listed below, you can help keep the costs down:

- Set your thermostat at 78 degrees in the summer and at 68 degrees in the winter. Constant changing of the thermostat wastes energy.
- Close registers and doors in rooms not normally used.
- Hot air rises and cold air falls. With this in mind, in the summer you should close some downstairs registers and open some upstairs registers, reverse the process in the winter.
- Keep registers and cold-air returns free from obstacles, such as drapes, furniture and other items.
- Check the filter in your heating system monthly to see if it should be cleaned or changed. The filter should be checked more often if there is a lot of traffic in and out of the house.

**Landscaping:**

- Be sure the ground slopes away from the foundation.
- Be sure splash blocks and downspout extensions are in place and carry roof water away from the foundation at least five (5) feet.
- Do not allow sprinklers to hit the area within four (4) feet of your foundation.
- Do not allow puddles to form near the foundation.

**Winterize:**

- Check the furnace. Clean or replace filters and check for proper operation.
- Drain water from outside faucets and put away the hose.
- Clean out gutters and downspouts, as clogged gutters and downspouts can cause "ice damming," which can result in damage to the roof.
- Check and repair weather stripping and caulking.

Mildew is a fungus and can be removed by using three tablespoons of Tri- Sodium Phosphate (TSP) and one-and-a-half cups of household bleach in one gallon of water. (ALWAYS WEAR RUBBER GLOVES.) Allow seven days to dry before repainting.

**Remember, failure to maintain your home can become costly.**

*For new homes only:***Landscaping and Grading:**

There are many areas across the country that contain active soils that can expand and shrink when the soils become wet. It is critical to the success of the home's foundation to keep the soils around the foundation at a consistent moisture content level.

Your builder has provided your yard with a final grade, which is designed to drain your yard and keep excess water away from the foundation. When you landscape, you must maintain this grade, or if you hire a landscaping firm, make sure they also maintain this grade. To protect the foundation and prevent leaky basements:

- Keep water drainage swales clear of leaves and debris. This allows for a proper root system and helps keep water away from the foundation.
- Do not allow sprinklers and sprinkler systems to wet the area within four (4) feet of your foundation or cause puddles near the foundation.
- Keep the watering of shrubbery and plants near the foundation to a minimum. Keep in mind that under your warranty you are responsible for maintaining the proper grades that will help keep water away from the foundation.

**Condensation:**

During the construction of your home, gallons of water were used in the foundation, basement floor, paint and even in the bathroom grout. Daily use of the home also creates moisture, so dampness in a new home is unavoidable. About one year should be allowed for your home to "cure." High temperatures of unnatural heating to help speed up "curing" can cause warping of wood products and other types of damage. You should always:

- Use exhaust fans in the bathroom, kitchen and any utility area.
- Open basement windows when it is warm and dry and close them when it rains.