



HOME CARE MANUAL

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Introduction to Caring for Your Home

Habitat EJC Standards

Habitat for Humanity of East Jefferson County (Habitat EJC) builds affordable, accessible, durable, and sustainable homes to a high standard using quality products. Your home has been constructed with materials that meet our specifications¹ for quality and durability. All labor by volunteers and experienced craftspeople is performed under our supervision to attain the best possible results.

Homeowner Responsibility

Habitat EJC is proud of the product we build and our aim is to create lasting value. This can only be achieved in partnership with you, the Homeowner, as you take on the homeownership responsibility of properly maintaining your home and all of its components. Periodic maintenance is necessary because of many factors, including normal wear and tear, the inherent characteristics of various materials used in your home, and normal service required by the mechanical systems. Environmental conditions and fluctuations in temperature and humidity also have impacts on your home.

Many times, a minor adjustment or repair done immediately by you can remedy the condition before it becomes more serious, time-consuming, and costly to repair. **Negligence of routine maintenance can possibly void applicable limited warranty coverage on specific elements, appliances, and systems in your new home.** General homeowner maintenance is essential to providing a quality home for a lifetime.

Home Care Manual Support

This Home Care Manual, along with the manufacturer's operation and maintenance manuals, provide you with information you can utilize to properly maintain your home. The subjects covered include major components of Habitat EJC homes. The manual may cover topics or items not present in your home. There may be items requiring maintenance in your home that are not covered in this manual. We recognize that it is impossible to anticipate and describe every attention that may be needed for home care; however, we have addressed many important details.

We make every effort to keep our information current and accurate, however, this Home Care Manual is informational only and it is your responsibility to consult with a professional regarding any maintenance or repair questions. **It is the responsibility of each Homeowner to properly care for and maintain their home.**

You need to activate specific manufacturer warranties online or by completing and mailing the registration cards included with their materials. In some cases, manufacturer warranties may extend beyond the first year; it is in your best interest to be aware of such coverage. In addition, you may receive warranties on specific products such as roofing, windows, electrical, and plumbing. **It is your responsibility to request and track any such warranties.**

We hope this Home Care Manual becomes a valuable part of your toolbox, providing resources and support as you plan and perform home maintenance.

¹ The Habitat EJC approach to construction and homeowner support meets or exceeds Habitat for Humanity International Construction Standards 2021 (exceptions apply).

New Home Habitability Guarantee

For newly constructed homes: Habitat EJC guarantees the habitability of your home for one year, meaning that all structural components of your home (for example, roof, walls, foundation) and building systems (for example, plumbing and electrical) will be functional.

Homeowner Support, New Homes and Recycled Homes

This Home Care Manual describes Habitat EJC material and workmanship standards for the major components of the home, with the goal of supporting you as you determine what remedy may be performed for items that require maintenance, repair, or do not meet our standards. Please note that Recycled Homes are not new construction and as such, conditions and standards vary.

Year 1 Support: Reporting Process

Homeowner Services contact info: e: info@habitatejc.org; t: (360) 379-2827

During your first year of Homeownership, Habitat EJC may provide support for items that do not meet our standards. Please contact our Homeowner Services department and describe the problem(s) you are having. Within 5 work days, you will be contacted by our team. If trade sub-contractors are needed, Habitat EJC may contact them or request that you schedule with them directly.

Year 1 Support: Repair Needs

If you experience a life-threatening situation requiring police, medical, or fire emergency assistance, call 911. Immediate repair needs may include the following, and may include other items not anticipated or listed:

1. ***Total loss of heat when the outside temperature is below 45 degrees.***
 - a. Call Homeowner Services during Business Hours.
 - b. If you do not receive a timely response or as needed, call the heating company that installed your heat source or another heating company.
2. ***Total loss of electricity.*** This means all power to the entire house. For power failure to one room or outlet, check to see if GFCI's or breakers are tripped.
 - a. Check with your utility company for information, as there may be a system outage.
 - b. Call Homeowner Services during Business Hours.
 - c. If you do not receive a timely response or as needed, contact the electrician that installed your electrical system or another electrician.
3. ***Plumbing leak that requires the entire water supply to be shut off.***
 - a. Shutoff the water supply.
 - b. Call Homeowner Services during Business Hours.
 - c. If you do not receive a timely response or as needed, call the plumbing company that installed your plumbing or another plumbing company.
4. ***Total loss of water.***
 - a. Check with your water department; there may be a general outage in the area.
 - b. Call Homeowner Services during Business Hours.
 - c. If you do not receive a timely response or as needed, call the plumbing company that installed your plumbing or another plumbing company.

Home Exterior

Concrete

Use and Care

Chipping/Flaking

Repeated hosing of concrete for cleaning, animal urine, automotive fluids, fertilizer, failure to shovel snow and ice, ice melting agents, or road salts from vehicles are some of the causes of chipping/flaking. Maintain your concrete surfaces with care.

Cleaning and Use of Chemicals for Snow and Ice Removal

Do not wash patios, porches, driveways, etc. with cold water from an outside faucet when temperatures are extremely high and the hot sun has been shining on the concrete. The abrupt change in temperature can damage the surface bond of the concrete. Sweeping is the recommended method of keeping exterior concrete clean. If washing is necessary, do this when temperatures are moderate.

Remove ice and snow from concrete slabs as promptly as possible. Protect concrete from abuse by chemical agents such as pet urine, fertilizers, automotive fluids, repeated washing, or de-icing agents, such as road salt that can drip from vehicles. All of these items can harm the surface of the concrete. If you want to put something down to help with slippery, icy conditions, use sand or another non-damaging material.

Cracks

Some cracking in concrete occurs in almost all homes. The New Home Habitability Guarantee does not cover aesthetic concrete cracks. Concrete will not be replaced due to cracking. By maintaining good drainage away from your home, you are protecting both your home's foundation and the crawl space or slab. Maintenance of drainage away from all concrete foundations will minimize cracking and other forms of movement. Cracks in slabs can be sealed with a waterproof concrete caulk to prevent moisture from penetrating the soil beneath. Cracks that are less than 1/8" in width are normal as is minor settling or heaving (less than 1").

Expansion Joints

Expansion joints appear like strips of felt between two adjacent surfaces of concrete. The purpose is to help control the expansion of the concrete material itself. Concrete is also susceptible to shrinking. If the concrete shrinks, moisture can penetrate under the concrete and lift the expansion joint. If this occurs, you can fill the gap with a waterproof concrete caulk.

Flatwork

Flatwork may include crawl space floors, porches, patios, driveways, and sidewalks.

Concrete flatwork slabs are "floating"; they are not attached to the home's foundation walls. These are not a structural (load bearing) element of the home and are not covered by the New Home Habitability Guarantee.

To properly care for your exterior flatwork concrete do not use salt or chemical ice melters. Do not allow downspouts to drain in such a way that the water will get under the concrete. Cracking in the concrete flatwork is often caused by extreme cold. During the summer, moisture finds its way under the concrete along the edges or through cracks in the surface. In winter, this moisture forms frost that can lift the

concrete, increasing or causing more cracking. Seal any cracks in control joints or surface areas immediately with special concrete caulking. Check your local hardware store for the proper type of concrete caulking that is self-leveling and designed to flow smoothly into horizontal cracks and joints. Unfinished landscape at patios or stoops can cause extreme settling conditions and damage to concrete.

Foundation

The foundation of your home has been designed in accordance to building code and installed and inspected based on permitted building plans. Even so, cosmetic cracks can still develop in the foundation wall and/or slab. Shrinkage or backfill cracks are not unusual in foundation walls. Slight cosmetic imperfections in foundation walls, such as a visible seam where two pours meet or slight honeycombing, are possible and will not be repaired.

Heavy Vehicles

Concrete is not intended to bear the weight of heavy vehicles such as moving vans or concrete trucks. Do not allow these types of vehicles to drive or park on your concrete surfaces.

Homeowner Grade Changes

Damage that occurs due to the Homeowner making changes in grading, drainage, or landscape design, or failing to perform needed maintenance, is the Homeowner's responsibility to repair.

Settling or Heaving

Moderate settling or heaving of porch or patio slabs can require cosmetic repairs, which are not included in the New Home Habitability Guarantee.

Doors/Locks (exterior and interior)

Use and Care

The doors installed in your home are of high quality, but they may be wood products and subject to the natural characteristics of wood such as shrinkage and warpage. Due to normal settling of the home, doors may require adjustment for proper fit. Due to humidity changes, interior doors may require minor adjustments. Putty, filler, or latex caulk can be used to fill any minor separations that may develop at mitered joints in door trim.

Bi-fold Doors

Interior bi-fold doors will sometimes stick or warp due to weather conditions. Applying silicone lubricant to the tracks can minimize this inconvenience.

Exterior Finish

To ensure longer life for your exterior doors, it is recommended that you refinish them if they become worn or chipped.

Locking and Latching

In the event a door will not latch due to minor settling, you can correct this by making a new opening in the jamb for the latch plate and raising or lowering the plate accordingly.

Lubricate door locks with graphite or other waterproof lubricant. Avoid oil, as it will gum up the latch mechanism.

You may wish to keep a duplicate “privacy lock” key, where children cannot reach it, for use in the event someone locks themselves in a room. The top edge of the door casing is often used as a place to keep the key. Some types of privacy locks can be opened with a small screwdriver or similarly shaped device.

Sticking or Squeaky Door

There are several reasons a door may stick in the doorframe, including loose hardware or seized hinges. Humidity is another common cause of sticking doors: The high moisture level in the air can seep into the wood, resulting in a swollen door that does not open or close properly. Use sandpaper to smooth the door. Be certain to repaint the area of the door where it was sanded to seal against moisture.

Before cutting or planing a door due to sticking, there are two steps to try. First, apply either a paste wax, light coat of paraffin, or candle wax to the sticking surface. Second, tighten the screws that hold the doorjamb or doorframe.

Removing the hinge pin and rubbing a lead pencil or graphite lubricant on it can remedy a squeaky door hinge. Do not use oil as it can gum up the hinge.

Warping

Panels of wood doors will shrink or expand in response to changes in temperature and humidity. In the event a door warps, keep it latched as much as possible, and it often will return to normal.

Weather Stripping

Weather stripping and/or any threshold supplied with exterior doors may occasionally require adjustment or replacement.

Framing

Some floor squeaks are unavoidable and are common in well-constructed homes. Floors will deflect when walked on and will be more noticeable next to bookcases, chairs, etc. This is not a structural deficiency and Habitat EJC will take no action for this occurrence.

Grading and Drainage

Use and Care

The final soil level around your home has been inspected and approved for proper drainage of your lot. The local building authorities as well as our construction supervisor make inspections.

It is the Homeowner’s responsibility to maintain the drainage as established. If the drainage pattern is altered, either by action taken directly or instigated by the Homeowner or their agent, or as a result of neglect of maintenance, Habitat EJC will not provide a remedy for this situation.

Drainage

It is essential that you maintain the positive drainage or slopes away from your home to permit the water to drain away from the home as rapidly as possible. Failure to do so can result in major structural damage.

During construction, it is necessary to excavate an area larger than the foundation of your home. In addition, some trenching is necessary for installation of utility lines. Although the soil is replaced and re-compacted, it does not return to its original density. Some settling will occur, especially after prolonged heavy rainfall. This can continue to occur for the first few years you are in your home, depending on the

amount of precipitation that occurs and other factors. Inspect the perimeter of your home regularly for signs of settling.

Erosion

Habitat EJC is not responsible for damage caused to yards by weather after the final grade has been established or the closing date, whichever occurs last.

Roof runoff

Do not remove the splash blocks and/or downspout extensions from under the downspouts. Keep these in place at all times, sloped so the water drains away from your home quickly.

Backfilled or excavated areas around foundation and at utility trenches should not interfere with the drainage away from the house.

Soils and Landscaping

Habitat EJC provides a varied approach to soils and landscaping on both New and Recycled Homes. Homeowners are responsible for all maintenance and repairs to soils and landscaping.

Swales (channels for water to drain)

In most cases, drainage swales do not follow property boundaries. Habitat EJC will not alter drainage patterns to suit individual landscape plans. An existing lot may receive water from and/or pass water on to other lots. For this reason, Homeowner changes in grade often affect lots that are nearby. Habitat advises Homeowners against making such changes.

Gutters and Downspouts

Use and Care

Gutters must be checked every spring and fall and cleared of leaves or other debris. Materials that accumulate in gutters can slow the process of draining water from the roof, cause overflows, or clog the downspouts and lead to problems such as a leaking roof. Excess snow should be cleaned away from downspouts as soon as possible to allow the gutter to drain and prevent damage.

Your gutter system is designed to collect water runoff from your roof and direct it away from the foundation. When gutters become clogged, water can back up underneath your roofing material and overflow onto your siding.

Use caution when leaning ladders against gutters as this may cause dents.

Downspouts

Downspouts are placed to carry water to the ground and into stormwater pipes, extensions, or splash blocks, which then direct the flow away from the foundation of your home. Extensions and splash blocks are for the protection of the foundation; the Homeowner is responsible for maintaining them. Extensions and splash blocks should extend outside of the rock or mulch beds so that water is not dammed behind any edging materials that might be used.



Figure 1 Downspout Extension

Leaks

If a joint between sections of gutter drips, caulk the inside joint using a gutter caulking compound available at hardware stores.

As part of normal maintenance, the Homeowner should keep gutters clear of debris that might clog them and cause the water to run over the downspouts. The Homeowner should check gutters every spring and fall to ensure proper functioning.

Overflow

Gutters may overflow during periods of excessively heavy rain. It is expected that small amounts of water, but not exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ " in depth, will stand for short periods of time in gutters immediately after rain. No correction is required for these conditions. The Homeowner must keep the gutters free from obstruction for the gutter to operate properly.

Landscaping

Use and Care

Hydroseed

On occasion, Habitat will install hydroseed. Hydroseeding involves a mixture of seeds, water, fertilizer, and a protective mulch material being sprayed onto the desired area. It is a cost-effective alternative to traditional seeding methods, as it requires less labor and time. It is also ideal for areas with poor soil conditions, slopes, or hard-to-reach locations.

One of the most important tips when it comes to hydroseeding care is to make sure the seeds don't dry out. In order to protect against premature drying, establish a watering schedule according to the installer's recommendations.

Most hydroseeded lawns take between 5 and 7 days to sprout, and this generally means that lawns are ready to mow about 3-4 weeks after application. As soon as you start seeing blades of grass that are between 3- and 4-inches high depending on the grass species, then it's time for the first mow. Even if all the grass sprouts aren't this high, the first mow when any of them reach this height will help stimulate grass growth, prompting a healthy, lush lawn to grow in. When you're ready to mow, make sure the blade height on the mower is set so that only the top $\frac{1}{3}$ of the grass is cut. If the blade is lower than this and removes more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the plant, the grass will struggle to grow as well. Mowing early and regularly will

help your lawn get the best results from hydroseeding. Also make sure the area is dry before its first mowing, and pick up the clippings if there are areas where it looks like the new grass may be covered too thickly.

Irrigation Systems

You may be provided with an automatic or manual irrigation system. Regular maintenance of your system, including checking sprinkler or drip heads regularly and winterizing your system prior to the first freeze, will minimize repairs and support a longer life of your system.

Planting

The plants around your home will need regularly scheduled fertilizing, watering, and pruning. It generally takes two years for new plants to become established, at which point low-maintenance, drought-tolerant plants can thrive with less attention. In addition, all areas will require regular weeding.

Paint (exterior)

Use and Care

Fading

Fading of exterior paint or stain can be expected due to the effects of sun and weather. No warranty repair is provided for this occurrence.

Maintenance

When you wish to repaint the exterior on your home, popped nails should be reset; the blistered or peeling portions should be wire-brushed or scraped with a putty knife, sanded, and spotted with primer. Then the entire area can be painted and/or stained. Be certain to apply a quality exterior paint that has been formulated for local climate conditions. Do not allow water to spray on the exterior walls of your home. This will cause blistering, peeling, splintering, and other damage to the home.

Severe Weather

Hail and wind can cause a great deal of damage in a severe storm and your house should be inspected after such weather. Damage caused by severe weather should be reported to your insurance company promptly.

Touch-ups

Homeowners may receive a sample of exterior paint used on their homes. This paint should be stored so as not to be affected by freezing temperatures. When doing touch-up painting, use a small brush, applying paint only to the damaged spot. The paint may not match the surrounding area exactly, even if the same paint mix is used. When it is time to repaint, prepare the wall surfaces first by cleaning with a mild soap and water mixture or a cleaning product that is recommended by the manufacturer.

Regular painting and repair will preserve the beauty of and add value to your home. Check the painted/stained surfaces of your home's exterior annually. If you repaint before there is much chipping or wearing away of the original finish, you will save the cost of extensive surface preparation. It is a wise maintenance policy to plan on refinishing the exterior surface of your home approximately every five to ten years, depending upon the condition of your home's finish, which will age according to a variety of factors including climatic conditions.

Roofing

Warranty

Roofers provide a workmanship warranty, usually of 10 years, and a materials warranty which varies by product. Roof warranty information may be included in your manual; it is your responsibility to verify and maintain your warranty documents.

Use and Care

Safety should be the priority before starting any roof work. Some maintenance chores must be completed from a ladder.

Clear Off Organic Debris

Trees provide shade in the summer and add beauty to your landscape. Unfortunately, they're a constant source of debris. Organic matter can absorb water, causing your roof to remain in contact with moisture for lengthy periods. In addition, when rainwater runs down your roof, it can pick up debris, leaving it to settle in your gutters.

Remove organic residue from your roof at least twice a year or more, depending on your region's tree activity. You may be able to gently remove the debris with a broom or leaf blower depending on roof access.

Remember, don't use a tool that would rub the roof surface because it could dislodge shingle granules or cause other damage.

Inspect Flashing & Vent Pipes

Flashing helps ensure a watertight seal in areas where two roof planes meet. For example, you might find flashing where your vent pipes emerge. Flashing is often placed in roof valleys – the channel created when two roof slopes converge.

Find a safe, comfortable vantage point to view flashing. If you see that the flashing is rusted, dented, missing fasteners or the sealant is rotting away, you may want to contact a roofing contractor. They can inspect the flashing in greater detail to see if a repair or replacement is necessary.

Some vent pipes are sealed with a rubberized gasket. Over time the gasket itself or the accompanying sealant can dry out and fall apart. Periodically, check that all roof penetrations are sealed tightly against the elements. Again, if you notice this from a safe vantage point, call a contractor to get an official inspection.

Leaks

When a leak is noticed try to detect the exact location; this will greatly simplify locating the area that requires repair.

Limit Moss & Algae Growth

Environmental factors can contribute to moss and algae growth on your roof, including a north-facing roof, shade trees, and a wet climate. Moss absorbs water, and large clumps of moss growing on your roof can damage shingles by raising the shingle edges and exposing the undersides to water.

Algae can leave dark streaks on a roof's surface. Refer to the roof manufacturers' recommendations on how to remove algae stains on roofing material.

Minimize Roof Traffic

Asphalt shingles are covered with tiny granules that help prevent UV degradation while adding a three-dimensional color element to the surface. Unfortunately, too much foot traffic can scuff off granules. It's also possible to catch the edge of a shingle when walking on the roof, causing it to lift or crack. Because of this, it's best to limit the number of roof walks. In the event there is a need to walk on the roof, for any reason, take great care to avoid: falls, coming in contact with overhead power lines, or damaging the flashing, vent stacks, flues, or ventilators.

Remove Tree Branches

Similar to the potential problems from walking on a roof, trees can disturb roof granules by rubbing against shingles, especially during windstorms. Trim nearby branches as much as necessary so that even on the windiest of days, they aren't touching your roof or gutters.

Severe Weather

After severe storms, a visual inspection of the roof for damage is necessary. Notify your homeowner insurance company if damage is noted.

Siding

Use and Care

Most Habitat EJC homes are sided with fiber cement siding. Follow manufacturer's recommendations for maintenance of your home's specific siding product.

For fiber cement siding:

Wash down the exterior surfaces every 6 to 12 months with a low-pressure garden hose to remove dirt and debris, gently cleaning your siding with a soft brush or wet soft cloth in a side-to-side motion in the direction of the plank siding.

NOTE: Clean by working small sections at a time, starting from the top down to prevent dripping or streaking onto the cleaned area.

Waterproofing

Use and Care

Your exterior crawl space foundation walls have been coated with a waterproofing material. A trench drain has been installed below the footer. There may be a sump pit located in the crawl space. While every effort has been made to eliminate any seepage, during times of excessive moisture some dampness may be noticed. Careful maintenance of positive drainage will also protect your crawl space from this condition.

Windows and Screens

Use and Care

In heavy rains water may collect in the bottom channel of window frames. Weep holes may be provided to allow excess water to escape to the outside. Keep the bottom window channels and weep holes free of dirt and debris for proper operation.

Broken Glass

If any panes of glass become broken you should contact a glass company for reglazing. Glass is very difficult to install without special tools. Habitat EJC is not responsible for broken windows after occupancy.

Cleaning

Once a month, clean vinyl surfaces with warm, clear water. Do not use any powdered cleaner. After each cleaning, apply a silicone lubricant.

Condensation

Condensation on interior surfaces of the window and frame is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures. The humidity level within the home is largely influenced and controlled by the environmental conditions inside the home.

Operation

Windows should operate with reasonable ease and locks should perform as designed.

Screens

Clean screens regularly and gently. Screens can be vacuumed with a soft brush attachment or cleaned with a lint roller or a soft cloth with mild soap and water.

Sticking Windows

If sticking occurs or excessive pressure is required to open or close, a silicone lubricant should be applied. This is available at hardware stores. Do not use a petroleum-based material.

Tinting or Solar Coatings

Installation of these films will void the window glass warranty because they increase the heat buildup in the thermopane space. Homeowners should request a glass warranty from the company installing the film.

Ventilation

Proper ventilation will prevent excessive moisture from forming on the inside of the windows. Pay attention to any moisture you observe and adjust ventilation as appropriate.

Window Locks

Acquaint yourself with the operation of the window hardware for maximum security.

Home Interior

Appliances

Habitat may install a number of appliances prior to occupancy. Appliances in your home may include range, oven, refrigerator, dishwasher, microwave, washer, dryer, or hot water heater. All appliances are tested for functionality prior to your home purchase, and they are your responsibility as a homeowner to maintain properly.

New appliances are warrantied directly to you in accordance with the terms and conditions of the written warranties supplied by the manufacturers. New appliance warranties are often for one year; refer to the

literature provided by the manufacturer for specific information. Extended warranties are not available through Habitat EJC but may be available through the manufacturers.

- **Habitat EJC is not responsible for any warranties on appliances.**
- **You need to activate specific manufacturer warranties online or by completing and mailing the registration cards included with their materials. Failure to do this may result in negation of your warranty.**

If you encounter a problem with an appliance, contact the manufacturer directly. Be prepared to provide:

1. The date of purchase (your closing date)
2. The serial and model numbers (can be found on each appliance)
3. A description of the problem

Use and Care

Read and follow all manufacturer requirements for each appliance in your home.

Clothes Washer and Dryer

There are hot and cold shut-off valves located behind the machine. Be sure to clean the lint trap for the dryer after each use. Be sure to clean your washer, including gaskets, regularly to prevent mildew.

Dishwasher

If your dishwasher has a filter, remove it and clean off any food or grime. Food can become trapped in the filter and impair cleaning. Dishwashers have seals around the door rim to prevent the machine from leaking while running. Wipe down the rubber seals and the door with a damp cloth to prevent soil and grime from building up. Cleaning your dishwasher once a month helps prevent a build-up of germs and maintains your machine's efficiency. Running your dishwasher at least once a week keeps the motor seals working properly. Remember, even small loads can save water with your dishwasher.

Electric Stove

Turn off burners and oven when not in use. A clean stove and oven will work more efficiently and give you many years of carefree performance. Turn off the breaker before any repair is made to the stove.

Garbage Disposal

You may or may not have a garbage disposal in your kitchen sink. Use the disposal to grind soft kitchen scraps ONLY. Never put your hand or any metal object into the garbage disposal, especially when it is running. The unit is attached to the underside of the sink and is connected to a drain. The electrical supply to the disposal is plugged into an electrical outlet under the sink.

Microwave

Regular cleaning of your microwave interior will improve performance and maximize lifespan. Use microwave-safe utensils and dishes ONLY; never put metal in a microwave.

Range Hood

Regularly clean exhaust hood surfaces and replace or clean the filter. Replace light bulbs as needed.

Refrigerator

To help maintain efficient operation, vacuum/dust the condenser coil located behind or underneath the fridge at least once a year. Regularly inspect the gasket for any signs of wear and give it a good wipe-down with warm, soapy water to prevent crumbs and spills from harming the seal. If it's cracked or brittle, it's time to run to your local hardware store for a replacement.

Water Heater

Hybrid or Heat Pump Water Heater

A heat pump water heater is a type of water heating system that uses electricity to move heat from one place to another. It works by pulling heat from the surrounding air and transferring it to a water storage tank. In the event that there is insufficient heat from the surrounding air to provide heat to the water storage tank, an electric element will be energized to provide the necessary heat to the water.

Electric Water Heater

An electric, tank-type heater has a large, insulated storage tank that holds hot water until it is needed. Cold water enters the bottom of the tank and is heated by electric elements suspended inside the tank. An adjustable thermostat regulates and maintains the water temperature. A pressure-relief valve prevents an excessive buildup of pressure inside the tank. When hot water is called for at a faucet or appliance, hot water flows out the top of the tank and through the home's hot-water supply pipes. As the water level drops in the tank, it's automatically refilled with cold water, and the whole process starts over again.



Figure 2 Typical Heat Pump Water Heater

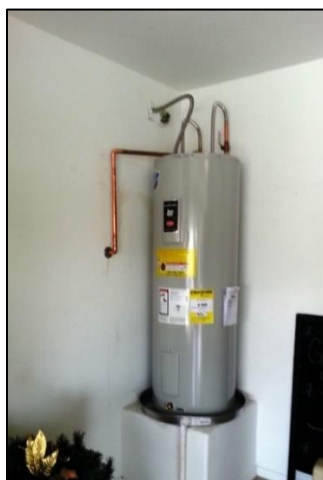


Figure 3 Electric Tank Type Water Heater

Cabinets

Use and Care

Mild products such as soap and water are suggested for caring for cabinets, to maintain the finish.

If hinges catch, or drawer glides become sluggish, a small amount of lubricant will improve their action. Door height can be adjusted by loosening the screws that attach the hinge to the door, and then tightening the screws once desired position is achieved. Periodically, this type of adjustment may be needed to maintain level doors and drawer fronts.

Separations

Gaps between cabinets and ceiling or walls can be corrected by the Homeowner by caulking or other means.

Surface Damage

Minor chips, scratches, and other surface flaws may be present and can be touched up by the Homeowner as desired.

Communication (data & phone)

Use and Care

Communication and phone wiring may be provided, in which case it is routed to the outside of each home. Wiring of the interior of the home is the responsibility of the Homeowner and/or communication provider (Internet, Cable, Phone, etc.). Initiating communication service is the Homeowner's responsibility.

Countertops

Use and Care

Always use a cutting board when cutting, chopping, etc. Protect the counter from heat and extremely hot pots and pans. Do not place hot pots and pans directly on the counter; use trivets or hot pads instead. Avoid dropping heavy items onto the countertop as heavy objects can crack or damage the surface.

Caulking

The caulking around the edge of your countertops and between the countertops and the sink may shrink, leaving a slight gap. Refer to "Caulking" for maintenance tips for this condition.

Separations of countertops at walls and the backsplash are the result of normal shrinkage of materials. It is important to maintain caulking to keep moisture from reaching the wood under the laminates to prevent warping.

Cleaners

Your countertops should be cleaned daily using a soft material cloth. This helps remove dust and dirt and protects the finish. Avoid using harsh bleach cleansers or scouring agents as these can remove the finish of the laminate.

Cosmetic Damage

Minor surface imperfections may be present and can be touched up by Homeowner as desired.

Dish Drying Mats

Rubber drain mats can trap moisture beneath them causing the laminated plastic to warp and blister. Dry the surface as needed.

Laminates

Laminated countertops typically will have one or more discernible seams. There should be no gap at the seams. Gaps at seams or joints noticed within the New Home Habitability Guarantee period in excess of 1/16", or significant de-lamination, should be reported to Homeowners Services for evaluation.

Drywall

Use and Care

Slight cracking, screw “pops” and/or seams may become visible in walls and ceilings. These occurrences are caused by the shrinkage of the wood and normal deflection of rafters to which the drywall is attached.

Drywall Repair

Most drywall repairs can easily be made. To correct a screw pop, reset the screw with a screwdriver. Cover it with spackle (available at paint and hardware stores) and apply two or three thin coats of the spackle compound. When dry, sand the surface with fine grain sandpaper before painting. Indentations caused by sharp objects can be filled with spackle in the same manner. Hairline cracks can be repaired with a coat of paint; slightly larger cracks can be repaired with spackle or caulk.

Electrical

Use and Care

The main electrical panel for your home control panel includes a main shutoff that controls all the electrical power to the home. In addition, individual breakers control the separate circuits. Be certain you are familiar with the location of the master control panel.

Each breaker is marked to help you identify which breaker is connected to major appliances, lights, outlets, or other electrical service. Should a failure occur in any part of your home, always check the breakers in the main panel box before calling for warranty service.

Breaker Tripping

Breakers can trip due to overloading the circuit by plugging in too many appliances, a worn cord or defective item, or operating an appliance with too high of a current requirement. There are many reasons why a breaker will trip; however, the most common is having too many appliances on the same circuit.

If any circuit breaker trips repeatedly, unplug all items connected to it and reset the breaker. If it trips when nothing is connected to it, the problem should be reported to Habitat EJC during the first year of ownership and an electrician should be contacted to assess the situation.

Circuit 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 circuit breaker directly from tripped to on will not restore service. You must first turn the switch off and then turn it on to operate the circuit breaker properly.



Exhaust Fans

The ceiling exhaust fan is used to remove moisture and unpleasant odors from a room. Fans may be located in the bathrooms and laundry room. Newer fans are often barely audible so check closely before calling for service. **Always use your exhaust fans when bathing or showering so that the moisture can be exhausted to the exterior of your house. If you do not use the fans, condensation can collect in the duct work and drip back down.**

GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter)

GFCI receptacles have a built-in element that senses fluctuations in power. Quite simply, the GFCI is an indoor circuit breaker. Installation of these receptacles is required by building codes in the bathroom, kitchen, outside, and garages (areas where an individual can come into contact with water while holding as electric appliance or tool). Heavy appliances such as freezers or power tools will trip the GFCI receptacle. **Do not plug a refrigerator or food freezer into a GFCI controlled outlet; the likelihood of the contents being ruined is very high, and such damage is NOT covered by warranty.**

Each GFCI receptacle has a test and reset button that may be located at the outlet or the electrical panel. Once each month the test button should be pressed. This will trip the circuit. To return service, press the reset button. If a GFCI breaker trips during normal use it may be an indication of a faulty appliance, and some investigation is in order. An important point to remember is that one GFCI receptacle can control up to three or four outlets. (If a receptacle isn't working, check to see if one of the nearby GFCIs is tripped.) GFCI Breakers are becoming popular in new construction, they are located in the main panel and have an obvious design. These are reset at the panel and will control several outlets. AFCI Breakers are similar to GFCI and the same rules apply to using them.



Figure 4 GFCI Outlet

Modifications

Do not tamper with or add to your electrical system. For any modification that is needed, contact a licensed electrician.

Light fixtures are installed per plans and will not be moved by Habitat EJC. Most fixtures installed in a new home are LED fixtures and may or may not have a removable/replaceable light bulb.

Outlets

If an outlet is not working, check first to see if it is one that is controlled by a GFCI. If the GFCI is not tripped, then check to see if the circuit breaker is tripped.

If there are small children in the home, install safety plugs to cover unused baseboard outlets. This also minimizes air infiltration that can sometimes occur with these outlets. Instruct children never to touch electrical outlets, sockets, or fixtures.

Power Surge

Power surges are the result of local conditions beyond the control of Habitat EJC. These can result in damage to light fixtures and sensitive electronic equipment, such as TV's, alarm systems, computers, etc. Purchasing a surge protected power strip can help avoid this.

Underground Cables

Check the location of buried service leads as required by law by calling the local utility locating service before digging or moving large amounts of sod (call before you dig-811). Care should be taken to keep soil around the foundation from settling and to avoid water accumulation in these locations to protect these services.

Flooring

Use and Care

Carpet

Vacuuming high traffic areas daily will not only keep them clean but will help to maintain the upright position of the nap. Spills should be wiped up and stains spot-cleaned immediately. Always dab at the stain, never rub it. Stain removers should be tested first on an out-of-the-way area of the carpet, such as in a closet, to check for any undesirable effects. Professional or steam cleaning should be performed regularly, usually annually.

Carpet seams may be visible and edges of carpet along moldings and edges of stairs should be held firmly in place. In some areas, metal or other edging material may be used where carpet meets another floor covering.

Manufactured Wood or Vinyl

Review your manufacturer's specification for cleaning and maintenance instructions. For "click install" laminate flooring, use a dust mop, soft bristle broom, or suction-only vacuum with NO beater bar to remove dust and dirt. Avoid wet-mop cleaning. Use protective window coverings to block fade-causing UV rays and rearrange rugs and furniture periodically to help your floor age evenly.

Tile

Ceramic tile floors should be swept regularly. Use a damp mop with the manufacturer's recommended tile and grout cleaner, or with a water and soap-less detergent mixture/household cleaner. Grout is susceptible to mold and mildew and is easy to stain. Consequently, clean attentively. Hot water and household bleach works well for food spills, blood, and inks/dyes (e.g. juices, coffee, tea, food, leaking pen, new dark wet clothes). Apply it with a small soft brush to the stained grout lines.

Individual tiles may crack over time due to settling of the house. Extra tiles, if available, will remain on your new home site to facilitate repair or replacement of cracked or damaged tiles.

Grout should be resealed yearly or as recommended by the product manufacturer of the product the homeowner chooses to use.

Heating & Air Conditioning System

Use and Care

Heat Pump - General

The heating and air conditioning system installed in your home will provide you with many years of comfort if given proper care and maintenance. This type of heating and air conditioning system has an outdoor and indoor unit and is referred to as a heat pump. A heat pump operates by transferring heat from one place to another. In the winter, heat from the outside air is transferred to the interior of the home. During the summer, the cycle is reversed and warm air inside the home is transferred outside.

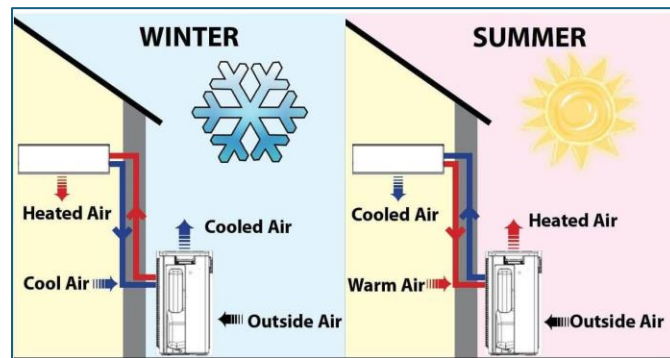


Figure 5 Heat Pump Operation



Figure 6 Indoor Unit



Figure 7 Outdoor Unit

A programmable thermostat (wall-mounted or remote control) was chosen for your home to help maintain a comfortable temperature and reduce heating bills. It can be set to automatically adjust to your specific heating requirements. The thermostat contains back-up batteries, which will keep your settings in case of an electrical power failure. These should be replaced each year in the fall. Operation instructions are in the manufacturer's manual. Please read and follow the operation instructions to understand how to program the thermostat and use the appliance in the most efficient manner.



Figure 8 Programmable Thermostat

Good maintenance of the appliance can save energy dollars as well as prolong the life of the heat pump. Carefully read and follow the manufacturer's literature on use and care. Be sure to clean and/or replace filters as recommended. The guidelines here include only general information.

Heat Pump - Temperature

During the winter outside temperatures drop and without sufficient heat brought into the home, the inside temperature of the home will decrease as well. The heat pump system will add sufficient heat to provide comfort to the desired level. The thermostat controls the amount of heat that will be delivered to the living spaces and should be set to a reasonable level to provide the comfort that is desired.

The thermostat can be programmed to automatically adjust heating and cooling temperature settings for optimal performance. Programmable thermostats can be set to lower the temperature of the home while you are away or at nighttime when you are sleeping. The goal is to save energy by reducing the load on your heating system when not needed. This will reduce the energy demand and reduce the electrical costs. This type of thermostat can store multiple daily settings that you can manually override without affecting the rest of the daily or weekly program.

Heat Pump - Odor

It is normal for the heating system to emit odors for a few minutes when it is first turned on after an extended period of not being used. This is caused by dust that has settled on the coil and should pass very quickly.

Energy Recovery Ventilator (ERV)

Energy recovery ventilators (ERVs) are equipment used to process heat and moisture through mechanical ventilation. An ERV facilitates mechanical ventilation by sending stale indoor air outside and bringing conditioned fresh air inside, which is filtered to maximize indoor air quality. This results in lower energy usage (and lower costs), increased home comfort, and improved indoor air quality.

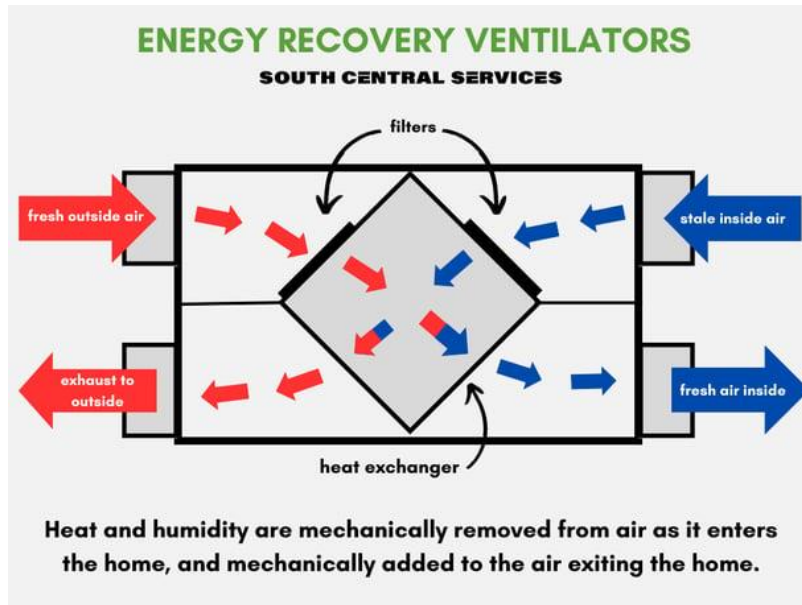


Figure 9 Energy Recovery Ventilator

The ERV's heat exchanger transfers heat and moisture from the outgoing air to the incoming air. In the summer, the ERV cools and dehumidifies the warm, humid outside air. In the winter, the ERV preheats and humidifies the cold, dry outside air.

Maintenance of ERV Units

The filters in your ERV play a critical role in purifying the incoming air by trapping dust, pollen, and other airborne particles. However, over time, these filters can become clogged, compromising air quality and forcing the system to work harder, leading to increased energy use and potential system strain. To prevent this, follow manufacturer's recommendations to regularly inspect and clean/replace the filters.

The external vents of your ERV system are its lifelines to the outside world, allowing fresh air to enter and stale air to exit. However, these vents can become blocked by external elements such as leaves, snow, or even bird nests, which can hinder the system's ability to ventilate your home correctly. Periodically check these vents to ensure they are clear of any obstructions. Keeping these pathways open allows your ERV to operate as designed, promoting optimal airflow and ventilation efficiency.

Insulation (blown-in attic)

Use and Care

The effectiveness of blown insulation (in the attic) is diminished if it is uneven. The last step in any work done in your attic should be to check that the insulation lays smooth and even.

Insulation will be installed to meet or exceed the building codes applicable at the time of construction.

Mirrors

Use and Care

To clean your mirrors, use any reliable liquid glass cleaner or polisher available at most hardware or grocery stores. Avoid splashing water under the mirror. The moisture will cause the silvering to deteriorate.

Paint and Stain (interior)

Use and Care

The house interior has been painted with latex paint. These areas may be wiped down with a soft sponge and soapy water. Wood filler or putty may be used to cover any small defects prior to paint touch-up.

Touch-ups

Homeowners may receive a sample of interior paint used on their homes. This paint should be stored so as not to be affected by freezing temperatures. When doing touch-up painting, use a small brush, applying paint only to the damaged spot. The paint 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 first by cleaning with a mild soap and water mixture or a cleaning product that is recommended by the manufacturer.

Wall Cracks

Do not attempt to fix drywall cracks or other separations due to shrinkage until after the first heating season. See “Drywall” for additional information concerning repairs.

Plumbing

Use and Care

Your main water shutoff may be located near your water heater or in another location. It is imperative to know and remember the location of the shutoff for emergencies such as a water line freeze or break. Also know the location of your meter shut off in case that is needed.

Care and Cleaning

Follow manufacturer’s directions for cleaning fixtures. Abrasive cleansers will remove the smooth finish leaving behind a porous surface that is difficult to maintain. A non-abrasive cleaner or liquid detergent is usually recommended.

Clogs

Many plumbing clogs are caused by improper garbage disposal use. Always use plenty of cold water when running the garbage disposal. **Do not put grease down a garbage disposal.** Allow the water to run a minimum of 15 seconds after shutting off the garbage disposal.

Clogged toilets can usually be cleared with a plunger. If you use chemical agents, follow directions carefully to avoid injury or damage to you or the fixtures.

Cosmetic Damage

Chips, scratches, etc., that occur after the end of construction will be the responsibility of the Homeowner. Refer to the manufacturer’s directions for caring for fiberglass products.

Dripping Faucet

A dripping faucet may be repaired by shutting off the water at the valve directly under the sink. Then, remove the faucet stem, change the washer, and reinstall the faucet stem. The showerhead is repaired the same way. It is important to replace the washer with another of the same type and size. Remembering not to turn the faucets off with excessive force can minimize the frequency of this repair.

Leaks

It is essential to address leaks right away, as water can cause significant damage to your home. If a major plumbing leak occurs, the first step is to turn off the supply of water to the area involved and perhaps to the entire house. While minor leaks can often be assessed/addressed by Homeowner (see *Dripping Faucet*, above), leaks may require the services of a plumber.



Water valve in "on" position



Water valve in "off" position

Low Pressure

It will occasionally be necessary to remove and clean the aerators on faucets to allow proper flow of water; normally every three to four months is sufficient. You can do it more often if you notice a pressure reduction.

Mineral Deposits

Hard water can cause unsightly mineral deposits on your faucets and showerheads. Over time, these deposits can lead to reduced water flow and even damage the fixtures. To remove mineral deposits, you can use a simple solution of white vinegar and water.

1. Remove the shower head from the water piping.
2. Fill a plastic bag with a 50/50 mixture of white vinegar and water.
3. Attach the bag to the faucet or showerhead using a rubber band or zip tie, ensuring that the fixture is submerged in the solution.
4. Let the fixture soak for at least 30 minutes or up to a few hours, depending on the severity of the buildup.
5. Remove the bag and use a soft brush or toothbrush to scrub away any remaining deposits gently.
6. Rinse the fixture thoroughly with water to remove any residual vinegar.
7. You may also unscrew the aerator screen, if present, from the end of the faucet if more soaking is needed.

Noise

Changes in temperature or the flow of the water itself will cause some noise in the pipes. This is normal and requires no repair. Consistent “water hammer” noise needs to be assessed for repair. Temperature variations can be expected if water is being used in more than one location in the home.

Outside Faucets

Turn the faucet off until water drains out the back of the spigot. This feature keeps this faucet from freezing. **Remove any hoses as soon as the outside temperature falls below 35 degrees.** The water left in a hose can freeze; expand back into the pipe, causing a break in the line. Repair of a broken line to an exterior faucet is not covered by warranty.

Pipes

Your pipes are at risk of freezing any time temperatures drop below 32°F. However, it's much more common for pipes to freeze when temperatures dip below 20°F. The longer the weather remains below freezing, the more likely it is your pipes can freeze if not properly protected and winterized. Provided the home is heated at a normal comfort level your pipes should not freeze. The thermostat setpoint should be set at no lower than 55 degrees if you will be away for an extended period of time; and in that case, it is best to drain your water supply lines. This is done by shutting off the main supply line and opening the faucets to relieve the pressure in the lines.

Even though your plumbing lines have been flushed out to remove dirt and foreign matter, there are usually small amounts of minerals that enter the line. Aerators on the faucets strain much of this from your water. However, debris caught in these aerators may cause the faucets to drip because washers wear more rapidly when they come in contact with foreign matter. Remove these screens periodically and clean them with an old toothbrush.

Plumbing Fixtures

Clean plumbing fixtures with a soft sponge and soapy water, then polish with a dry cloth. Drying with a soft cloth or towel will prevent water spots.

Running Toilet

To stop running water, check the shutoff float in the tank. You will most likely find it has lifted too high in the tank, preventing the valve from shutting off completely. In this case, there is usually a screw that you can turn to adjust the float. Turn the screw a little bit and flush the toilet to see if it has improved. Use trial and error to figure out how to get the screw adjusted properly.

Sink and Toilet Care

Avoid exposing the toilet to blows from sharp or heavy objects; this can cause chipping or cracking. Avoid abnormal pressures against the sides of the tank. It is possible to crack the tank at the points where it is attached to the bowl.

Stainless Steel

Stainless steel sinks should be cleaned with soap and water to preserve their luster. Do not use abrasive cleaners; they will damage the finish. An occasional cleaning with a good stainless-steel cleaner will enhance the finish. Care should be taken to avoid leaving produce on a stainless-steel surface since prolonged contact with produce can stain the finish.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Use and Care

Each smoke and CO detector is permanently wired to the house electrical system and has back up batteries to operate the unit in case of electrical power failure. Review the manual from the manufacturer for information on the care of smoke and CO detectors.

Cleaning and Batteries

Once every three months smoke and CO detectors should be cleaned (vacuumed) to prevent a false alarm or lack of response in a fire. After cleaning, push the button to test; the alarm should sound. For your safety, it is important that these devices be kept clean and in good operating condition.

The batteries should be changed every six to twelve months, per manufacturer's recommendation. Be sure to use only new, unused batteries of the same type as originally installed. After installing the new battery, push the button to test; alarm should sound.

Habitat EJC does not represent that the smoke or CO detection device will provide the protection for which it is installed or intended. Insurance, if any, must be obtained by the Homeowner.

Stairs

Use and Care

There is no known method of installation that will prevent vibration in a staircase when used by adults. Often there will be a slight shrinkage where the stairs meet the wall. When this occurs, a thin bead of latex caulk can be applied and, when dry, painted to match the wall

See also: Caulking, Framing

Miscellaneous Areas and Conditions

Attic Vents

Use and Care

Attic ventilation through the roof or siding is required by building code and therefore cannot be obstructed.

Attic ventilation is required by building code and therefore cannot be omitted. Occasionally, depending on the force and direction of the wind, rain or snow will infiltrate through these vents causing spotting on the ceiling. Habitat EJC is not responsible for such weather damage and will not make repairs in these instances.

Access Areas (attic & crawl spaces)

Use and Care

The attic space is not intended for storage. Access is provided for the purpose of maintaining mechanical equipment that may be located in the attic. When performing any needed task in the attic, caution should be used to not step off wood members onto the drywall. This can result in personal injury and/or damage to the ceiling below. Disturbed insulation should be raked back into place as evenly as possible.

Crawl Space

The crawl space is not intended for storage. Slight dampness may be experienced in the crawl space. (See also, "Vents")

Crawl Space Fan

There may be a fan in your crawl space that should be kept running at all times. It vents the crawl space and provides fresh air to the house. Please do not adjust the power level for the fan after Habitat has done so.

Caulking

Use and Care

Time and weather will shrink caulking and dry it out so that it no longer provides a good seal against moisture and air infiltration. As a matter of routine maintenance, it is wise to check the caulking and make repairs as needed. Caulking compounds and dispenser guns are available at hardware stores. Read the label to make sure the product that you are buying suits the intended purpose.

Latex Caulk

Latex caulking is appropriate for an area that requires painting (ie: along the stair stringer or where trim meets the wall).

Silicone Caulk

Caulking that contains silicone will not accept paint but works well where water is present (for example, where the tub meets wall or sink meets countertop).



Figure 10 Crawl Space Fan

Condensation

Condensation on interior surfaces of the windows and frames is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures, and/or inadequate ventilation. These conditions are significantly influenced by family lifestyle. If your home includes a humidifier, closely observe manufacturer's directions, especially during periods of cooler temperatures. Habitat will not be responsible for damage resulting from the use of humidifiers.

Expansion and Contraction

Use and Care

All building materials are subject to expansion and contraction caused by changes in temperature and humidity. Dissimilar materials expand or contract at different rates. This results in separation between materials, particularly dissimilar ones. The effects can be seen in small cracks in drywall and in paint, especially where moldings meet drywall, at mitered corners, etc.

Shrinkage of the wood members of your home is inevitable. This will occur in your home. It will be most noticeable during the first year but may continue beyond that time. In most cases, paint and caulking are all that is needed to conceal this minor evidence of a natural phenomenon. Properly installed caulking will shrink and must be maintained by the Homeowner.

Pacific Northwest Conditions

When it comes to home maintenance, every region and climate has its own particularities. Here are some items to focus on in the PNW.

Airflow

Exhaust fans should be running, and all vents need to be maintained for clear airflow with no blockages. Regularly clean all filters.

In addition to interior airflow, wet weather and microclimates can lead to limited airflow in the environment outside of your home, which can potentially result in mildew on siding, eaves, or other surfaces. Monitor airflow and trim tree branches to promote airflow and sunshine on surfaces, as needed. Cleaning tips for mildew include a 10% bleach and water solution or an over-the-counter mildew preventing spray.

Smoke

Smoke events can impact indoor air quality. Familiarize yourself with the specifications of any air exchange units in your home, such as an Energy Recovery Ventilator (ERV). Depending upon your specific unit, these systems may need to be turned off or adjusted during periods of high outdoor air pollution to avoid entry of air pollutants.

Typical New Homeowner Tool Inventory

- Toilet plunger
- Measuring Tape – 25 feet
- Claw Hammer
- Screwdrivers
 - Phillips head and flat head of various sizes
- Pliers
 - Variety set, include needle-nose
- Wrenches and socket wrench set
- Wire Cutters
- Assorted brads, nails, screws and washers
- Stud Finder
- Wireless Drill and small drill set
- Utility Knife
- Putty Knife
- Leather Gloves, Safety Glasses
- Duct Tape
- Toolbox
- 3-4 step stepladder and 8-9 ft. ladder
- Interior and Exterior Paint
- Interior and Exterior Caulk
- Paint brushes, foam and/or bristle
- Sandpapers, fine and medium grained
- Batteries, 9-volt, AA and any other sizes as needed
- Electric socket tester
- First aid kit
- Fire extinguisher

Appliance Model and Serial Numbers

Appliances come with instruction manuals and warranty cards that must be completed and mailed as directed. If no warranty card is provided, you must register your warranties with their manufacturer online or by phone.

Read the manuals and make them available for reference. For warranty service, contact the appropriate manufacturer directly at the service number provided in the appliance literature. You will need to supply the model and serial number, and the date of purchase (the closing date). Use this form to record this important information.

Date of Purchase (your closing date): _____

Appliance	Manufacturer	Model No.	Serial No.
Range			
Refrigerator			
Washer			
Dryer			

Appliance Manufacturer Customer Service Contact Information			
Appliance	Phone No.	Website	E-Mail Address
Range			
Refrigerator			
Washer			
Dryer			