

# **Welcome to Your New Home**

Dear Homeowner:

Welcome to your new Cornerstone Communities home. We understand the major commitment buying a new home represents and appreciate the trust you have placed in us by your purchase. We take pride in our homes and strive to provide you excellent service.

In creating the Homeowner Maintenance Guide, we have utilized our years of homebuilding experience, along with that of our subcontractors and other industry professionals, to assist you in learning about the components of your home. Proper and timely maintenance of these components will help you achieve the maximum value and use from your home for many years to come.

We provide this Homeowner Guide to assist you in maintaining and caring for your home. It also outlines the procedure for requesting service, should you need to do so.

Thank you for your confidence, and again, welcome home.

Cornerstone Communities

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# Homeowner Maintenance Guide Overview

This guide will help you understand the components in your new home, what the warranty covers and how to submit your warranty questions and concerns. Here, you will find:

- Information regarding the manufactured products installed in your home and your maintenance responsibilities for those products.
- Guidelines and tips on how to maintain your home.
- Links to the CC&Rs for your community, detailing what the Homeowners Association is responsible to maintain, as well as your obligations.
- Helpful information for staying safe & healthy in your home.
- Community services available nearby.

While intended to provide you a basic understanding of the components in most homes, not every option available for installation is addressed in this guide and as a new homeowner, you will need to be actively involved in learning about home ownership maintenance. The Fit and Finish warranty covers defects in materials and workmanship during the first year but maintenance is different than warranty.

## Warranty Requests

All warranty requests must be submitted in writing. We have included a Request Form in this manual so you may submit your concerns via fax or mail. Use the following link to submit your request online:

<http://www.cornerstonecommunities.com/home-warranty-request>

We will acknowledge receipt of your request and based upon your concerns, we will either set up an appointment for reviewing the issues or forward the request to the responsible sub-contractor for their review.

Service appointments and repairs are scheduled Monday thru Friday, 7 am until 2 pm. On occasion, a trade partner may schedule outside of these hours, but that is the exception to the rule.

We anticipate reviewing all issues in a timely fashion and target resolution of repair requests within 30 days of receipt, pending parts and material delivery and unusual labor scheduling.

# Emergencies

Please call us if you are experiencing one of the following emergencies:

- A water supply leak you cannot control by using the shut off valve at the fixture or appliance
- A total loss of power while the neighbors still have power
- A total sewer system back-up during the first month of occupancy
- A total loss of heating or cooling during extreme weather conditions

Call **858-458-9700** and follow the prompts, a Cornerstone representative will return your call.

Remember that we pointed out the main water, gas and power shut offs during the walk through and provided a subcontractor contact list you may use to report of one of these emergencies directly to the responsible trade, but be certain to contact Cornerstone, too.

With all emergencies, make sure that personal health and safety is taken into consideration first, then follow up on protecting your home and belongings, say, in the case of a water leak or similar situation.

For all other issues, fill out a Warranty Request and we will respond during normal business hours.

# Fit and Finish Warranty

This is a copy of the Fit and Finish Warranty which is part of your sales contract. It is reprinted here for your convenience.

SUBJECT TO THE EXCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS LISTED BELOW, SELLER PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING FIT AND FINISH WARRANTY (“**WARRANTY**”) ON THE RESIDENCE BUYER IS PURCHASING AT THE ABOVE REFERENCED UNIT:

## ARTICLE 1 DEFINED TERMS

As used in this Warranty, the following terms shall have the meanings described below.

**1.1 Close of Escrow:** “Close of Escrow” means the date of recordation of the grant deed conveying the Residence from Seller to Owner.

**1.2 Components:** “Components” means cabinets, mirrors, flooring, interior and exterior walls, wall coverings, countertops, paint finishes and trim.

**1.3 Condominium:** “Condominium” means an undivided interest in certain property held in common coupled with a separate interest in the living space of an attached residential unit.

**1.4 Deficiency:** “Deficiency” means the Fit and Finish of a Component does not meet standards of quality as measured by acceptable trade practices or applicable industry standards, subject to the terms, conditions and exclusions of this Warranty.

**1.5 Fit and Finish:** “Fit and Finish” means the non-structural, cosmetic appearance or alignment of the Components, subject to the terms, conditions and exclusions of this Warranty.

**1.6 Homeowner Maintenance Guide:** “Homeowner Maintenance Guide” means the maintenance guide provided by Seller to Owner which sets forth the obligations of the Owner for maintenance of the Residence and a schedule for such required maintenance.

**1.7 Owner:** “Owner” means Buyer or any successor owner of the Residence.

**1.8 Owner Orientation:** “Owner Orientation” means the walk-through inspection of your Residence, with a Seller representative, prior to Close of Escrow for the purpose of familiarizing you with the features and appliances in your Residence and during which the Fit and Finish of Components will be inspected and if any Deficiencies are discovered, they must be identified and reported to the Seller representative. If such Deficiencies are not reported at the time of the Owner Orientation, they may be excluded from coverage under this Warranty, as items of damage caused by Buyer or a third party.

**1.9 Purchase Agreement:** “Purchase Agreement” means the Purchase Agreement and Escrow Instructions entered into between Buyer and Seller for the purchase of the Residence.

**1.10 Residence:** “Residence” means the separate interest in the living space of an attached residential unit occupied or leased by an Owner.

**1.11 Seller:** “Seller” means: \_\_\_\_\_ a Delaware limited liability company.

**1.12 Unforeseen Acts of Nature:** “Unforeseen Acts of Nature” means a weather condition, earthquake, or manmade event such as war, terrorism, or vandalism, in excess of the design criteria expressed by the applicable building codes, regulations, and ordinances in effect at the time of original construction.

**1.13 Warranty Period:** “Warranty Period” means ONE YEAR from the Close of Escrow.

## ARTICLE 2 WARRANTY

Seller warrants the Fit and Finish of the Components to be free from Deficiencies during the Warranty Period, subject to the exclusions in **Article 4**.

## ARTICLE 3 SCOPE OF WARRANTY

**3.1 Seller’s Performance.** During the Warranty Period, Seller will, within a reasonable amount of time, if repair or replacement is appropriate under this Warranty, repair or replace the affected Components at no charge to Owner. The decision whether to repair or replace the Components shall be within the sole discretion of Seller.

**3.2 Repair Materials/Subcontractors.** All repairs or replacements will be made with materials or components identical to, or of an equal or better grade or quality than the materials or components used in the original construction of the

## Fit and Finish Warranty, cont'd.

Residence. Seller has the right to choose the specific materials and components and the subcontractors used for repair or replacement work in its sole discretion. There could be color or texture variations with the new materials.

**3.3 Assignment of Other Insurance and Warranties.** In the event Seller repairs, replaces or pays the cost of repairing or replacing any Deficiency covered by this Warranty for which Owner is covered by any other insurance or warranty, Owner hereby assigns to Seller all rights, proceeds or payments under such other insurance or warranty to the extent of the actual cost of repair or replacement incurred by Seller, and hereby authorizes Seller to file a claim against any insurance or warranty on Owner's behalf. Owner shall cooperate with Seller, at no out-of-pocket cost to Owner, with respect to such claim. To the extent permitted by Owner's insurance, Owner agrees to look only to Owner's insurance coverage for covered claims and to waive any right of subrogation to the extent of such insurance.

**3.4 DISCLAIMER OF IMPLIED WARRANTIES.** EXCEPT FOR THIS WARRANTY, SELLER DISCLAIMS ALL OTHER WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THAT THE HOME WAS DESIGNED AND CONSTRUCTED IN A REASONABLY WORKMANLIKE MANNER, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, AND MERCHANTABILITY.

**3.5 LIMITATION OF AVAILABLE REMEDIES.** OWNER AGREES THAT THE SOLE AND EXCLUSIVE REMEDIES FOR THE BREACH OF THIS WARRANTY SHALL BE TO REPAIR OR REPLACE THE COMPONENT. OWNER OTHERWISE AGREES TO ASSUME ALL RISKS ARISING FROM A BREACH OF WARRANTY, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO ALL ECONOMIC, CONSEQUENTIAL AND EMOTIONAL DISTRESS DAMAGES. EXCEPT TO REPAIR OR REPLACE THE COMPONENT, SELLER SHALL NOT OTHERWISE BE LIABLE FOR ANY DAMAGE FOR BREACH OF WARRANTY. BY INITIALING BELOW, OWNER REPRESENTS THAT OWNER UNDERSTANDS THAT REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT UNDER THIS WARRANTY ARE EXPRESSLY CONDITIONED UPON SELLER OR ITS AUTHORIZED AGENT, BEING GRANTED A REASONABLE OPPORTUNITY TO REPAIR OR REPLACE SUCH COMPONENT. OWNER AGREES THAT SELLER, OR ITS AUTHORIZED AGENTS, AND NOT OWNER, SHALL DETERMINE THE MATERIAL AND METHODS TO BE USED IN EFFECTING SUCH REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT.

### ARTICLE 4 EXCLUSIONS

The following are not covered by this Warranty:

**4.1 Wear and Tear.** Damage to the Components due to ordinary wear and tear.

**4.2 Owner's Failure to Properly Maintain.** Any Deficiency, loss or damage caused by lack of reasonable care and maintenance, failure to follow a manufacturer's or Seller's maintenance schedule, recommendations or commonly accepted Owner maintenance obligations. Seller has provided a description and list of suggested Owner's care and maintenance items and procedures in the Homeowner Maintenance Guide and a schedule for such maintenance. From time to time, Seller may perform a maintenance task for the benefit of Owner at no charge; however, performing a task on one or more occasions does not imply or require that Seller will perform a similar task at a later date, nor shall such performance be deemed to extend the Warranty Period.

**4.3 Casualties or Unforeseen Acts of Nature.** Any Deficiency, loss or damage caused by Unforeseen Acts of Nature, casualties normally covered by homeowner's insurance, or any other cause not under the control of Seller such as fire, smoke, explosion, water escape, fluctuations in water pressure, flood, insects, and falling trees. Damage of this sort may be covered by your homeowner's insurance. You should contact your insurance carrier within 24 hours of the occurrence of any such damage.

**4.4 Abuse of Residence.** Damage caused either by the misuse, abuse, neglect or the use of the Residence in a manner which was not intended.

**4.5 Materials Furnished by Owner.** Any Deficiency caused by materials furnished or work done by or at the request of Owner, including any work done by anyone other than Seller or the employees, agents or subcontractors expressly selected by Seller.

**4.6 Variations in Natural Materials.** Variations in natural materials, such as stone, marble, wood grain and color of stained wood used in cabinets, paneling, siding, doors and wood trim. These variations are inherent characteristics of natural materials and are not a Deficiency.

**4.7 Failure to Give Timely Notice.** Any Deficiency, loss or damage caused or made worse by Owner's failure to timely notify Seller of any Deficiency.

**4.8 Failure to Mitigate Damages.** Any Deficiency, loss or damage caused or made worse by Owner's failure to minimize or prevent damages in a timely manner.

**4.9 Refusal to Allow Repair.** Any Deficiency, loss or damage caused by the Owner's failure to allow reasonable and timely access for inspections and repairs.

**4.10 Owner or Third-Party Negligence.** Any Deficiency, loss or damage caused or made worse by the negligence of Owner (or Owner's agent, employee, subcontractor, independent contractor, or consultant) or a third party.

**4.11 Successful Repair.** Any Deficiency, to the extent that such Deficiency has been successfully repaired or corrected.

## Fit and Finish Warranty, cont'd.

**4.12 Released Violation.** Any Deficiency, for which liability has been released by Owner pursuant to a release agreement with Seller, Seller, a manufacturer or any other third party.

**4.13 Warranty Period.** Any Deficiency that occurs after the Warranty Period.

**4.14 Statutory Claims.** Any claims for Deficiencies, loss or damage governed by California Civil Code Sections 895 through 897 and Sections 910 through 938, as may be hereafter amended.

### ARTICLE 5 PROCEDURES FOR FILING A WARRANTY CLAIM

**5.1 How to Request Warranty Service.** To assure quality, and to allow Seller to maintain a complete file on your home, all requests for service under this Warranty must be submitted in writing to Seller. Please use a copy of the Warranty Repair Request from which is attached to this Warranty or at our internet website ([www.cornerstonecommunities.com](http://www.cornerstonecommunities.com)). Warranty request forms can be submitted online or mailed to:

Cornerstone Communities  
Attn: Customer Service Department  
4365 Executive Drive, Suite 600  
San Diego, CA 92121  
FAX (858) 768-7363.

Please complete the form fully and describe the location and nature of your problem in as much detail as possible. If submitting through our website ([www.cornerstonecommunities.com](http://www.cornerstonecommunities.com)), please select the location and then click "Contact Us".

ALL REQUESTS FOR WARRANTY SERVICE MUST BE SUBMITTED WITHIN 30 DAYS AFTER THE DISCOVERY OF A DEFICIENCY, BUT IN NO EVENT LATER THAN THE EXPIRATION OF THE WARRANTY PERIOD.

**5.2 Customer Service Schedule.** Upon receipt of your request, Seller will acknowledge having received your request, may have a staff member schedule to review the concerns or the request may be forwarded directly to the subcontractor to schedule a repair. In most cases, Warranty inspection appointments will be scheduled to take place at your home within 10 days of the receipt of the request.

If it is determined that the problem is covered by this Warranty, Seller will attempt to schedule the repair work to take place within the next 30 calendar days. Repair work is generally done Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**5.3 Time for Corrective Work.** Seller intends to fulfill its obligations for a particular warranty claim for Deficiencies 30 days of its receipt of a written request so long as Seller is given reasonable cooperation by Owner. However, Owner recognizes that a 30 day period for certain covered repairs or replacements may be insufficient and it may be necessary to extend that 30 day period.

**5.4 Service Requests Not Covered by Warranty.** If Seller determines that a particular service request is not covered by this Warranty, Seller will provide Owner with a notification describing why the Owner's service request is not covered. Failure to send such a notice shall not be deemed evidence that a service request is a covered Deficiency. If a service request is governed by California Civil Code, Section 895, et seq., the non-adversarial procedures described in the Post Closing Title 7 and Dispute Resolution Addendum to the Purchase Agreement will apply to such service request, instead of the procedures set forth in this **Article 5**.

### ARTICLE 6 GENERAL PROVISIONS

**6.1 Applicable Law.** This Warranty is made in the State of California and is to be interpreted and constructed in accordance with the cases and laws of California.

**6.2 Interpretation.** Whenever the context requires, the use herein of one gender includes both genders and the singular number includes the plural number.

**6.3 Modification.** No modification or change of this Warranty is valid unless it is in writing and signed by Owner and Seller.

**6.4 Captions.** Captions are inserted for convenience of reference only and do not define, describe or limit the scope or intent of this Warranty or any provisions hereof.

**6.5 Time of the Essence.** Time is of the essence on all matters of any nature arising under this Warranty.

**6.6 Severability.** Should any provision or portion of this Warranty be declared invalid or in conflict with any law of the jurisdiction where your Residence is situated, the validity of all other provisions and portions shall remain unaffected and in full force and effect. This Warranty is intended to be a Fit and Finish Warranty under California Civil Code Section 900. To the extent of any conflicts between this Warranty and the requirements of Civil Code Section 900, the requirements of the statute shall control over the terms of this Warranty.



## **Fit and Finish Warranty, cont'd.**

### **ARTICLE 7 DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

**7.1 Arbitration.** All disputes arising under this Warranty will be resolved in accordance with the same procedures for dispute notification and resolution as set forth in the Post Closing Title 7 and Dispute Resolution Addendum to the Purchase Agreement. The statutory non-adversarial procedures applicable to certain construction defect claims under California Civil Code Sections 910 through 938, as hereafter amended, shall not apply to any claims under this Fit and Finish Warranty.

**NOTE: SELLER'S SALES STAFF DOES NOT HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR, NOR ARE THEY QUALIFIED TO MAKE, JUDGMENTS REGARDING SERVICE. ALL SUCH COMMITMENTS MUST BE IN WRITING AND MUST COME FROM SELLER'S CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT. SELLER IS VERY PROUD OF ITS SERVICE AND TRUST YOU WILL FIND OUR POLICY TO BE FAIR TO ALL CONCERNED. PROPER SERVICE AND A CONTINUING PROGRAM OF OWNER MAINTENANCE WILL KEEP YOUR PROPERTY IN GOOD CONDITION BOTH FOR YOUR OWN COMFORT AND TO MAXIMIZE ITS USEFULNESS AND DURABILITY.**

California State Law – Civil Code Title 7 requires that your home be properly maintained in order to preserve the coverage provided by this statute. Following the maintenance tips found in this guide, along with manufacturer recommendations, will help you preserve the coverage outlined here and the condition of your new home.

# Maintenance

Our goal is to introduce you to your home; the various components found there in, and then give you a brief guide as to what to watch for and how to begin to maintain your new home.

We will provide some tips and techniques, while including the manufacturer information so that you may find their 'best practices' and helpful hints.

## Interior

### Appliances

Your home has come equipped with a group of appliances, either as part of the package selected by our design team or options and upgrades you have chosen at the design center.

Please read the manufacturer operation instructions, where you will find the best and latest information regarding the features of your specific choices. Also, fill out the warranty cards to register these major components of your home.

Different models from the same manufacturer may have different features, so take the time to become familiar with these modern conveniences, which may include the dishwasher, garbage disposal, microwave, range, refrigerator, clothes washer and dryer, to name the most typical.

#### NOTE:

Dishwashers drain into the disposal, so always be sure to clear the disposal prior to running the dishwasher. There is a *cap* on the counter next to the sink and this *airgap* makes certain dirty water from the disposal does not siphon back into the dishwasher. If water starts to flow from the *airgap*, it is blocked and can be cleared by removing the cover and then the small cap at the top. Remove the debris, snap it back together and this issue should be resolved.

Disposals come with a hex wrench which we demonstrated at walk through. If the disposal becomes clogged, fit the wrench into the bottom, then rotate the wrench to loosen the clog. After removing the wrench, reset breaker on the bottom and run the disposal again.

These appliances are designed to be used: disposals can rust and not run without regular use and dishwasher seals can dry out and leak if not regularly used.

Microwave ovens typically vent to the exterior of the building and they have a filter that needs to be cleaned and reinstalled to function correctly. While some come with metal racks inside the microwave, *no other metal* should be placed inside the appliance.

Vacuum under and behind the fridge a couple times of year, as dust can block vents, causing the unit to run longer than needed.

## Cabinets

While most cabinets are wooden, with stained or painted facing, doors and drawers, typically the interiors are manufactured surfaces which are easy to clean with a damp cloth. That same clean, damp cloth can be used to gently wipe down the exterior surfaces finish.

With use, screws will become loose and should be checked every few months or when something seems to 'click' when you open and close a door or drawer, but don't over-tighten. A little lubricate helps the moving parts continue to move freely and be sure to protect adjacent surfaces when you use your oil, silicone or graphite lubricants.

NOTE:

Heat and Moisture can damage and prematurely age the finish of your cabinets. Take care where you set the coffee maker, crock pot or other moisture producing appliances and don't drape damp towels over counters or cabinet doors. Pay extra attention to the cabinets below sinks and at the dishwasher as they have extra exposure to water and need to be dried more often.

## Caulking

Caulking is used to close and seal a gap between 2 adjoining surfaces.

- 1.1 – Sometimes this is a cosmetic issue, like applying caulk between the wall and the door trim makes it look finished; this is done with *painter's caulk*. *Silicone* caulk may be applied around the shower enclosure to help prevent water from escaping from inside, out.
- 1.2 – As the house *matures*, settlement will occur- typically at adjoining surfaces, say the countertop to the *side or backsplash* (the matching piece on the wall, at the end or behind the countertop). While the countertop or tile sub-contractor will do a courtesy touch up on these settlement cracks once during the first year, this is all normal and will become homeowner maintenance after that. This settlement would be resolved using grout matching the original material installed or with caulk.
- 1.3 – Head over to the home improvement store and stare at all of the different sealants or *caulking* they carry and learn the difference between the basic painter's caulk and the one designed for keeping out casual water; needed for the bath sink countertop side splash, and the silicone caulk, used in wet areas, like where the kitchen sink meets the countertop: an important place to keep well sealed.

## Countertops

Granite, Quartz, Stainless Steel, Ceramic Tile, Wood and manmade materials are all used to create counters for your kitchens, while most bathroom tops are cultured marble; manufactured from marble and resin, for a clean and durable, low maintenance surface.

The design center where you selected your flooring and counters should have provided use and care instruction and there is manufacturer contact information included with this guide.

- 1.1-avoid excessive heat, set something under the hot dish before setting it on the counter
- 1.2-avoid impacts: stone, tile, marble can all crack under the right force
- 1.3-avoid spills. Life will happen, but nail polish on cultured marble bath tops can stain, as can wine, olive oil, vinegar, even water can soak into some stone surfaces and leave a stain
- 1.4-mild cleaners only, unless there is a specific manufacturer recommendation
- 1.5-chairs are for sitting and ladders for standing – not the countertops
- 1.6-use cutting boards, not countertops, for slicing and dicing

## **Doors**

The interior doors are hollow-core and painted to match the interior with a enamel paint. DO NOT slam the doors, DO NOT attach or nail anything to the door: they are hollow and the thing you attach will not stay attached for long. DO NOT let children swing on the doors or handles.

The handle should be cleaned with a mild soap and be sure the screws of the handle and hinges are tight. Spray a little lubricant on the moving parts, while protecting the adjacent surfaces, a couple times a year.

Sliding glass patio/deck doors, pocket doors, by-pass closet doors all have wheels that need to lubricated, as does the patio door screen. Don't forget Bi-fold closet hinges need love, too.

## **Drywall**

AKA – Sheet rock, gypsum board, etc: this rigid, durable material is used on the walls and ceilings, creating the interior surfaces of your home. Once it is secured to the framing, it is textured and then painted. As the home *matures*, settlement cracks may appear in corners of walls, ceilings and about an inch away from the windows and somethings are outside corners. This 'inch away' is where the corner bead is: a rigid plastic or steel edge, secured to the drywall to produce the straight outside corner of a wall or at windows. As the house settles and dries out, especially in the first year, you may notice minor cracks developing. While normal, if they become a bother to you, some drywall spackle may be applied over the crack. Once the spackle has dried, it can be painted, but remember to apply patching material sparingly, too much will create a flat spot in the texture.

NOTE: Be careful when hanging pictures or other items on the walls. There are pipes and electrical wiring that could be damaged as you nail or drill into the walls. Home improvement stores carry a variety of hangers for this purpose and can provide useful instructions, even sell you a stud finder.

# Electrical System

This system provides power throughout the home for our many modern conveniences and a basic understanding of the service and features is critical for your safety.

- Main shut off – is typically at the electric meter on the exterior of the house or in a Utility Closet on our multi-family building, and this was identified on your walk through.
- Breaker Panel – contains the Circuit Breakers through which power flows to the individual areas or appliances in the house. They are sized to handle the demands of each circuit, calculated as AMPS, and if the demand on the circuit exceeds the breakers capacity, the breaker will turn off, or “trip” to prevent damage or injury. Sometimes the Main shut off is in the Breaker Panel.
- Sub Panel – certain homes may have a sub-panel installed, which provides convenient access to a breaker panel inside the living space in conjunction with the main panel.
- Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCI) are specialized breakers, with an integrated reset switch, which senses an erratic current flow, that could have been caused by a damaged wire and they service bedroom spaces in the home. A tripped Arc Breaker signals a problem and you should identify the cause of the issue prior to restoring the breaker to the ON position. Test the breaker monthly and refer to the manufacturer documents.
- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) senses a change in current at an outlet located near water: kitchen, baths, garage and exterior and will ‘trip’ the circuit reset device built into the outlet. Not every outlet with GFCI protection has a ‘reset’ button. If an outlet near water is not working, search for the GFCI that has tripped and push the larger button to reset the circuit. There is a TEST button on the reset outlets. Use it monthly to verify the circuit is working as intended and do not plug appliances or heavy tools into GFCI outlets, the sudden draw of the motor could cause the circuit to trip.

Be aware that sometimes the garage door opener outlet is protected by the garage GFCI.

- Occupancy Sensor Switches are designed to save money by turning off a light fixture after a certain amount of inactivity in the bathroom. Many can be adjusted for how long they stay on.
- Humidity Sensor Switches may be installed to turn exhaust fans on and/or off, depending upon the device and reduce the moisture bathrooms with their auto-on feature.
- USB Outlets have receptacles for charging cables, built into standard power outlets.
- Tamper Resistant Outlets- prevents access to the contacts unless a 2 prong plug is inserted, helping ensure hairpins, keys, etc. will be blocked out.
- Half Hot Outlets – are installed in rooms which do not have a build in lighting fixture: living and family rooms, as well as bedrooms and these outlets are installed up-side-down, as a reminder that half of this outlet is always on and the other half by the light switch at the door or entry to the room.
- Lighting fixtures and features are located throughout the house per plan and code. Be sure to match the replacement lamp to the fixture and always verify power is off before cleaning, changing lamps or undertaking other adjustments.

Most communities require electrical installations and repairs be made by a licensed electrician and sometimes any improvement to your home is subject to HOA guidelines. Take care of your home,

your health and your loved ones by relying on qualified professionals to repair this service and system.

## Fireplaces

If your community and plan include this feature, your fireplace provides you the ambiance of a wood fire without the actual mess and smoke from burning and storing wood.

As a gas appliance, these units require little more than to verify the gas is on at the valve next to the appliance and turn on a switch to enjoy your fire and turn off the switch to shut it down.

Remember that you are burning gas: the face frame and glass of the unit will get hot, so use the same safety precautions you would around a BBQ grill or kitchen range.

Reviewing the manufacturer instructions will alert you to the required service and safety requirements for this device.

## Flooring

The design center where you selected your flooring should have provided use and care instruction for your choices and there is manufacturer contact information included with this guide regarding the flooring materials available for your home.

Carpet, vinyl, ceramic tile, stone, wood or manufactured wood/laminate products - while each is unique they also have some similar care characteristics:

- Install and use door mats: the more dirt and debris you can leave outside, the better your flooring will look and wear. “Mahalo for taking off your shoes” may be an island mainstay, but this choice can improve the indoor quality of life on the mainland, as well.
- Blot up liquid quickly: stains can ruin the look of almost every flooring product – even vinyl can be stained by the rubber backing of bath mats, although, some sticky things are easier to clean up after they dry. Candle wax should be allowed to harden and then removed using a paper bag placed over the wax and then a warm iron applied to the bag warm the wax enough to be absorbed by the paper.
- Resolve spills on wood product floors ASAP: water can seep between boards and be absorbed by the backing layer, sometimes causing permanent damage.
- Protect your flooring from your furniture: use appropriate caps, glides, casters, etc to protect surfaces from chair and table legs.
- Brace for impact: dents, chips and cracks from dropped objects or wheels can ruin your floors, so make sure those casters are appropriate for the surface and application and leave the skate shoes at the door.
- Vacuum often and clean regularly: some manufacturer wear warranties are void if you don't clean the carpet every year, professionally.
- Mild cleansers are always a good starting point, right after a visit to the manufacturer's website: vinegar and water works well for ceramic tile.

# Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

Maintaining indoor temperature and humidity levels within a general range not only makes the house more comfortable, it will help control moisture and reduce movement of the components of the house due to extremes of temperatures and humidity.

Heating is accomplished using a gas fired furnace, usually installed in the attic.

Ventilation comes from a fan in the furnace cabinet, creating the FAU- Forced Air Unit: the burned gas warms a *heat exchanger* and the fan forces the heated air through the ducts in the attic and walls.

Air Conditioning is removing warm air from the house and achieved using the compressor and condenser on the exterior of the house, acting upon gas inside a small tube that then travels to the FAU in the attic and where compressed gas exchanges warm air for cool and the fan circulates the cool air through the house.

The *filter* is an important part of the *ventilation* system, located in the return air grill, in the ceiling or sometimes, the wall. As the name implies, it filters the air flowing through the system to reduce the dust and dirt being circulated by the unit. Your home may have more than one and the filters are disposable: check them every month or two to maintain an even flow of air, as a dirty filter makes the entire system work harder and uses more energy, too. The smaller registers in the rooms are the air delivery grills and often can be adjusted to help even the air flow and temperature be balanced throughout the house.

Air Conditioning also removes moisture from the air. This moisture is collected in a pan under the FAU in the attic and drains through a *primary* drain pipe, connected to one of the plumbing waste lines inside the house. The *secondary* drain pipe terminates over an exterior window: if the primary drain becomes clogged, the water flows over the window to alert you to have the HVAC system serviced. In fact, most manufacturers recommend an annual service check on the system, to maintain safety and efficiency.

The HVAC system is controlled by a programmable thermostat, capable of handling both heating and cooling with the ability to turn on and off the system at times to fit your schedule and lifestyle. Instructions for programming the thermostat were left in the house at walk through.

## **Mirrors and bath amenities**

These everyday conveniences are constantly exposed to high humidity and gently drying them will extend their useful life. Mild soap will keep the fixtures clean and can be used inside the medicine cabinets, as well.

Mirrors should be cleaned by spraying your favorite cleanser on the cloth, not on the mirror, as the excess cleaner can reach the reflective finish at the edges and begin to dissolve the coating. Using the exhaust fan in the bathrooms is essential to reduce excess moisture.

## **Paint**

The walls, wood trim and doors of your home have been prepped and painted for a uniform and attractive appearance. All of the paint used is a latex or acrylic based paint, for a smooth, even finish and environmentally friendly clean-up process.

- Gentle cleaning will remove most fingerprints and marks, scrubbing walls to remove marks may end up removing the paint, too.
- Settlement cracks will occur, especially during the first year or two of ownership. Minor cracks in corners can be filled with painter's caulk and once dry, touched up with the paint left for you at walk through.
- All paint will age and while touch up is possible, in certain lighting conditions, these repairs are more obvious than in other places.
- Follow the manufacturer guidelines on prep and painting the various surfaces in your home. Choosing better brushes, rollers and paint typically leads to a better finish.

While this section of the guide covers the Interior of the house, the effects of weather may be more pronounced outside of the unit, where sun, wind and moisture bears down on surfaces. Refer to the CC&Rs to determine which exterior maintenance items are covered by the HOA and which are your responsibility.



# Plumbing

Hot and cold running water and indoor bath facilities: these modern necessities of our homes are relatively recent additions and a second bath was a 'luxury' just a generation ago.

- Shut off valves are at every toilet, sink, appliance and the water heater.
- MAIN SHUT OFF VALVE – in garage and/or at the water meter. Everyone in the house should know where this is and how to use it, in case of emergency.
- EMERGENCIES: reviewed earlier, but here in brief – know where the water, gas and electric shuts offs are located - gas shut off at the meter, electric at the meter or breaker panel. Remember that personal health and safety comes **first**; *things* can wait. Use the emergency phone list to contact Cornerstone and the specific trade or utility *after* you have taken care of personal health and safety.
- Faucets are manufactured products with an aerator screen on the spout which can become clogged with fine debris from the water supply. You can un-screw this device, rinse the screen and reinstall it if water flow becomes reduced. Shower heads also have these screens.
- Faucets arrive with *cartridges* that control the flow of water and this part can also be affected by debris allowing the water to drip and not shut off entirely. Moen's Warranty covers the faucets for function and finish, as long as the original owner is in the house. You can order up new cartridges from their website, free, under this warranty.
- Sinks can be integrated into the countertop, under mounted or a 'drop-in' style and they are manufactured in different finishes, colors and from a variety of materials: all can break if something heavy hits them or they may stain over time, with normal use. Review the manufacturer documents to understand the care of each type of sink in your home.
- Bathroom drains can become clogged with hair and kitchen drains with food, grease and debris. Use a *drain cover* to help reduce the amount of hair that enters the pipe and take care when clearing clogs: harsh cleaners or devices inserted into the drain can damage the system and cause a leak. Plumbing drains have *traps* - J, P or U shaped bend to retain water and help eliminate the entry of sewer gases from the pipe into the house. Regularly running water into every fixture replaces water that has evaporated from this trap.
- The bathroom sink stopper has a linkage that may collect the hair which the cover does not catch. On the Moen website you can learn how to remove this linkage for cleaning and reinstall it so that it does not leak - easy – you can do this!
- Bath tubs and shower trays are made of a manufactured material for ease of maintenance and durability. As with many of the components of your home, durable does not mean 'unbreakable: normal, daily use is fine, but be aware of sudden impacts. Follow the manufacturer information for cleaning and care.
- Shower glass and enclosure: drying these surfaces after use goes a long way to maintaining the appearance of the finish. Be aware of the locations which have been sealed with caulk: this will need to be maintained to control water and keep it inside the tub area and not outside. Every year, inspect the seal and if there are gaps, remove the old caulk, thoroughly clean the surfaces and apply new sealant. Vinegar and water is effective for hard water stains on glass.
- DO NOT use abrasive cleaners, brushes or pads to clean any of these surfaces, they will do more harm than good.
- Toilets are made of durable material, with a wax ring seal between the toilet bowl and the waste pipe, as well as rubber seals between the tank and the bowl. DO NOT use cleaners in the tank, they will damage the seals and cause a leak. Take care when using a plunger on a

- toilet clog, pressure from the plunger damage the wax ring seal to the waste pipe and cause a leak. Clogged toilets are usually caused by too much paper and waste; this *soft clog* will dissolve over time and the line will clear itself.  
What will not clear itself is a clog from a plastic bottle cap or a toy or a Q-tip or other debris not intended to go into a toilet. Also, “flushable” wipes are generally not kind to toilets or water treatment systems: disregard the label and DO NOT FLUSH them.
- Toilet flush valves are constantly being improved but the basics are the same: there is a fill valve which shuts off when the water reaches a certain level inside the toilet tank. The ‘float’ mechanism that shuts off the water typically has an adjustment device and a review of the manufacturer information can help you with how to adjust the float and fill valve when you hear that the toilet is constantly filling.
- The toilet flapper is connected by a chain to the handle- pushing the handles lifts the flapper and releases the water in the tank to flush the toilet. Over time, this rubber piece will begin to wear and replacing it is a simple maintenance task.
- Utility sinks are in certain plans and are a sturdy composite material, equipped with a Moen faucet.
- Smitty Pan is the tray set under the washing machine. It is connected to a drain pipe that exits the exterior of the building and in the event of a leak in the washing machine, most of the water will be collected in the pan and delivered outside of the house.
- Clean-outs have been provided to access the sewer lines in the event a pipe becomes clogged and needs to be cleared. Most are around the perimeter of the first floor and in the garage slab, some are under sinks and behind toilets.
- Hose bibs – spigots where you attach the hose, will have a vacuum breaker attached, to prevent dirty water from being siphoned back into the drinking water system. The breaker does have a spring inside of it, which can vibrate at certain times when the water pressure is just right, *or wrong*; as the noise will reverberate throughout the house. If the noise continues every time the hose is used, the vacuum break will need to be replaced.

## Water heaters

Water Heaters in most new homes are ‘tankless’: a tankless system heats the water *when* the hot faucet is turned on, for a more energy efficiency system. While typically installed in the attic, your unit might be in the garage and both will need to be maintained and serviced, per the manufacturer instructions. These units use gas to heat the water and require electricity to control the device. If you wake up to no hot water, verify that the breaker controlling the water heater is ON.

## Pressure Regulators

Pressure Regulators can be a requirement in certain communities where high water pressure exists and they provide a safe guard for the fixtures and appliances in your home, items that might be damaged by a sudden increase in the water pressure. They are usually preset to keep the pressure below 60 PSI and while adjustable, we recommend that you leave it at the original setting. The pressure regulator is usually installed near the water meter or main shut off valve.

# Safety features

## Fire Sprinkler system

Many communities require an automatic fire sprinkler system, especially in multi-family buildings. The system is designed to release water from a sprinkler head in the event of an extreme elevation in temperature near that device. At the same time water is released, the system sends a signal to the local fire department or dispatcher and a fire alarm bell will sound on your building.

- Practice fire safety: know the most direct, safe route out and away from the building. Rehearse a fire drill so your entire family knows how to safely exit the building and where to gather outside, in the event they become separated during the exit process, and remember personal health and safety is most important, things are just stuff and stuff can be replaced.
- Do not paint or tamper with fire sprinkler heads – while exposed in the garage, inside the house they are covered with caps and paint will interfere with their function. Vacuum, carefully but do not attempt to clean the heads.
- Take care not to impact the heads which are often exposed in the garage: a sharp impact can break the glass tube allowing the water to flow.
- The fire sprinkler system is separate from the water system in your house: you cannot turn it off once it begins to flow.
- Do not hang anything from exposed sprinkler heads.
- Maintain 18 inches of clearance directly under the sprinkler heads.

## Fire Sprinkler system, cont'd.

These systems are installed and governed under fire & building codes and require regular inspection and certification. Review your C, C & Rs and discuss this process with the property management company for your community.

## Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

These life-saving devices are hardwired to the building and have a battery back-up in each one. When activated by smoke or the colorless and odorless gas Carbon Monoxide, the corresponding alarm will sound a tone until the sensing chamber in the device is cleared.

While we have burnt the dinner or toast, sending smoke through the house and setting off the alarm, be aware that *something* has set off this alarm and you should respond as if this is a life threatening event, until proven otherwise.

Remember the smoke alarm could be obstructed by steam escaping the bathroom after a hot shower as well as smoke.

- Test them annually and when one battery goes low and the alarm begins to chirp regularly, buy enough batteries to change them all out at once.
- Do not paint or tamper or remove an alarm or detector.
- Vacuum around the unit, gently, a couple times a year, as dust could also trigger an alert.

## Stair railings

Either painted or stained, the railing system is installed for your safety while using the stairs. Some sections are attached to the house framing using brackets while others may be fastened to the floor and walls.

When used as designed, the finish will receive constant wear and even the durable coatings applied during construction will age, wear and need to be re-finished.

Pay special attention to how solid the railing and posts *feel*: wobbling or rattling, loose screws in the brackets or rails need to be attended to in a timely fashion to maintain the safety of this system. At the same time, hanging or pulling upon the railing and/or posts can place a strain on the system which exceeds normal usage and that is not covered by the warranty.

## Shelving

Closet and pantry shelving may be a vinyl covered wire, light weight and ultra-low maintenance or a solid surface material, with wooden clothes rods. Both have been secured to the framing of the building and the solid surface materials have been painted to match the closet walls. We recommend a shelf liner for the painted surfaces and do not over load the shelves or rods: too much weight can cause these units to fail.

## EXTERIOR

**NOTE:** Each community we build is a little different from the next and even within specific developments, the maintenance responsibilities may vary between individual housing types.

Always review your CC&Rs to determine what exterior maintenance the HOA takes care of and the tasks you need to perform on your own. Herein, we will provide information on the exteriors as if ALL items were maintained by the homeowner and the reminder to check the manufacturer websites for care information applies to the components throughout this guide.

Maintenance needs on the exterior of your home are effected by sun, wind and moisture exposure and those can change within a mile or two in our 'micro-climates': hot and dryer away from the water or cool and moist in a coastal valley. We'll give you a range but reviewing the changing conditions will provide best gauge for your home, in your location, as to the effects of weather on your home.

## Address numbers

Secured to your house with adhesive and typically at the front door and garage door, these numbers allow for emergency and delivery services to easily identify your location. They can be gently cleaned with soap and water once a year or as needed. If they become loose due to the effects of weather, clear silicon caulk is a good option for reattaching them to the wall, making sure the surfaces are dry prior to attempting the repair.

## **Awnings**

Fabric awnings are an attractive feature on certain elevations, with the added benefit of providing shade to some windows during the hot summer weather.

While low maintenance, during dry periods, dust can collect on the material and gently hosing the awning can help reveal the color of the fabric, as well as remove dust and dirt from the supports. If this cannot be safely accomplished from the ground, consider hiring a service to undertake this task and the repainting the supports will be maintenance task to undertake every 3-5 years.

Sun exposure will weaken the fabric and replacement become necessary, eventually.

## **Decks**

These exterior living spaces are sometimes built within the building envelope while others are attached outside the building and partly supported by legs.

Those built into the structure includes a waterproof coating while the extended deck is constructed of man-made and natural materials. The waterproof coating protects the structure and living area below from water intrusion. Carpet, tile, planter boxes, and anything else that covers a large area should not be placed on the surface, as these alterations could affect the water proof membrane.

Heaters and barbecues should not be placed close to the surface or windows and do not hang anything on the building as the fastener could damage the building envelope and lead to a leak.

Keep the deck clean and protect the surface from damage by sharp objects, table and chair legs and excessive loads: no hot-tubs or kiddie pools on the decks.

Keep all drains and scuppers (over-flow) drain openings clear of debris. Check the rail and deck fasteners, as well as the caulking: gaps or cracks can allow water to enter and damage the structure. As previously noted, with direct exposure to the elements, exterior surfaces need to be checked more frequently for gaps in caulking or faded finishes and make those repairs in a timely fashion to avoid additional finish failure or water intrusion into the building.

## **Doors**

Exterior swinging doors are selected for their appearance, low maintenance, composite materials and the fire-rating on the garage to house door. While not the hollow-core product used inside the house, adding holes to accommodate decorations is still discouraged.

Wipe the exteriors to remove dust every 6 months or so, use lubricate on key cylinders and hinges, making should the screws are snug, as well. Avoid spraying the exterior door with the hose as this direct application of water could force it around the weather strip seal around the door. These pieces: the sweep on the bottom and weather strip around the edges, help seal out moisture and air. These materials will wear and should be inspected annually for proper fit and replace as they age.

## **Fire-rated Door**

The fire-rated house to garage door also has spring loaded hinges, to ensure the door closes and keeps exhaust fumes from entering into the house. These are required by the local building code.

## **Garage Doors**

This modern convenience also provide security for your home and some routine maintenance will keep this system in good condition.

The sectional door has been painted to blend with the color scheme of your building and can be washed down every few months, but avoid hi-pressure washing that may harm the finish or force water past the weather strips. Silicon spraying the hinges and wheels a couple times a year and make certain the nuts and screws securing these parts are tight.

The spring device over the door allows for ease of operation and should be adjusted only by a professional: if the door is ever crooked, out of balance or making odd noises, call the garage door experts to assess and adjust.

## **Garage Door Opener**

While considered part of the door system, the motor and carrier track is a separate device; with safety sensors at the bottom, to reverse the door if something crosses through the sensor beam while the door is closing. If these sensors are knocked out of alignment, the door will not close and you will have to align them by hand to re-establish that connection. Most openers will allow you to over-ride this safety mechanism by holding the wall switch in until the door is fully closed.

The motor outlet is usually protected by a GFCI circuit: if there is no power to the wall switch, first attempt to reset the GFCI outlet.

With the many moving parts of this system, read the manufacturer instructions to understand the preferred maintenance schedule and materials for lubricating this unit.

## **Sliding glass doors**

Allowing for easy access to decks or patios, these low maintenance 'wall-windows' allow light to enter and a fairly unobstructed view to the great outdoors. A couple times a year, clean and lubricate the track, as well as the locking mechanism and run the vacuum hose over the track regularly, to remove damaging grit or sand. Avoid using petroleum based cleaners on the frames or glass, as these could damage the vinyl or window seals.

## **Doorbell**

This system has a voltage transformer, working to connect the doorbell button to the chime inside the house. Dust can settle around the button, so use a silicon spray to lubricate it every few months, as a stuck button can damage the bell unit inside the house.

Dust or vacuum the chime unit regularly.

## **Driveway, sidewalks, porches, slab and foundation**

These features are all made from concrete, installed and finished on-site. This durable material can handle extremes of temperature and moisture and truly stand the test of time. While the installers have added control joints to the garage, driveway, walks and porches; which relieve some of the stresses from the curing of the material, that very curing process may lead to cracking and not every crack will follow a control joint.

Along with cracking, concrete can absorb moisture; a moisture barrier is placed under the slab to limit absorption under the living spaces but oil dripping from a car or other chemicals, even repeated water exposure, can stain the cement. Watch out for older vehicles dripping fluids when parked on the drive and watch out for heavy trucks: keep the moving van on the street, as the weight can crack the driveway or sidewalk. Sweep these areas down when they get dusty, and avoid high pressure washing which, if done incorrectly, could etch the surface.

### **Post-Tensioned slab system**

The concrete under the roof of the building is protected by a Post-Tensioned system, where by steel cables set in place prior to the concrete being poured, are then tensioned while the concrete is curing, to provide additional strengthening to the entire slab. While this does not prevent cracks, it does maintain the integrity of the concrete, in the event of extreme soil movement under the building. Once tensioned, do not cut or core the concrete under the roof of the building.

## **Lighting and Outlets**

Most exterior lighting fixtures are connected to a photo cell that turns them on at night and off in the morning. If there is one photo cell for the entire multi-family building, the HOA maintains those fixtures. If each unit has a photo cell and/ or you control a light by a switch inside your home, you will maintain those fixtures.

Always be sure the power is off when cleaning the fixture, changing the lamp or making adjustments, such as tightening the mounting screws: the wind can create movement that can loosen the screws. Remember to exchange light bulbs for like wattage and style.

### **GFCI outlets**

Just to review: the exterior outlets are a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter, due to their exposure to moisture. They are designed to shut off the flow of current as a safety precaution, just like the interior outlets located near water and the reset for your exterior GFCI outlets may actually be inside the house or garage. Try to verify the cause for tripped circuit has been resolved prior to resetting the device.

## **Roofs and Rain Gutters**

The durable and attractive roof tile of your home is designed to quickly shed rain and is no place for an amateur: it is highly recommended all evaluations and repairs be made by a licensed, professional roofer. The system of underlayment, battens, vents for plumbing, heating and exhaust fans, as well

sheet metal flashings, work with the roof tile to keep the house dry. Hazards of walking on the tile include breaking tile, which can lead to roof leaks, and more importantly: falling off the roof.

Trades that may cross the roof to perform maintenance tasks such as window cleaning, painting, rain gutter or TV dish installation should be asked to take before and after photos to confirm roof tile are not damaged due to their activity.

Regular inspection of the roof, with special attention to the vent penetrations and sealant around flashings will help prevent leaks, especially after major storms, when debris could impact and damage the roof.

Roof vents provide important ventilation to the attic and their number and placement are a part building code requirements. Occasionally, during a rain storm where the winds are especially high, rain may be forced up and through the vent and into the attic. This rare event exceeds the design specifications but as it could happen, we are mentioning it here.

## **Rain Gutters and downspouts**

Collecting the water from the roof and diverting it safely away from the foundation of the house, this system help protect the footings, as well as the appearance of your property, by reducing the splash of dirt and debris created as rain water hits the ground around the home.

Rain gutters may have a screen installed to minimize the accumulation of leaves and debris in the gutter, but they can still become clogged and it is wise to observe the flow of water during a heavy rain: water overflowing the rain gutter above the downspout is a sign of a clog. Clearing debris from the rain gutters sounds simple, but be certain your ladder is the proper size and rating for the job, that you have a spotter to make sure the ladder is stable and will not slip, and take care to not dent the rain gutter as the ladder is used.

Sometimes the downspout will direct the water to a splash block rather than the underground drainage system on the site. In this event, occasionally verify that the water continues to flow away from your unit at least 5 feet and there is no ponding around the foundation. Even the underground drains can become blocked, so that a look during a storm, making sure there is no water backing up from the pipe where the down spout terminates.

## **Stucco and siding**

The exterior walls of the houses are covered with stucco, enhanced on certain elevations with siding. Stucco is a preferred finish for new homes, based on its durability and low maintenance. While accents of paint may have been added to details of the building, the color integrated into the stucco mixture is a simple solution to finishing each unit. Applied over a water-resistant paper, stucco will provide years of durability and 'curb appeal.' A reapplication of stucco fog – a mixture of the color that is sprayed over the stucco to even out the finish, is recommended every 5-7 years.

As a rigid, cement product, curing and the movement of the building itself may be evidenced in hairline cracks; this is normal and hairline cracks do not expose the building to any additional problems or issues. The other location where hairline cracks develop is where the rigid stucco abuts another material, like the wood trim around the doors. Changes in temperature and humidity will



expand and contract these materials differently, increasing the likelihood of stucco cracks appearing. These areas may be caulked and then painted to blend into the wood.

Dust and debris will come to rest on the textured finish and gently hosing off the walls can help remove much of this sediment. Again, take care around doors, windows, light fixtures and other trims to not push water through intended waterproofing and do not pressure wash stucco.

Observe where caulking has been applied between to different surfaces to create a water tight seal and be sure to maintain this seal by re-applying a fresh coating of caulk where the original cracks or begins to peel away. The local home improvement store can help direct you to the material best suited to what needs repair.

The stucco system includes the weep screed at the bottom of the exterior walls, which allow an exit point for moisture entering the stucco to escape. This simple device is installed with a clearance of 4-6 inches above the ground and as you finish the exterior landscaping or hardscapes – patios or porches, always leave 2-3 inches of clearance for the water to exit the bottom of the stucco walls.

Avoid unnecessary holes in the walls, as a break in the water resistant membranes behind the stucco can allow unintended water to enter the wall and void the warranty coverage for this concern. Watch as your landscaping matures and remove leaves and branches which will rub against the stucco and harm the finish. Staining may occur in locations under trim, awning supports, eaves and other areas where dust collects and then is rinsed off by the wet morning air. Another area to watch is on the north side of a structure where the sun does not help dry off the surface. These locations may need more frequent rinsing, possibly brushing the stucco surface with a soft bristled brush, to remove more stubborn stains.

## **Sliding**

Select elevations have been accented with a smooth siding, along with the stucco. This manufactured product is painted to compliment the color scheme and requires little attention, beyond maintaining the caulk between dissimilar surfaces, gently washing down the surface, if needed and the occasion paint touch up. Reference the exterior paint manufacturer product page for prep and repainting recommendations.

## **Trim and accents**

### **Wood trim**

Under the eaves, rafter tails and the fascia will require re-caulking and painting due to exposure to the elements. Additional trim located near gable vents and around exterior doors will need attention, as well. When taking on the task, the attention spent on preparing the surface for repainting is as important as actually applying the paint, so take your time to remove old caulk and loose paint. Use quality materials to seal and apply the new coating, verifying everything is dry before moving on to the next step. Caulk areas with paintable caulking, per the original spec.

Look at these surfaces every year, to maintain the appearance and longevity of the wood.

## **Iron work**

Awning supports and decorative trim may arrive at the site with a powder coat surface or paint that might have been applied in the field. Dirt and dust will accumulate on these surfaces and rinsing them gently will help remove the residue. As with the other exterior features, the weather will age these components and as you notice the finish fade or rust begin to appear, a quick resolution will prevent further deterioration of the object or surrounding surfaces. As these elements are bolted and sealed to the structure, whenever you are servicing these features, verify that those bolts are solid and secure.

## **Shutters and Clay Tile accents**

Many architectural features in use today are made from lightweight foam, allowing for a variety of details on our houses. Secured to the stucco during production, the main maintenance here is to repaint as the weather ages their appearance, although severe weather could loosen these features and an annual visual inspection should be undertaken to ascertain if a feature has become dislodged. Similarly, the paint might get chipped, exposing the foam underneath and requiring fresh paint.

## **Vents**

The exhaust fans mentioned as *interior* items are connected to ducts and terminate as vents on the outside of the home; some through the walls others up to or through the roof. The wall vents have been secured to the framing, weather sealed and often painted to blend into the stucco color. Here, you will mainly be concerned with the condition of the paint, over time. Some vents at the peaks of the roofs – gable vents - may have wood trim around them and caulking to seal these elements together and that caulk and paint will need to be maintained, for appearance and weather tightness. The clothes dryer vents may have a damper – a cover which is opened by the force of the air from the appliance, falling shut again when the cycle ends. This vent needs to be inspected once a year, to verify it has not become clogged with lint and lubricated during that inspection, as a blocked damper can cause a build-up in lint, which in turn, could lead to a fire in the dryer or duct.

## **Windows and screens**

Vinyl windows help protect your home from the elements while providing natural light and ventilation, as most can be opened. Insulated glass in each window reduces the transfer of heat and sound, while the screen inhibits the easy access of pests from outside to in.

NOTE: the screens offer no security nor are they capable of bearing any weight – if pushed or leaned on, they will give way.

Each opening window has weather strip material built into the sash, so when closed, the window is well sealed against the elements. Spraying silicon lubricate on to a rag and wiping the edges of the open window frame – in the space where the window slides – can keep it moving smoothly. Do not use oil based lubricants which may damage the weather strip or other vinyl components. The locking

device can also be lubricated, along with the bottom track for sliding windows: the wheels will collect the lubricant as the window is opened and closed.

Clean the glass gently and be aware that applying any type of tinting film to the glass will void the warranty and may damage the seal of the glass. Before storms, verify that the weep holes in the bottom track are clear – they allow the water which comes through the screen to collect and exit the outside of the building. Occasionally, a heavy rain may deliver more water than the weep holes allow to escape, and some water may overflow the track; just use a towel to dry up the water and prevent damage to the home.

## Landscaping

The appearance and enjoyment of your living space is enhanced by the landscaping within the community, what is in place when you move in and what you add to your lot. The CC&Rs will have guidelines and some restrictions pertaining to what can be planted and installed both inside your own lot and around the front and side yards. You will have to submit a landscape *plan* for approval, verifying the plants, patio and other installations comply with the community and city codes. Once that has been approved, you can proceed to install your plan and we will give you an overview here of what this can involve.

### Drains and Irrigation

The yards are shaped per a precise grading plan that keeps the rain or excess irrigation water flowing away from your house, toward an underground drain inlet and through a pipe to the city storm drain system. Sometimes, the plan may include a *swale*: a 'V' shaped path which will allow the water flow on top of the ground and not through a drain pipe. As you create your own landscape plan, remember to maintain the pattern of the original drainage design.

Throughout the community, water is delivered to the grass, trees and scrubs via an irrigation system. In the community common areas, the management company maintains these devices and the landscaping. Your landscape designer may design, provide and install similar irrigation components to best serve the plants you select.

The components may include:

- Backflow preventer separates the potable (drinkable) water supply from the irrigation system
- Anti-siphon valves provide a release point for pressure in the line
- Time clock, programmed to control water valves – choose controllers with rain gauges or other 'weather-based' water conservation features to comply with CAL Green standards
- Water valves which turn on and off the flow of water
- Pipes, installed underground, to deliver water across the property
- Sprinkler heads, attached to the pipes, that spray water on the grass and other plants
- Flexible supply lines, connected to the water pipes are usually visible on top of the ground
- Emitters, attached or built into the flexible supply lines, deliver water directly to individual plants

These devices provide a convenience in maintaining the plants you choose for the exterior of your home. As these systems are programmed to run early morning, before the wind is too high or the sun is too hot, you will have to make time to manually run the system while you have the time to watch the

sprinklers and emitters for proper application and performance. Too often, we only learn something is not working right when a plant is stressed, the lawn is brown or the side of the house is always wet because the sprinkler is spraying the wall rather than the grass.

## **Grass, trees, scrubs and plants**

So many plants and so little time: personalizing your outdoor living space can bring great satisfaction to some, while others want the look without the work. Grass for the kids and the pets? Drought tolerant and low maintenance? Or maybe, a little of each? With your landscaper or the help desk at the nursery, planning the space is the first step to enjoying your new home's exterior possibilities.

### **Turf**

For many, the *idea* of home often includes an expanse of green grass in the yard. Choosing the right turf also includes choices about how much time, effort and money you wish to invest: from the initial outlay for sod or seed, through fertilizers and mowers, and water to keep it green. Local nurseries are a great starting point to gain insight into what will work well in your location, while keeping your lifestyle in mind.

### **Trees**

The shade a tree may reduce your heating and cooling costs, as well as providing a focal point in the yard. Consider how rapidly your selection will grow, how much the roots will spread or become invasive, forcing their way under sidewalks or maybe even the foundation of your house. Will they keep their leaves all year long? Do they bear fruit – and attract birds and bees, drop flowers and seeds and oranges or olives? Will the crown of the tree begin to rub against your house, or the neighbors? Is that palm going to thrive or wilt with all the water the grass requires? A knowledgeable arborist can guide you to what meet your needs.

### **Shrubs, ground cover and other growing things**

Ground cover can provide erosion control, maintaining top soil on slopes, while engaging the eye with color. When selecting your plants, consider the shape, color and how large each will grow, as many varieties mature quickly and what may have looked balanced at the start can quickly appear overgrown.

Avoid attaching vining plants to the house or fence: install a trellis that lets the plants climb and allows you to lower the plant for maintaining the surface behind it. Consider the watering needs of your groupings, keeping thirsty plants together and separate from the low water groups. You can plant different varieties for when they bloom, providing year-round color and always maintain a space between your house and the plants: keeping the water away from the foundation and avoiding concentrated irrigation spray from hitting the house.

### **Fertilizer, amendments and pests**

If you have plants, you will have pests, use amendments and need fertilizer. Hopefully, the proper balance of amendments, to enhance the ability of the soil to grow healthy plants, with the proper amount of the right fertilizer will lead to fewer pests. Practice moderation, as whatever is not absorbed into the plants and the soil will wash into the surrounding area, down the driveway, into the drains, on to the creeks, rivers, bays and ocean.

# **Walls and fences**

## **Retaining and perimeter walls**

Retaining walls secure and control the slope above and behind the wall.

Perimeter walls will enclose and define the edges of the community or individual property.

Made from natural and manmade materials, these block walls require little maintenance but may be susceptible to moisture from the ground or irrigation systems as well as movement that may crack the mortar joints between the blocks. Control joints are designed to relieve some of the stress that movement causes and should not be filled. The same applies to any weep holes that may have been installed at the base of the walls to allow moisture to escape the walls.

Efflorescence can appear on masonry blocks as a white powdery film, actually natural salts in the stone escaping to the surface. Water and a stiff brush can usually remove this film and if needed, consult with the home improvement store for recommended cleaners. Periodic cleaning is recommended to maintain the appearance.

## **Fences**

Vinyl fences offer privacy and very low maintenance for our busy lives. While adjustments might be needed on the gate hardware to keep the gate level, along with annual lubrication of the hinges and latch, the rest is soap and water!

Some *view* fences will be made of iron or block and glass panels. The iron fence will require painting every few years and beware how erosion might affect the posts. The block wall information above will apply to block and glass view fences, with the tempered glass panels susceptible to impact. Check the CC&Rs to verify who is responsible for the view fences.

# Living in your new home: things to know

## Energy and Water Conservation

Your new home has been built under the CAL-Green Building Code, which set out with this statement:

The purpose of this code is to improve public health, safety and general welfare by enhancing the design and construction of buildings through the use of building concepts having a reduced negative impact or positive environmental impact and encouraging sustainable construction practices in the following categories:

1. Planning and design.
2. Energy efficiency.
3. Water efficiency and conservation.
4. Material conservation and resource efficiency.
5. Environmental quality.

The influence of the Code is experienced in how storm water is handled during and after construction, what light fixtures and plumbing features are installed, how waste is dealt with and even the emissions from materials used to build the house. You can discover all the details here:

<http://www.bsc.ca.gov/Home/CALGreen.aspx>

## Energy conservation

Within your home, the simplest tools quickly become good energy and money saving habits:

- Turn off lights, appliances when you leave a room – vacancy sensing switches help with this when you forget
- Run the washer, dishwasher, etc after 7pm – ‘off-peak’ electricity is less expensive
- Use power strips to turn off devices not in use when you are not at home and invest in LED night lights with photo cells or motion detection sensors
- Research the most efficient light bulb for the device and purpose – in 2017, LED bulbs cost the same as standard Edison bulbs and provide more savings than CFL’s or Edisons, while halogen bulbs use the most energy at the highest per bulb cost

Consult <https://www.energystar.gov/> when shopping for appliances and electronics

The Programmable Thermostat can provide comfort and savings by running the system at times when you are home and not when you are at work or sleeping. Most have a ‘set-back’ feature to start the cycle in order that your desired temperature is reached at the time programmed: you return from work at 6 pm and the system has the house cooled to the programmed temp at 6 pm.

- Whenever possible, open the windows and enjoy the breeze
- Ceiling fans can cool the house when the temperature is moderate at a lower cost than air conditioning. Reversing the fan allows warm air to be circulated off the ceiling in winter, cheaper than running the furnace

- Clean filters allows the HVAC system to move more air with less effort, to save you money

Appliances have many features and settings to help them perform the tasks efficiently, making the most of resources and energy. While reviewing the specific instructions for your model, you can also...

- Run clothes and dish washers with full loads
- Detergents are now formulated to work better in cold water and should be considered to save energy
- Always use the proper setting for the materials being dried and consider *Solar drying*, when and where possible
- Clean the lint screen on the dryer for greater safety and efficiency
- Vacuum the fan area behind and under the refrigerator every 6 months, more if you have pets

## **Water Conservation, Humidity and Mold**

While water conservation is literally built into your new home through low-flow shower heads, faucets and toilets, your lifestyle and habits can help or hinder this effort.

- Shorten your showers – use the ‘2-song’ limit and stop the shower at the end of the second iTunes track
- Do not leave faucets running while brushing your teeth or shaving
- Limit what you put in the garbage disposal- compost when you can
- Rinse veggies in a sink with a stopper, to control how much water is used

ALWAYS use a fan when running water in the bathrooms, laundry or while cooking. Some indoor humidity is healthy but when levels exceed 50% mold growth can really take off. Ventilation is a key to removing the excess humidity that can build up in new construction, so start by turning on the fan in the laundry and leave it on. If high humidity is an issue in your neighborhood, running the air conditioner will remove some of the excess moisture from the air.

Keep in mind that molds are a natural part of the environment, helping to break down organic materials in nature. If allowed to grow uncontrolled inside your home, they can lead to health problems, especially for those with weakened immune systems.

- Controlling indoor moisture is a key to stopping mold growth and reduced indoor air quality
- Ventilation is the first defense against excessive moisture in the home
- Second is to clean up excess water quickly and thoroughly. Mold needs water to thrive, so a wet-suit or damp towel tossed into the back of the closet or behind the door is an incubator for indoor mold growth
- Fix leaks and drips quickly and dry up surrounding surfaces completely
- Remove wet carpet pad and dry the carpet thoroughly, following a major leak or spill
- While mold can grow on almost anything, you can clean an affected surface with some hot water and soap, but remember to work with rubber gloves and in a well ventilated space.
- Beach will eliminate surface mold when used carefully with goggles, gloves and fresh air

Read more here: <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq>

## **Pest Control**

Just as molds are a part of the environment, the great outdoors contains many critters that are just annoying to us in our space. Birds are sweet until they nest on our light fixtures. Opossums, raccoons, or coyote can be fun to spot ambling down the street, then they knock over the trash can in search of left-overs while ants are probably our most common household pests. As pest control is not a part of your warranty, here are some tips:

- Clean up spills to avoid setting the 'table' for outdoor pests to come in
- Don't leave pet food dish outside, it is another invitation to dinner
- Over-watered potted plants and saucers of standing water can become breeding grounds for mosquitos – drain excess and unintended standing water
- Do not plant directly against the foundation – excessive watering here could attract sub-terrarium termites: dirt tubes between the ground and the bottom edge of the house are a sign of active termites

To eliminate pests on the inside, you can treat the exterior yourself, while others will choose to hire professionals and in either case, always read the available literature and take the necessary precautions to keep you, your family and pets safe.

## **Reduce, reuse and recycle**

The goal is to have a better relationship with our local, regional, national and globe neighborhood, understanding that each choice we make has an impact on our immediate and our global environment. For instance, 'buying local' not only improves the surrounding communities' economy, it also reduces the amount of fuel and packaging needed to carry these commodities to market.

Many local government websites have information on water and energy conservation, as well as recycling, public transportation and ride sharing services, where offered.

<http://www.carlsbadca.gov/>

<http://www.chulavistaca.gov/>

<https://www.murrietaca.gov/>

<https://www.ci.oceanside.ca.us/gov/water/>

<http://www.countyofriverside.us/>

<http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/>

<http://www.ca.gov/>



## Local Recycling sites

Waste MGMT Of North County  
Material: Household Hazardous Waste  
2141 Oceanside Blvd  
Oceanside, 92054  
Phone: (760) 439-2824

Lake Elsinore Permanent Household Hazardous Waste  
Material: Household Hazardous Waste  
512 N Langstaff St  
Lake Elsinore 92530  
Phone: (800) 304-2226

Regional Solid Waste Association-Chula Vista  
Material: Household Hazardous Waste  
1800 Maxwell Rd  
Chula Vista 91911  
Phone: (619) 691-5122

## Public Transportation and Ride Share

San Diego Metropolitan Transit System- <https://www.sdmts.com/>

North County Transit District- <http://www.gonctd.com/>

Amtrak- <https://www.amtrak.com/california-train-routes>

Riverside Rideshare- <https://www.ie511.org/iecommuter/>

San Diego County- <http://icommutesd.com/>

<https://www.carpoolworld.com/>

# Maintenance Schedule

## Weekly

- Vacuum carpets
- Clean shower and bath doors, glass and fiberglass/tile – vinegar and water is recommended

## Monthly

- Check HVAC filter – dirty filters waste energy
- Check microwave exhaust fan filter – clean greasy filters
- Use every sink, bath and toilet to refresh the water in the trap
- Check plumbing fixtures for leaks
- Check appliances attached to water for leaks
- Vacuum window and door tracks
- Test Arc Fault circuit breakers – each should reset after it has been tripped
- Test GFCI outlets – each should CLICK off when test button is pushed and turn back on when RESET button is pushed
- Check irrigation system for proper setting on timer clock and the function of water delivery components – valves, sprayers, emitters, etc

## Quarterly

- Review drainage pattern of yard to resolve low areas where water may pool and remove debris that could block drain inlets
- Test window weep holes - pour a cup of water into the bottom track, water should drain outside. If clogged, gently clean and vacuum
- Lubricate dryer vent flapper, if installed, and the hinges of garage door. Carefully clean garage door sensor beams, so as not to push them out of alignment
- Review condition of plants, trees and grass – prune and fertilize as needed
- Dust, sweep and clean sidewalks, driveways, decks, patios, walls and registers, light fixtures
- Spray lubricate the doorbell button

## Bi-annually

- Run HVAC system to verify readiness for upcoming season
- Inspect caulking at sinks, showers and tubs –clean and repair/replace as needed
- Tighten door and drawer hardware, lubricate moving parts
- Check stair railings – tighten screws and secure as needed
- Check deck railing, brackets – tighten as needed and recaulk areas per original spec. Loose railing are a safety hazard and should be serviced as soon as a defect is noted
- Lubricate windows, door hinges, and locks
- Verify all outlets and fixtures are secure and functional – caulk fixtures per original spec
- Clean exterior doors, windows and fences
- Clean sink faucet aerators

- Check the evidence of termites
- Test underground drain system using a hose to verify system is not clogged
- Review concrete surfaces for signs of damage – roots and impact can affect their condition

## Annually

- Review manufacturer recommendations for servicing appliances, HVAC system, water heater, fireplace, etc.
- Inspect the roof, rain gutters, downspouts and fire sprinkler system – these may be covered by HOA – and if not, hire a professional as walking on the roof tile is not recommended
- Professionally clean the carpet
- Re-grout or caulk edges of ceramic tile, as needed
- Verify solid surface flooring is secure and in good condition – follow manufacturer recommendations for maintenance
- Tighten bolts on garage door tracks and lubricate carrier track
- Check condition of door weather strip and replace as needed
- Check condition of wall and fence components - secure and clean
- Vacuum and lubricate doorbell chime and exhaust fan motors, as needed
- Turn off and on every water angle stop, hose bib and main water shut off valve
- Review exterior stucco, siding, vents and accessories for wear, damage, stability and the condition of caulking for these components
- Test smoke and CO detectors
- Replace battery in irrigation timer, if required and verify function of any weather based set-back feature
- Prune trees and scrubs when dormant
- Verify function of water pressure regulator and back flow preventers, if installed
- Inspect an installed *view* fencing for stability or corrosion and consult HOA regarding responsibility and repair options

