HOMEOWNER **MANUAL**

BRINGING COMMUNITY TO LIFE

DUNSIRE
DEVELOPMENTS

Vol. 2 – October 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOMEOWNER MANUAL

INTERIORS

BASEMENT/FOUNDATION

CONCRETE FLOOR

It is common to find cracks in concrete basement floors due to shrinkage and minor settlement. This does not indicate faulty materials or faulty workmanship. We will repair cracks exceeding 4 millimetres in width for a period of one year following occupancy. Minor cracks can also be repaired using a non-shrink grout.

A white powdery substance (efflorescence) might be present on some areas of the basement floor. They are deposits left behind during the curing process of the concrete; as moisture evaporates, the salt in the concrete is brought to the surface. These deposits can be easily scrubbed off using a stiff brush.

When the basement floor has fully cured (at least two years), it can be treated with a concrete sealer to make an unpainted concrete floor easier to clean and reduce the accumulation of dust on the concrete surface.

For cleaning unpainted concrete floors, use a washing soda solution (4 to 6 tablespoons of washing soda to a gallon of hot water). If necessary, scouring powder can be used with the washing soda solution. For painted concrete floors, use plain water or a mild soap solution. All solution must then be rinsed off with clean water.

FOUNDATION WALLS

Basement walls are subject to many stresses and strains. The top portion of the base wall, which extends above ground, is exposed to extreme temperature changes causing the concrete and other masonry to expand and contract. The concrete walls also tend to contract as they cure after construction. It may take up to two years for the concrete walls to fully cure. This creates stresses for the foundation walls and may result in the development of minor cracks that do not affect the structural performance of the wall. The settling of the soil around the house may shift the foundation and can further contribute to the strains foundation walls are subjected to.

It is not necessary to repair cracks unless they leak – surface cracks can be repaired using waterproof, non-shrinking grout. However, the installation of drainage membranes make foundation leaks a rare occurrence.

Your basement has been designed to prevent exterior moisture from entering the house, however, during humid weather, some dampness may occur. This condition will stop occurring as the soil in the backfill areas becomes more dense and compact over the years. Maintaining proper drainage can also help alleviate this condition.

WALLS, WINDOWS & DOORS

DRYWALL

Drywall is used on the interior walls and ceilings in your house. Minor cracks and "nail pops" may develop due to the shrinkage of the supporting wood frame behind the drywall.

As part of the Year End list, we will repair nail pops and shrinkage-related defects in the drywall once during the first year of occupancy.

Nail pops can be filled in using drywall compound or filler paste. When decorating or repainting, let the filler dry completely and then sand lightly with a fine-grain sand paper before painting. Cracks can be repaired using spackle or caulk.

Repairs should not be done until the drying out process is almost complete.

TRIM & MOULDING

Shrinkage of the trim and mouldings will occur during the first few years due to changes in temperature and humidity. For example, humidity levels should be maintained between 40%-50% to avoid contraction of materials and permanent damage of trim, moulding, and the overall structure of the home. This can cause trims and mouldings to separate from the floor, the wall, and at the joints or corners. This separation is also due to the natural settling process in your home. Small separations can sometimes be brought back together after further settling, or can be easily remedied. Therefore, it is recommended that repairs be done after the first heating season.

Separations at joints and corners can be corrected with caulk or wood filler, and touch-up paint.

Trims and mouldings that have separated from the floor or wall can be loosened then renailed in their proper position. Drive the new nail close to the existing nail hole and fix the old nail hole with putty and touch-up paint.

INTERIOR DOORS & FRAMES

As the house settles and goes through the drying out process, the interior doors may go out of alignment, bind, not latch or close properly. This is also a natural response to the changes in temperature and humidity that the doors are exposed to. It may be more difficult to operate the doors during colder months due to warping. Extra care should be taken to keep the warped doors closed as much as possible, in order to help retain their proper shape, structure, and alignment. Avoid slamming the door, which can damage the door and jamb, and cause cracks in the walls to form. Once the weather warms up, the door often goes back to its original form and will be easier to operate.

We will repair or replace interior doors that have warped or gone out of plane in excess of six millimetres to ensure acceptable operation. These repairs will be made once, at the end of the first year of occupancy.

WINDOWS

Clean glass surfaces using vinegar and water, or a commercial glass cleaner. Aluminum metal surfaces can be cleaned with warm water only. Apply a silicone lubricant after each cleaning. Similarly, if sticking should occur on a sliding window, apply a silicone lubricant to remedy the problem.

While caulking can last for many years, weather and time will shrink and dry caulking making the seal ineffective. Annually inspect the caulking around windows for any cracks or gaps and re-caulk where it is needed.

When re-caulking is necessary, consult with a hardware store or check the label to ensure that the correct caulking material is being purchased for the intended purpose. Prior to re-caulking, remove old caulking materials that have deteriorated, clean the surfaces, and read the manufacturer's instructions carefully to take necessary safety precautions.

During the colder months, the differences in temperature between a cold window and a warm room can create a convection current, which is caused by vertical air movements (warm air rising and cold air dropping) occurring close to the window. This mimics the feeling of a draft around windows, which might be mistaken as a leak from the outside air into the interiors.

Condensation that forms on the interior surfaces of a window is a result of high humidity in the home and cold external temperatures. Adjust the humidity level of your home in conjunction with the changes in season to avoid this problem. However, if the condensation forms between the two glass panes, this indicates seal failure. Seal failures in insulated glass units are covered by the one-year warranty and will be replaced.

FLOORS

HARDWOOD FLOORING

As a natural wood product, hardwood floors will expand and contract due to variations in temperature and humidity. Hardwood floors sometimes have the tendency to squeak or make snapping sounds when expanding and contracting. This is normal and is no cause for alarm. However, maintaining proper humidity levels can greatly reduce their occurrence.

Low humidity levels in the winter can cause wood to shrink and separate. When this occurs, hairline gaps may appear between the boards. This is a normal response to a moisture level that is too low. The gaps will close up once the humidity level increases.

Low humidity levels can even cause permanent damages to your floors, as the planks could crack causing irreversible damage. High humidity can also cause permanent damage as excessive moisture can create swelling of planks and damage to the wood surface. The humidity level in your home should be maintained between of 40-50% to avoid issues.

High humidity levels can cause expansion and lead to cupping and crowning. Cupping is caused by a moisture imbalance; the wood is wetter on the bottom of the board than on the top. Aside from high humidity, liquid spills can also cause cupping. Clean up a spill immediately to avoid having it absorbed by the wood. Wipe dry and then spray some wood cleaner on a cloth or sponge to wipe the spot clean.

Cleaners should never be applied directly to the floor. Use a warm water and vinegar solution to help soften and clean tough food spills. Applied finished flooring shall be installed without visible ridges or depressions. Should visible ridges or depressions occur, the variation shall not exceed 6 millimeters from the specified plane. We will make corrections, one time only, to meet this standard for a period of one year following occupancy.

Regularly sweep or vacuum the floor to prevent dirt and dust from accumulating and scratching the finish. Do not use a wet mop on hardwood floors as this can cause the wood to expand and damage the floor.

Wax, oil-based detergents, and household cleaners should be avoided as they can dull and damage the finish. Protect areas of the floor that may be exposed to direct sunlight. Direct sun can cause damage and discoloration to the hardwood floor.

Note that high traffic areas will dull the finish on the hardwood floor over time. Do not walk on hardwood floors with high-heeled shoes as they will make marks and damage the floor. Felt covers should be installed underneath furniture legs. This will prevent scuffing from furniture placed on hardwood floors.

CERAMIC & MARBLE

Marble is a soft material that scratches easily, and should be treated like fine wood. It is particularly sensitive to acidic substances such as citrus, vinegars, or oil, which causes surface damage. Marble is porous and vulnerable to stains, requiring a more frequent reapplication of a sealer to protect the material.

When cleaning marble or ceramic tiles, vacuum the floor first to make sure dirt has been removed, then use a damp sponge mop with warm water. You may use vinegar with warm water on ceramic tiles. The use of abrasive cleaners will gradually remove the glossy coating on the tile surface and dull the finish. Use a specialty cleaner if a more thorough cleaning is required. The joints or grout between tiles can be cleaned using a fiber brush, water, and a mild cleanser. A sealer can also be applied to the grout to prevent staining.

Moving heavy objects across a tile floor should be avoided as this can cause the tiles to crack. Make sure that the movers use a dolly or place plywood down on the floor when moving in heavy furniture or appliances.

CARPET

Carpets can be easily maintained with weekly vacuuming. In high-traffic areas, a light daily vacuuming might be necessary. Spills should be cleaned up immediately. Blot or dab spills and avoid rubbing, which could damage the fiber.

Stain removers can be used, however a spot check on a discrete area of the carpet should be done prior to use. Furniture can also crush carpet pile fibers. Regular vacuuming under heavy pieces of furniture can help prevent this.

Visible seams are normal and are alleviated with time, use and vacuuming. Carpets with low, tight naps usually show more visible seams in comparison to other carpet styles.

High humidity can cause rippling to occur. If the carpet remains rippled after the humidity has left, contact a professional to have the carpet restretched.

We will correct loose or buckling carpet for one year following the date of occupancy.

Repairs to carpets, can sometimes leave visible seams. It is also important to note that different carpet types require different cleaning methods and machines. Please ensure you refer to the manufacturers care guide.

Additionally, please take caution when moving furniture on carpeted flooring as it can cause permanent stretching and damage to the carpet. Heavy furniture should be lifted instead of pushed or pulled across the carpeting floor.

CABINETS & VANITIES

CABINETRY

Cabinets with painted wood, metal, laminated plastic or wood-grain vinyl surfaces can be cleaned with a cloth or sponge that has been dampened with warm water. Make sure to dry the surface with a microfibre cloth to prevent streaking. Avoid the use of abrasive cleaners or other commercial cleaning products as they may cause the finish to stain or fade.

Lemon oil and naphtha spray waxes should be avoided, as they will damage the lustre of the finish and damage the cabinets.

Cabinet doors should be checked frequently for loose screws on the hinges. This is a natural occurrence and will require tightening. A screwdriver can be used for the adjustments, however make sure not to tighten the screws too tightly as they can strip the wood.

Problems with squeaky or hard-to-operate hinges can be easily remedied with the application of a silicone lubricant. Be careful not to get any of the lubricant onto the wood surface.

Extra care should be taken when using heating appliances that are directly below cabinets in order to avoid damaging the cabinets from excessive moisture and heat. Portable kitchen appliances such as a kettle or a toaster, which emits moisture, should be directed away from cabinets to prevent damage to the cabinet surface.

Avoid placing wet cloths or towels over cabinets to prevent water damage such as staining, chipping or swelling from occurring.

Cabinet doors and their hardware are warranted against defects in material or workmanship for one year from the date of occupancy.

Wooden cabinets are made from a natural material that carries variations in grain and colour. Likewise, colour and grain of replacement parts may vary from the original installation.

GRANITE & OTHER NATURAL STONE COUNTERTOPS

Granite is extremely durable and resistant to abrasions, heat and water, making it easy to clean and use. Although hot pots and pans can be placed directly on the surface without damaging it, it is not advised since granite is a poor conductor, meaning the surface will remain hot for some time. For granite and other countertops, trivets or hot pads should be used. Natural stone countertops are porous and spills must be cleaned immediately using mild soap and hot water. The periodic reapplication of a sealer is also required to help prevent stains.

Frequently rinse countertops using a solution composed of mild dishwasher detergent or soap and water. Avoid exposing the countertops to oils since they can easily penetrate natural stone materials and be difficult to remove.

Natural stone countertops will display natural variations, and pattern and shade variances. This is common and not a defect in the material. Fissures and pits may also be present in crystalline structures such as granite. This is part of the natural structure of the stone and does not compromise its durability. Seams are visible to the sight and touch, although the level of visibility will depend on the granularity, colour and pattern of the stone.

LAMINATE COUNTERTOPS

Clean the countertop surface using a cloth dampened with a mild dishwashing detergent and water solution. Avoid the use of abrasive cleaners or steel wool since they can damage the lustre of the surface.

Always use a cutting board when chopping, and protective insulating pads for hot pots and pans to protect the counter.

Wipe spills immediately and do not leave counters wet from standing water or wet cloths. This will prevent

water damage, which can lead to the swelling of the subsurface of the countertop. Laminated countertops will have one or more discernible seams.

Natural shrinkage may cause separation of countertops from walls, backsplash and around sinks. Re-caulk where necessary to maintain a good seal and prevent warping.

We will repair the delamination of laminate caused by a defect in material or workmanship for one year following the date of occupancy.

PLUMBING SYSTEM & FIXTURES

The plumbing fixtures in your home, including faucets, shower heads, basins, toilets and tubs, are warranted against defects in material and workmanship for the first year of occupancy. Water pipes and drains are protected against defects in material and workmanship in the two-year warranty.

SHUT-OFFS

The main stuff-off valve is located near your meter. This is used during major water emergencies such as a water line break, when a sprinkler system is being installed, or when an addition to your home is being built. The shut-off valves for toilets are located under the toilet tank.

There is also a city-owned water shut-off valve located in the driveway or front lawn. Inspect the standpipe once a year to make sure the cap has not risen above the grade level. If it has risen too high, it should be lowered to avoid damage. Contact the city or municipality to inform them if damage should occur.

SUMP PUMPS

Homeowners should perform visual inspections of the sump pump on a monthly basis. Homeowners should check for debris build up at the bottom of the basin, or water levels higher than the float. Should this be identified, we recommend referring to the manufacturers care guide for service. When performing any service or maintenance on the sump pump, please note that the power must be unplugged. As an additional precaution, battery backup and high-water level alarms are available for install at your discretion.

CLOGGED DRAINS

Clogged drains are built up progressively. Preventative maintenance measures can go a long way in preventing serious drain blockage. Some of the basics are to avoid pouring grease or coffee grounds down the drain, and to use a plunger at the first sign of a low drain. It is also recommended to pour boiling water down the drain once a week to prevent clogging. The drains can also be cleaned frequently by pouring ½ cup of baking soda followed by ½ cup of vinegar down the drain. Complete the process by rinsing the drain thoroughly with hot water.

If you have a plunger drain stopper in your bathroom sink, clean this regularly by loosening the nut under the sink and pulling out the rod attached to the plunger. Lift the stopper, clean and reinstall. Use strainers for floor drains in showers and tubs, and clean them regularly by clearing out any debris by hand.

The most common causes of blocked drains in toilets are feminine hygiene products; toys and other objects placed in the toilet by small children, paper towels, baby wipes, disinfectant wipes and Q-tips. Avoid flushing tampons or other feminine hygiene products and paper towels down the toilet, as they are highly absorbent materials that expand and do not disintegrate like bathroom toilet paper.

TOILETS

Low-flush toilets are required by the Ontario Building Code and are designed to use less water. As such, you may experience an incomplete flush, but this does not mean the fixture is defective. A second flush may be required.

Avoid the use of chemical toilet cleaners that require installation in the water tank. The blue chlorine "puck" is an example of the type of chemicals that are highly corrosive and can severely damage the components of the tank. It could corrode the rubber flap in the toilet tank, and cause permanent damage to the rubber gaskets and seals. This will lead to a running toilet, and water leaks from the tank to the washroom floor.

Retain a water level in the toilet tank that is 2-3 centimeters below the top of the overflow valve. If the water level is too low, incomplete flushing could occur; and if the water level is too high, the water in the tank will constantly leak into the toilet bowl. Adjust the float arm to adjust the water level.

If you notice that the ball is half submerged in the water, causing the water level to be too high, it may be punctured and in need of replacement. Make sure to check the chain in the flush handle and make sure it is not too tight or it could prevent the rubber stopper from sealing and also result in a leak.

FAUCETS

Faucets can be cleaned using a spray cleaner, baking soda or a mild detergent. When removing dry water spots, wipe with a soft damp cloth using warm water. Avoid using abrasive cleaners that will damage the finish.

Periodically clean the aerators for your bathroom and kitchen faucets to prevent dirt and scale buildup. There is no need to shut off the water supply when cleaning or replacing an aerator. Make sure to close the faucet and put the drain plug in the sink before starting. Unscrew the aerator from the faucet, along with the washer and screen. Worn out pieces should be replaced. Soak the screen in vinegar for a few minutes, then scrub with a light brush and rinse all the parts. Reassemble the aerator and make sure not to over tighten. Showerheads can be changed in the same way.

The most common problem for both washer and washerless faucets is leaks. This is caused by forcing faucets to close tightly, which can cause the washer to cut, twist or bind. Leaks that occur from under the handle in compression faucets are most likely caused by a worn out "O"-ring.

Replacement parts can be obtained in hardware stores. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. Before starting the repair, make sure to turn off the water supply for that particular faucet.

BATHTUBS, SINKS & SHOWERS

We recommend placing a strainer in your bathtub, shower and sink to prevent obstructions from going down drain openings.

Clean bathtubs, showers and sinks using mild household cleaners and non-abrasive cleaners. Strong abrasive cleaners can dull and stain your fixtures. Each fixture has been built using different materials, such as stainless steel, acrylic or porcelain enamel. The cleaning method, maintenance, and the chemicals that can be used for each one will vary. When purchasing a cleaner, read the label to make sure it is the appropriate product.

Glass shower enclosures or stalls can be cleaned using dishwashing detergent. Use a commercial glass cleaner for hard water mineral build-ups. Regularly clean the aerator and filters in taps and showerheads. Silicone in showers and bathrooms must be inspected on a regular basis and replaced as needed in order to avoid leaks.

Avoid wearing shoes in bathtubs as they contain gritty particles that will scratch the surface. Food particles should never be left on the sink for prolonged periods of time.

If a sink or tub accidentally gets chipped, touch it up immediately using matching touch-up enamel that can be obtained at a hardware store or plumbing supplier.

HVAC (OR INTERIOR CLIMATE CONTROL)

The delivery and distribution systems, including all wires, conduits, pipes, junctions, switches, receptacles and seals associated with your furnace system are warranted against defects for two years. Materials and workmanship are warranted for one year.

We warrant HVAC appliances installed by us for one year following possession.

FURNACE

The heating system should be capable of producing an inside temperature of 22°C. The furnace and its components including the fan motor, heat exchanger and electronic components are warranted for two years. It is recommended that you document all maintenance and service.

Regularly check, clean or replace furnace filters every month. This will extend the life expectancy of your furnace and allow for a more efficient fuel consumption.

If the furnace is not working, check the thermostat and verify what temperature it is set for. Confirm that the furnace switch in the basement is also turned on. Make sure that nothing is blocking the exhaust of the furnace vent pipe, which is located at the exterior of your home. Ensure that the circuit breaker in the electrical panel for the furnace is in the ON position.

The thermostat is connected to the surface by a low-voltage wire line. Its main circulation fan has two settings: ON and AUTO. This should be left in the ON position for the first eight months to help in the drying of your home. The furnace fans should be left in the ON position during heating and cooling seasons to allow for proper air circulation and so that the heating and cooling systems can run more efficiently.

Avoid overheating your new home as it can cause excessive shrinkage of framing lumber and damage the home.

It is normal to hear some ductwork noise and is no cause for alarm. There may be some odour emission when it is first turned on, or when it has not been used for an extended period of time. The odour is caused by dust that has settled in the ducts and should diminish shortly. If you smell gas, immediately call the gas company.

DRYER VENT

Monitoring of exterior dryer vent line should be inspected quarterly, and any debris should be removed as it can pose a fire hazard.

AIR CONDITIONING

The air conditioning system, if installed by us, is covered by warranty for one year.

The air conditioning system is a closed system, meaning the interior air is continually recycled. Warm outside air and the heat emitted from the sun are enough to disrupt the cooling effect of the air conditioning unit. For best results, keep the windows closed and the drapes shut.

Set your thermostat appropriately for the time of day depending on your needs. Set the thermostat at a moderate temperature when you are not home. It is advised that the air conditioning at the breaker panel be switched off before the winter season as to avoid an accidental start-up that can damage the unit.

HUMIDITY & VENTILATION

Power humidifiers require monthly inspections and periodic cleanings by the owner as required. Before the summer, it is important to close the baffle to prevent moisture from entering the ducts, which could lead to an increased load on the air conditioner and cause corrosion to parts of the furnace. Humidity levels over the first year of occupancy may be excessive due to moisture contained within building materials. It may be necessary to run a dehumidifier to alleviate this condition.

RELATIVE HUMIDITY TABLE

HUMIDITY LEVEL	
LOW (Under 40%)	May result in splitting Trim Work, Gaps and shrinkage of hardwood flooring causing damage, caulking separating at countertops and around trim.
HIGH (Above 50%)	Foggy windows including condensation, visible mold, rotting wood, swelling of hard-wood floor causing cupping, interior doors swelling and movement within interior trim causing damage.

The ideal humidity in your house should be maintained between 40-50%. Humidity levels outside this range can have adverse effects to flooring, trim, doors, drywall, and the overall structure of your home.

Humidity levels can be monitored on some thermostats, or a hygrometer can be purchased. If purchasing a hygrometer, this unit can be kept on the main floor of the home for most accurate readings.

If you're experiencing high humidity levels, some options that can assist in lowing the humidity would be the installation of a humidifier on your furnace to automatically maintain appropriate levels or a portable room dehumidifier that can be left on the lowest level of the home. Additional tips for keeping the humidity maintained in your home can include leaving the kitchen/bath exhaust fan on for an additional 15 minutes after use.

When experiencing low humidity levels in your home, similarly to the correction of high humidity levels, the installation of a humidifier on your furnace to automatically maintain appropriate levels will help, or the purchase of a portable humidifier which can be left on the lowest level of your home.

It is important to ensure there is regular air flow throughout the home to help combat humidity levels being too low or too high. Keeping your furnace fan in the ON position will provide better air circulation, healthier indoor air, and aid in maintaining the appropriate humidity levels in your home.

Additionally, if your home is equipped with a gas or electric fireplace, keep in mind that this will drastically reduce the humidity in your home.

GAS FIREPLACES

We warrant the operation of the gas fireplace(s) installed by us for one year following the date of occupancy.

Clean the fireplace glass using a soft cloth with clear water. Glass cleaners and any ammonia-based products should be avoided. These products leave a thin film that will bake a brown crusty layer on the glass. Specialty fireplace glass cleaners can be purchased in hardware stores.

Familiarize yourself with the control panel and the manufacturer's directions. Inspect the fireplace yearly. It is advised that the pilot light be extinguished for the summer. Additionally, it is also advised that the pilot light remain on during the heating season to combat the cold air from entering the home through the exhaust vent

After switching the fireplace on, there should be a short delay before the flames start to ignite gently and silently. If it does not proceed in this manner and you smell gas, immediately switch off the fireplace and report it to the gas company. If the pilot flame is noisy, turn the adjuster screw clockwise to decrease the flame size.

When your fireplace is initially lit, ensure that the room where the fireplace is located is adequately ventilated since it will be emitting a noticeable odour caused by the curing of metal parts. This will go away after 8 hours of burning time.

Condensation may also appear on the interior surface of the fireplace glass. This is normal and will evaporate shortly. It is caused by the temperature difference between the air in the fireplace and the glass surface. Be careful around the fireplace as the glass surface temperature can become very high.

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM & FIXTURES

LOSS OF POWER

In the event of complete power failure, check to see if your neighbour is also experiencing a loss of power. If they are, call the power company and inform them of the problem.

If the power failure is only at your home, check to see whether the master switch and circuit breakers are tripped. If this is the case, switch the breaker to an OFF position and then an ON position. This step is needed since the breaker does not always move to the OFF position when tripped.

If you cannot find the problem, call an electrician.

If an appliance does not work, check its mechanism in addition to the circuit breaker. If a reset breaker trips repeatedly, there is a chance that it is the appliance that is defective.

One or more of the bathrooms, as well as your kitchen, will contain a ground fault interrupt (GFI) on the receptacle. Some contain two buttons on the plug for testing purposes. We recommend testing once a month. It also may serve the purpose of protecting the receptacles in all the bathrooms in the home.

Other plugs in your house may be protected by AFCI (Arc Fault Circuit Interrupter) and should be tested once a month. The test button for the AFCI is located on the breaker.

SMOKE DETECTORS

Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors have been installed in each level of your home near the stairs and sleeping areas. They are on a common electrical circuit and may have a battery backup. In some circumstances smoke detectors are wired to high-intensity strobes that flash.

The smoke and carbon monoxide detectors we have installed are warranted for one year following your possession date.

Regularly test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure they are functioning properly. The steps for the test can be found in the owner's manual. Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors that are more than 10 years old should be replaced. A smoke detector may also beep to indicate that the batteries require changing or the device needs to be tested.

The exterior of the smoke detector should be cleaned monthly using the soft brush attachment of a vacuum cleaner or a damp cloth. This will help remove any accumulated dirt or excess dust, which can trigger a false alarm. Do not remove their external casings and attempt to clean inside either detector directly.

If a false alarm occurs, open the windows to clear away any smoke or excess moisture lingering near the detector. In cases where repairs are necessary, call a technician to fix and reinstall the detector as soon as possible.

HOT WATER TANK

The main causes for a damaged tank lining are hard water and overheating. A water heater contains a dial that governs the water temperature. Hot water tanks have a balance (mixing) valve installed to prevent burns. Remember that it may take the hot water longer to arrive at sinks, tubs, and showers that are further away from the water heater. The installation of a water softener can also help reduce scale build-up.

It is recommended that you flush your hot water tank once a year. Please refer to your hot water manual for further instructions.

If you discover that the unit is not functioning and you have no hot water, check the pilot light, temperature setting and water supply valve before calling for service. Sometimes the pilot light may be out due to the dirt or scale in the main gas lines. To light the water heater pilot, follow the instructions located on the unit. All calls for service should be directed to the number on your unit label.

Condensation will sometimes form on the tank surface. This is normal and does not indicate a leak.

As a safety precaution, vacuum the area around a gas-fired water heater to prevent dust from interfering with proper flame combustion. You should also avoid storing anything close to the heater as this will obstruct the flow of air for the heater and creates a fire hazard. Using the top of the heater as a storage shelf should also be avoided.

ATTIC

Access to the attic has been provided for maintenance and inspection purposes only. Using the attic for storage should be avoided as it may overload the trusses and lead to damages such as ceiling cracks and the disturbance of ceiling insulation.

The attic insulation was blown in during construction. However, blown insulation becomes ineffective if it is uneven. After services are done in your attic, always confirm that the insulation has remained smooth and even.

Extreme wind conditions can cause the blown insulation to dislodge and leave the ceiling drywall exposed in the attic. Occasionally inspect the attic, especially after storms, to make sure the insulation has not been dislodged and to re-fluff insulation that has been compressed.

Heavy insulation in the attic creates a condition called "truss uplift." Truss uplift occurs in the winter due to the variations in moisture and temperature between the bottom and top chords of the trusses. The top chords expand due to humidity, and the bottom chords shrink due to dryness. This results in the trusses being lifted off the interior walls, causing cracks in the ceilings to form. This condition corrects itself in the summer when the trusses drop back down and causes most of the cracks to close. This condition is common and does not indicate a structural problem with the house.

Your attic is ventilated to provide good airflow. The vents are located in the roof and under the eaves. They should be clear of obstructions to ensure proper ventilation.

After heavy snowstorms, it is advisable to check the attic and make sure snow was not blown in through the soffit vents. If snow is present in the attic, remove before melting occurs to prevent damage.

Regularly check the roof vents during winter to make sure they have not been blocked by snow or ice. This will ensure that the attic remains properly ventilated, and prevent moisture damage and the growth of moulds and mildew in your home.

NOTE: When you are conducting necessary maintenance in your attic, be careful not to step off the wood members onto the drywall. This can lead to personal injury and ceiling damage.

HOMEOWNER MANUAL

EXTERIORS

FOUNDATION WALLS/CONCRETE

The top portion of the base wall, which extends above ground, is exposed to extreme temperature changes causing the concrete and other masonry to expand and contract. The concrete walls also tend to contract as they cure for many months after construction. These changes create stresses on the foundation walls and may result in the development of minor cracks that do not affect the structural performance of the wall. If the cracks do not exceed 6mm, and do not allow water penetration into the home, and show no evidence of lateral or vertical movement, they are considered minor in nature and acceptable as per the Construction Performance Guidelines.

Area/Room	Tolerance Measurement
Basement Concrete Floor	<4mm not acceptable
Garage Concrete Floor	<6mm not acceptable
Foundation Wall (CIP)	<6mm not acceptable
Brick Veneer	<2mm not acceptable

The settling of the soil around the house may shift the foundation and can further contribute to strains on the foundation walls.

The installation of drainage membranes makes foundation leaks a rare occurrence. It is not necessary to repair cracks unless they leak. Surface cracks can be repaired using waterproof, non-shrinking grout.

GARAGE **FLOORS**

The garage floor slab has been installed to slope slightly towards the front of the garage, allowing excess water to drain out. If the garage floor settles, preventing water from flowing towards the front of the garage, we will make corrections under the one-year warranty.

It is common to find cracks in concrete garage floors due to shrinkage and minor settlement. This does not indicate faulty materials or faulty workmanship. We will repair cracks exceeding six millimetres in width for a period of one year following occupancy. Minor cracks can also be repaired using a non-shrink grout.

A white powdery substance (efflorescence) might be present on some areas of the garage floor. They are deposits left behind during the curing process of the concrete; as moisture evaporates, the salt in the concrete is brought to the surface. These deposits can be easily scrubbed off using a stiff brush and vinegar.

When the garage floor has cured, it can be treated with a concrete sealer to prevent salt damage from cars. A reliable hardware store can recommend the right product.

To further prevent salt damage, especially during the winter season, it is recommended that ice buildup be removed from behind tires prior to parking in the garage. Slush and excess water should also be removed from the garage floor regularly and off the garage floor thoroughly to remove the winter salt deposited by your vehicles.

Please note that it is not advisable to hose the garage floor frequently since it allows water to penetrate existing cracks, increasing soil movement. It is suggested to use sweeping as the primary method of cleaning the garage floor. If your vehicle has an oil leak, place a flattened cardboard box underneath the leak to protect your garage floor from oil stains.

PORCHES & STAIRS

It is common to find minor cracks in concrete due to shrinkage and minor settlement. Precast concrete stoops and steps should not settle in excess of 3 centimetres (one inch) in relation to the house structure. If the condition of the steps poses a safety hazard within the first year, we will promptly make the necessary repairs. Cracks that are larger than six millimetres in width will also be repaired within the one-year period following occupancy.

Refrain from using salt or other de-icing products, which can damage the concrete. Sweeping is the safest and most recommended mode of keeping the concrete slabs clean. If washing is necessary, ensure that the external temperatures are moderate and avoid washing the slabs when temperatures are high; the sudden change in temperature can damage the surface bond of the concrete.

WALKWAYS

Walkways are exposed to fluctuations in temperature and precipitation. This may cause temporary cracks to develop in the concrete and minor settlement and upheaval to occur in response to climate change. Within the first year, if the condition of the walkway constitutes an immediate safety hazard, repairs will be made.

Grass or other seedlings growing between or underneath the slabs can also cause unevenness of the walkway. Unwanted growth can be treated with your method of preference.

Sweeping is the safest and most recommended mode of keeping the concrete slabs clean. If washing is necessary, ensure that the external temperatures are moderate and avoid washing the slabs when temperatures are high; the sudden change in temperature can damage the surface bond of the concrete.

During the winter months, refrain from using salt or other de-icing products, which can damage the concrete.

Note: when possible avoid the use of salt to remove ice as it can be corrosive to the concrete. Sand or calcium is preferred.

EXTERIOR WALLS

BRICK FINISHING

Bricks and mortar joints are water-resistant but not waterproof. Gardens should not be built up against the foundation wall or cover any of the brickwork since it can damage your home by allowing water to penetrate the masonry. Sprinklers used against the foundation or brick siding can also cause water to leak into the basement. It is therefore advised that sprinklers be directed away from the home.

The lower row of bricks has occasional gaps called "weep" holes that allow excess moisture to escape from behind the bricks. These should be kept clear and unobstructed at all times to allow air movement and prevent condensation.

As the mortar joints cure and the building settles, it is common for minor cracks to form in the joints. Cracks larger than 2 millimetres are considered excessive and will be repaired under the one-year warranty. It is recommended that initial repairs be made after the first year of occupancy to allow for normal settlement. The mortar joints may need to be repointed after many years and only if they have significantly deteriorated.

A white powdery substance (efflorescence) might be present on some brick surfaces. They are deposits left behind during the curing process; as moisture evaporates, the salt in the concrete is brought to the surface. These deposits can be easily scrubbed off using a stiff brush and vinegar.

VINYL SIDING

The vinyl siding is not nailed tight to the framework of the house in order to give allowance for the siding to expand and contract in response to climate variations. This can also create slight gaps in the joints. Joints in siding should remain reasonably tight in accordance with the manufacturer specifications and as covered under the two-year warranty.

The fluctuations in temperature can also cause "oil canning" to occur. "Oil canning" is a slight wave that develops across the flat areas of sheet metal panels between fasteners. This is a fairly common occurrence and is not a structural defect. If the oil canning is so severe as to cause detachment or allow water penetration into the building envelope, repairs will be made under the two-year warranty.

Vinyl siding is water-resistant but not waterproof. Direct sprinkler heads away from the home and do not use power spray washers, which could force water behind the siding, damaging the exterior wall sheeting. Vinyl siding does not require painting and can be cleaned using water and a mild detergent.

STUCCO

Stucco expands and contracts as a natural response to climate variations. It has been installed to give allowances for such changes. It is common for minor hairline cracks to develop on the outer layer of stucco. This is not a structural defect and does not compromise the function of the stucco.

Stucco is a porous material. Therefore, to avoid possible leaks, direct sprinklers away from stucco surfaces. Also, in order to ensure proper drainage, stucco screen (mesh underneath final coat of stucco) should be kept at least 15 centimeters above the soil surface and concrete flatwork.

A white powdery substance (efflorescence) might be present on some surface areas. They are deposits left behind during the curing process; as moisture evaporates, the salt in the concrete is brought to the surface. These deposits can be easily scrubbed off using a stiff brush and vinegar.

WOOD

Exterior wood trims are subject to drying and shrinkage due to fluctuations in temperature and humidity. It is especially vulnerable to shrinkage during summer months. Wood shrinkage can sometimes cause column bases and caps to split. This will be repaired, along with exterior trim columns that have developed cracks visible from 6 millimetres, within the first year of occupancy.

Should the exterior stain and paint adhesion fail during the first year, we will repair the affected areas once within the first year of occupancy. It is recommended that the owner repaint or stain the areas with the wood trim after the first year of occupancy.

Wood trim that splits slightly along the grain can be corrected with caulking and touch-up painting.

CAULKING

It is advisable to check the caulking around windows, doors, and other fixed joints such as vents where caulking has been applied. We will repair or replace exterior caulking that has cracked or become detached under the one-year warranty.

While caulking can last for many years, weather and time will shrink and dry caulking, making the seal ineffective. Check for any cracks or gaps and re-caulk where it is needed. Normal shrinkage that occurs in various exterior sidings can also create gaps that must be filled.

When re-caulking is necessary, consult with a hardware store or check the label to ensure that the correct caulking material is being purchased for the intended purpose. The caulking material used should be compatible with the siding material. Remember that not all caulks can be painted. Prior to re-caulking, remove old caulking materials that have deteriorated, clean the surfaces, and read the manufacturer's instructions carefully to take necessary safety precautions.

EXTERIOR **ENTRY DOORS**

Insulated exterior doors are constantly exposed to fluctuations in temperature and humidity. This can cause misalignment due to shrinkage, expansion, or warping as the door adjusts to climate changes.

It may be observed that during colder months, the weather stripping can become rigid, causing difficulty in closing and opening the door. This can happen in combination with misalignment caused by the warping of the wood panels of the door. Extra care should be taken to keep the warped doors closed as much as possible in order to help retain their proper shape, structure, and alignment. Avoid slamming the door, which can damage the door and jamb, and cause cracks in the walls to form. Once the weather warms up, the door will go back to its original form and will be easier to operate.

DOOR HARDWARE & LOCKS

Use graphite or other waterproof lubricants to lubricate both exterior and interior locks every six months to help ensure smooth operation. To fix a squeaky door hinge, remove the hinge pin and apply a silicone or graphite lubricant. Please note that the graphite lubricant can cause gray smudges if applied excessively. Avoid using oil for either the lock or hinge, as it tends to gum up and attract dirt.

Doors are subject to minor settling because of their exposure to extreme changes in temperature. Consequently, a door may not latch because of minor settling. This can be remedied by making a new opening in the jamb for a latch plate and then aligning the plate accordingly.

To clean the lock trim, use a mild non-abrasive soap and lightly buff using a soft cloth.

During the winter months, if you have problems inserting the key into the lock and turning it, it is most likely due to frozen moisture and not from a broken lock. Do not force the key or this will cause the lock to break. Instead, use a lock deicer similar to what you would use for your car or vehicle.

As a safety precaution, keep a duplicate privacy lock key somewhere accessible but out of children's reach in the event a child accidentally locks themselves in a room.

When installing additional locks, make sure the screws and bolts used for the attachment go all the way through the door and frame. The lock or chain is most secure if it cannot be dismantled from the outside. New locks being installed on doors may require the service of a professional locksmith.

It is not advisable to install locks that require a key on the inside to operate since they are potentially more dangerous should an emergency occur.

SLIDING PATIO **DOORS**

To ensure smoother operation and extend the longevity of your patio door, occasionally clean the tracks, and aluminum and vinyl surfaces with warm water.

Apply a silicone lubricant after each cleaning. Avoid using petroleum-based lubricants or powdered cleaners. Difficulty opening or closing sliding windows can also be remedied by applying a silicone lubricant.

The glass on the patio doors can be cleaned using vinegar and water, or a commercial glass cleaner.

Excess water can sometimes accumulate in the bottom channel of window frames due to heavy rainfall. Bottom window channels and weep holes should be kept clean and free of obstruction in order to allow the accumulated water to properly drain to the outside.

If you are removing and storing the screens on your patio door for winter, make sure to handle the screens gently to avoid perforating the screen or bending the frame. Label each screen as it is being removed to make the re-installation process simpler.

GARAGE OVERHEAD DOORS

Although the garage door has been designed for low maintenance, it requires periodic upkeep to ensure continued ease of operation. Rollers and tracks can be cleaned by wiping with a clean cloth, and then lubricated by spraying all moving parts with a suitable lubricant semi-annually.

Garage overhead doors are not fully weather-stripped and have been designed to allow air circulation to help minimize condensation, and carbon monoxide buildup from exhaust. As a safety precaution, never leave your car engine running in the garage. If for some reason, the car has been left running in the garage, leave the overhead door open for a sufficient period of time to allow the exhaust fumes to disperse.

For safety purposes, follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe and reliable operation. Avoid the use of excessive force when operating the garage doors, which can cause the latch to break, the panels to leave the tracks and fall, or personal injury. Garage doors and automatic garage door opener(s) installed by us are warranted against defects in material or workmanship for one year following your occupancy date.

**Read manual on door opening as they may need adjustments periodically.*

ROOFS & SHINGLES

As a safety precaution, never walk on your roof when the shingles are wet and slippery. Asphalt shingles are also more susceptible to damage during warm temperatures; walking on them can damage the protective granules of the shingles.

Significant weight or movement on your roof can loosen and break the roofing material, resulting in leakage. In the event of a leak, try to isolate where the leak is originating. This will help locate the area that requires repair when the roof is dry.

Following severe storms, it is advisable to do a visual inspection of the roof for damages; check for loose, broken or missing shingles. Immediately repair any damages to prevent leaks and damage to the house interior.

Exposure to extremes in temperature may cause slight variations in the roof's level. The roof structure itself is made of wood, and may experience puckering of plywood, or settlement issues caused by the raising of shingles between nails from expansion.

Any roof shingle, valley or flashing leaks due to defects in materials or workmanship within the first two years of occupancy are covered by the two-year warranty. Damage caused by "Acts of God" are not covered under warranty and should be covered by insurance.

EAVESTROUGH & **DOWNSPOUTS**

The eavestroughs help remove the roof water, which then drains into the downspouts and extensions. The eavestroughs and downspouts should be maintained properly and kept free of debris (leaves, twigs, etc.), excess ice and snow, or other restrictive obstructions in order to ensure a proper flow of water and prevent damage.

The flow of water can easily erode the ground around the drainage area and cause settlement. Periodically check the location of the drainage and make sure that the downspouts are directing the water away from the foundation.

We will repair defects that cause improper drainage or leaking of eavestrough and downspouts under the one-year warranty.

EXTERIOR **FAUCETS**

All exterior faucets (hose bibs) including those that are freeze-proof or located in the garage must be shut off and drained (winterized) during fall, or before frost occurs to prevent damage to the pipe. Similarly, all hoses must be removed from the faucets. A hose left attached to the outside faucet can contain water which may freeze and expand back into the pipe, causing a burst or crack from the expansion.

1. Turn off the main water service shut-off valve located within your home and close the shut-off valves for the exterior hose bibs. Keep the shut-off valves for the exterior hose bibs in the closed position for the winter months.
2. Remove hoses from the exterior faucets and store for the winter then open the exterior faucets. Very little water pressure should be present as you will have closed the main and individual shut-off valves. Keep the exterior hose bibs in the open position throughout the winter months.
3. On each hose bib's interior shut-off valve there is a small cap screw. Remove the cap screw and allow the water to drain. Have a cup handy to catch the water draining from the line. Securely replace the cap screw once the water has drained to avoid misplacing it.
4. Open the main water service shut-off valve to confirm that water is no longer being supplied to the exterior faucets.
5. In the spring, close the exterior hose bibs and open the interior hose bib shut off valves. Open the exterior hose bibs gradually and confirm that the water pressure has returned.

GRADING & **LANDSCAPING**

Proper grading directs surface drainage away from the house and into the storm sewer system. It is designed to slope away from the house in order to protect the foundation of your home and prevent structural damage.

PONDING

The grade on your lot has been designed for normal rainfall. Heavy or prolonged rainfall may cause "ponding" or create a large puddle in the swales of your lawn if the soil is saturated. This is natural and does not indicate a problem with the grading. The standing water will clear after a sufficient period of time.

BACKFILL

After the construction of your foundation walls and the installation of utility lines, the surrounding area is then backfilled. The soil in the backfill area is not as dense and will continue to settle for several years.

Regularly check the perimeter of your home for signs of settling and fill settled areas to maintain proper drainage. Make sure that the downspout is directed away from the foundation area of your home and that the area around the catch basin is free of debris to ensure proper drainage. Proper maintenance can prevent damage to the foundation, and avoid severe problems such as wet basements and cracks in foundation walls from forming.

LANDSCAPING

The grading on your lot may not necessarily be complete at the time of closing. It is extremely important that you confirm the completion of the grading on your lot prior to any alterations on your property. Landscaping, the installation of a hedge, fence or pool may affect the drainage pattern on your lot. Alterations on the grading may also cause drainage problems for adjacent homes. Similarly, if a neighbour from an adjacent lot makes alterations, or changes their grading, this could affect the flow of water from your lot. If such a problem arises, speak with your neighbour directly or through a solicitor to ensure they correct their alterations and make the proper adjustments to correct the drainage pattern on your property.

It is recommended that you begin your basic landscaping (weather permitting) soon after closing, and after confirming the completion of your grading.

Planned and installed properly, your landscape can prevent soil erosion and protect the foundation of your home. Take precautions to avoid altering the drainage pattern on your lot.

Planting beds should be laid out to slope away from the foundation walls to retain the same drainage pattern. If planted against the wall, remember that 15 centimeters of foundation needs to remain exposed in order to aid in the drainage around the home. Therefore, the soil level should not be built up to cover the top of the concrete wall, thus preventing damage to the brick and siding.

Shrubs and trees should not be planted close to the walls since their root system can weaken the foundation walls. As trees continue to grow, their branches and leaves can also cause damage to the eavestroughs and roof of the home.

SODDING

Sod is placed after the phase of the development is completed in accordance with your agreement. We will ensure that the freshly laid sod is healthy and in good condition. Freshly laid sod should not be walked on as this can create footprints and cause other damages to the lawn. When sod is installed, it is laid on top of a layer of topsoil and will require immediate care and maintenance in order for the roots to "take" (grow and bond with the topsoil).

WATERING

Water your new sod immediately after it has been installed. Water fresh sod every day for the first week to encourage rooting and two to three times a week thereafter. If the sod turns a reddish brown colour, increase your watering frequency. Test for root development in two weeks time by checking whether the sod resists being lifted. When root development occurs and the grass is more firmly established, reduce the watering frequency but increase the amount of water being applied in each watering session. This will allow the water to penetrate the soil deeper.

The best times to water are early in the morning or in the evening. This reduces the amount of water that would evaporate due to the hot sun, and avoids the risk of burning the grass.

Adjust the watering frequency based on weather conditions. Dryer months require the lawn to be watered two to three times a week. Wet months may require less frequency.

You do not need to water your lawn after a rainfall that produces at least 3 centimeters of rain.

MOWING

Mow your lawn frequently with a sharp lawn mower, removing no more than one third of the length of grass each time. Set the mower blade height to five centimetres in the spring and fall, and seven to eight centimetres in the summer. The blades of grass need adjustments in height during the hotter months to help with drought tolerance.

FERTILIZATION

Fresh sod has been fertilized at the sod farm and does not require fertilization after being planted. It is best to fertilize your sod during spring and fall to encourage rooting. If the sod was planted during spring or early summer, wait until fall to fertilize. If the sod was planted during fall, wait until spring to fertilize.

Avoid fertilizers with heavy nitrogen content. While it causes your lawn to grow quicker, it also creates an environment that can lead to thatch buildup and diseases.

LIME & GRUB TREATMENTS

Maintain a pH level of 6.0 – 7.0 to maximize soil fertility. Acidity in the soil can rise mainly due to rainfall. The soil pH affects the roots ability to absorb the nutrients in the soil so it is advisable to occasionally test the pH level of the soil. If the soil is found to be too acidic, acidity can be reduced with the application of limestone powder. This will also help improve oxygen levels in the soil.

If the presence of root-feeding insect larvae such as grubs is discovered, prompt action is required to prevent an infestation from killing the lawn. Consult a nursery or a lawn care professional for the proper product and action needed.

AERIFICATION

Newly laid sod should not be aerified until it is firmly rooted into the soil. Regular aerification reduces soil compaction, allowing the roots of the grass to better penetrate the soil. This should be done during spring and fall when the temperatures are moderate. Professional lawn care companies provide aerification services. An alternate method is to rent an aerifier (it is recommended that only the largest diameter tine-size be used).

ICE & SNOW BUILDUP

In the beginning of spring, as the snow and ice from winter are thawing out and beginning to melt, remove any large amounts that remain in one area. Break apart the ice or snow buildup and distribute it more evenly across the lawn. This will prevent "winter kill" from occurring, which is when the grass underneath the ice and snow buildup suffocates.

Similarly, refrain from making a skating rink on your lawn as this will result in the suffocation of the grass underneath the ice. This occurs when the carbon dioxide produced from the grass cannot escape and causes the grass to suffocate.

During spring, after the snow and ice have melted, wait for the ground to dry and then rake your lawn to remove the dead grass. This will promote new growth on your lawn.

PONDING & SETTLING

After the first or second growing season, the sub-base in your area will correct itself. Prior to that, puddles may form on your lawn after watering or rainstorms. This does not necessarily indicate a drainage problem.

We will repair areas that have excessive settling or are ponding by lifting the existing sod, filling the settled areas, and then replacing the sod. This work is generally carried out one time only, over the summer months following your occupancy date.

TREES

We will warrant all trees we plant on your lot for one year against disease, death or damage due to excessive settlement. Regular maintenance and care is extremely important in maintaining the health of your trees, and to promote their growth and development.

MAINTAINING THE BASE OF THE TREE

The soil area at the base has been cultivated in a dish shape to create a reservoir for capturing and holding water. This also allows the roots to gain better access to oxygen, allowing the tree to breathe. Maintain the dish shape and make sure the soil level does not rise above the base of the tree or around the trunk as this could suffocate the tree.

Keep the area weed-free and avoid planting flowers at the base of the tree. The presence of flowers and weeds at the base can limit the tree's access to nutrients and moisture.

WATERING

The tree should be watered to keep the soil moist but not soaked. Soil that is soaked impairs the tree's ability to absorb oxygen through the soil. This can lead to a condition called "root rot." Oxygen absorption through the roots is necessary for the tree to process food. When "root rot" occurs, it causes the roots to suffocate and stop processing oxygen, causing the tree to die.

During the summer months (June, July, and August), water the tree once a week. Fill the dish area at the base of the tree with water. Once the water has fully penetrated into the soil, repeat the process. The process should be repeated until the water starts to take a little longer to be absorbed into the soil – usually after the third or fourth watering. Trees can also be watered using a deep-root feeder.

FERTILIZATION

The fertilization of each tree should be done during the spring season. It is advisable to use a water-soluble tree fertilizer for the first two years after planting. Consult a nursery to choose the appropriate fertilizer. For safety purposes, follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.

PROTECTION AGAINST PESTS & DISEASES

Regularly inspect each tree every few weeks and after storms for signs of damage. Damaged trees that are left undiagnosed and untreated for a prolonged period of time may deteriorate and die. Some common symptoms are:

1. Brown roots indicate dry soil conditions or the presence of toxic chemicals.
2. Black roots indicate root-rot from overwatering or the presence of root-rotting organisms.
3. Various factors, including the weather, lawn mowers or rodents, can cause wounds on the trunk of the tree. Use plastic tree guards to help protect the tree against rodent damage in winter.
4. Curled or browning leaves may indicate a problem with caterpillars, insects, viral infection or toxic chemical exposure.
5. Dead leaves at the top of the tree indicate a problem with root stress. It is recommended that you consult a professional about the nature of the problem and to discuss suitable treatment options.

DRIVEWAYS

In most cases, the asphalt driveway (if applicable) would not have been laid before you took possession. In order to allow for the normal settling of the ground beneath your driveway, paving is usually delayed until the year following your occupancy date or until the ground has settled sufficiently.

Your driveway was designed and constructed for the use of passenger cars or light utility vehicles, not heavy vehicles. Point loads, trailers or even cars left in the same spot for long periods can create depressions or punctures in asphalt, especially in hot weather.

Exposure to outdoor elements such as seasonal temperature and precipitation changes can cause fading, cracks of a minor nature and increased visibility of surface gravel material. This is a normal condition and not a material or structural problem. Indentations, uneven areas or settlements in asphalt surfaces are also common. Driveways shall be graded so that water does not accumulate at or near the building. Driveways not meeting the acceptable conditions shall be repaired within 1 year of occupancy.

Avoid using chemical de-icers, which can damage the asphalt surfaces. Since asphalt is a petroleum product, gasoline, oil, turpentine, and other solvent or petroleum products can rapidly dissolve asphalt or damage the surface. Immediately wash such spills with soap and water, and then rinse them thoroughly with plain water.

WOODEN **DECKS**

Decks are a common outdoor extension of a home that must be designed and constructed to safely support imposed loads. If you decide to build a deck, check with the regional building department regarding the current requirements and whether a building permit is needed.

Before constructing the deck, it is advisable to utilize a free service provided by the utility companies called "Call Before You Dig." They will send someone to locate and mark underground utility services in order to avoid damages to buried facilities such as cable wires, hydro and gas pipes.

Decks are constantly exposed to sunlight and other weather conditions and require regular maintenance. It is recommended that a wood sealer or weather resistant product be used to protect and extend the life of your deck.

FENCES

When considering the installation of a fence or another boundary marker, check with the city to ensure that the fence you have in mind is in compliance with regulations governing fencing. It is also advisable that you consult with a qualified surveyor in order to locate the lot lines. This will ensure that your fence is accurately placed within your property line.

To prevent damages to buried facilities such as gas pipes and hydro, it is recommended that you make use of a free service provided by the utility companies called "Call Before You Dig," where they send someone to your home to locate and mark underground utility services.

Due to possible ground settlement, fences and other boundary structures should be installed at least one year after the closing date, and not until the lot has been sodded.

TROUBLE SHOOTING

ELECTRICAL

No power to exterior plugs	The GFCI receptacle may be tripped. The reset button is located on the receptacle itself. The receptacles can be found either in garage or by the front porch. Check breaker on main electrical panel.
No power to bathrooms	Reset GFCI located on the receptacles. Generally found in Powder Room. Check breaker on main electrical panel.
No power to whirlpool tub	Reset GFCI located in the basement. Can be found above the electrical panel. Check breaker on main electrical panel.
Light fixture not working	If light is on a 3-way switch, try both switches. Replace light bulb.
Switch to living room does not work	Reset AFCI located in the basement. Can be found on the electrical panel. Check breaker on main electrical panel.
Soffit plugs	Operates from switch generally located near the front door.
Plugs are difficult to plug into	This is normal due to the nature of tamper resistant plugs and gets better with regular use.
Plug and switches do not work	Inspect breaker(s) on main electrical panel.
Complete power loss	Check with your local utility company.
Tripping breaker	Determine cause of tripping breaker to prevent continuous resets which can lead to degradation of breaker.
AFCI (Arc fault circuit interrupter)	AFCI's are prone to nuisance tripping, avoid using incompatible devices or appliances. AFCI's work by using advanced electronic technology to monitor the circuit for the presence of "normal" and "dangerous" arcing conditions. Some equipment in the home, such as a motor driven vacuum cleaner or furnace motor, naturally create arcs. This is considered to be a normal arcing condition and may trip the breaker. Another normal arcing condition that can sometimes be seen is when a light switch is turned off and the opening of the contacts creates an arc. These can be identified by reading the breaker that has tripped, looking for a usually blue, yellow or purple reset switch.

PLUMBING

Hammer sound occurs when shutting off faucet	This is common on single lever faucets when the main control valve is depressed very quickly. Turn faucet off in a more gentle motion. If problem persists, turn off main water valve and drain system from lowest point of the house, eg; laundry tub in the basement.
Sound emanates throughout the house when exterior hose bibs are turned on	The vacuum breaker needs replacing.
Toilet appears not to flush properly	In order to preserve water consumption, the industry is required to install low flush toilets. A good tip is to hold down the lever for a few extra moments when flushing.
Toilet runs on	Lift tank lid and inspect that the chain or cord to the valve flapper has not come loose.
Ticking sounds coming from walls	This is created from copper water pipes or drain pipes which expand and contract when heating up or cooling down. This is a common occurrence.
Leak in plumbing water lines	Turn off the water valve under the sink or beside the toilet to isolate the leak. If this is ineffective, shut off your main valve located in the basement.
Leak in plumbing drain lines	Discontinue use of that particular fixture until repaired.
Clogged drain	Regularly clean underside of stopper and ensure p-trap is not clogged. Water should flow quickly and freely down the drain, slow or standing water may indicate the beginning of a clog. It is recommended that you perform a monthly maintenance task on drains to remove any hair, food and other blockages using a Drain Clog Remover Drain and Snake Cleaning Tool.

HEATING

Furnace will not turn on	Check thermostat to ensure it is properly set to heat. Ensure circuit breaker is set to on. Check that gas valve is turned on. Make sure the switch located above the furnace is turned on. Inspect exterior vent for blockage. Refer to owner's manual for a fault code and recommended solution.
Water heater will not turn on	Ensure the power vent is plugged in. Check that the gas valve is turned on. This appliance is generally a rental unit. Refer to owner's manual for a fault code and recommended solution. If all else fails, call your rental supplier for service.
House does not heat properly	Inspect the furnace filter. Clean or replace as necessary. A heat balance may be required. This process regulates air flow throughout the home by adjusting the dampers located inside the floor registers and the main damper in the main furnace plenum. You can attempt balancing the system yourself, however we do recommend the services of a Professional.
Air conditioner freezing up	Check for dirty or clogged filters. Coolant levels may be low. Thermostat may be set too low resulting in condenser freeze-up.

BASEMENT

Moisture around perimeter walls	More often than not, this is caused from condensation. Running a dehumidifier will alleviate this situation.
Water has penetrated into the basement	Check foundation walls for cracks, inspect that outside grading is sloping away from the wall. Ensure down-pipe spout is diverting water away from foundation. Water should be directed away from the building.
Cracks on basement floor	This is very normal as concrete shrinks. Cracks should not exceed 6 millimeters in width.
Finished basements	We recommend not finishing your basement within the first year of your possession date. Access is required to service your home during the warranty period.
Cold cellar does not cool in summer	This is normal. Keep door open to allow cooler air to enter into room. Inspect air vent for blockage. Cold rooms should not be used as storage areas as they are still vented to the outside. It should be anticipated that cold air, and moisture including rain and water can penetrate into a cold room from the venting.

INTERIOR

Condensation on windows	This is a common occurrence. Check relative humidity level. If moisture is excessive, review the following: · Ensure the dryer vent is fastened properly to exterior vent. · use principal exhaust fan to remove moist air. · It might be necessary during the first few years to use a dehumidifier. · If equipped with a Heat Recovery Unit, turn system to high. · Lower or turn off humidifier. · Run the range hood and bathroom fans.
Hardwood floor creaks	If the humidity is not maintained between 40-50% floor creaks may begin to occur. Humidity levels will need to be corrected to ensure permanent damage does not ensue.

ABOUT YOUR **HOUSE**

REGULAR MAINTENANCE **IS THE KEY**

Inspecting your home on a regular basis and following good maintenance practices is the best way to protect your investment in your home. Whether you take care of a few tasks at a time or several all at once, it is important to get into the habit of doing them. Establish a routine for yourself and you will find the work is easy to accomplish and not very time consuming. A regular schedule of seasonal maintenance can put a stop to the most common – and costly – problems, before they occur. If necessary, use a camera to take pictures of anything you might want to share with an expert for advice or to monitor or remind you of a situation later.

By following the information noted here, you will learn about protecting your investment and how to help keep your home a safe and healthy place to live.

If you do not feel comfortable performing some of the home maintenance tasks listed below, or do not have the necessary equipment, for example a ladder, you may want to consider hiring a qualified handy person to help you.

SEASONAL HOME MAINTENANCE

Most home maintenance activities are seasonal. Fall is the time to get your home ready for the coming winter, which can be the most grueling season for your home. During winter months, it is important to follow routine maintenance procedures, by checking your home carefully for any problems arising and taking corrective action as soon as possible. Spring is the time to assess winter damage, start repairs and prepare for warmer months.

Over the summer, there are a number of indoor and outdoor maintenance tasks to look after, such as repairing walkways and steps, painting and checking your chimney and roof.

While most maintenance is seasonal, there are some things you should do on a monthly basis year round:

- ☐ Make sure air vents indoors and outdoors (intake, exhaust and forced air) are not blocked by snow or debris.
- ☐ Regularly check the house for safety hazards such as a loose handrail, lifting or buckling carpet, etc.
- ☐ Check HVAC system filters. Some air filters are reusable, while others are disposable and must be replaced. Clean or replace filters when they get dirty, which might be anywhere from 30 days to a few months.
- ☐ Look for leaks around toilets and sinks. Any sign of water where it shouldn't be is reason to investigate further.
- ☐ Inspect grout and caulking. Touch up any voids or cracks in tubs and showers. This keeps them looking nice while helping to avoid seeping water damage.
- ☐ Check kitchen vent/range hood filter. Clean or replace if needed. Consider looking at the filter more often if you have an avid chef in the household.
- ☐ Test smoke and carbon-monoxide detectors. In addition to a monthly test, Consumer Reports explains why you should change batteries every six months.

- ☐ Trip your GFCI outlets. These can be located anywhere in your home but are most commonly found close to water sources (bathroom, kitchen, laundry room). Plug a light into the outlet, then click the "test" button to see if the light goes out, then click "reset" and see if the light goes back on. If so, you're good; if not, it's time to replace the outlet.
- ☐ Stroll around outside. You're probably outside your home on a regular basis, but how often do you really look it over? Walk around the house and any outbuildings, looking for problems with the foundation, vents, gutters, downspouts, and drainpipes.
- ☐ Sump Pump – inspect monthly for debris, rocks or silt build up to ensure your sump pump is free of blockage and/or build up that could result in the motor burn out or failure.

Timing of the seasons varies not only from one area of Canada to another, but also from year to year in a given area. For this reason, we have not identified the months for each season. The maintenance schedule presented here, instead, is a general guide for you to follow. The actual timing is left for you to decide, and you may want to further divide the list of items for each season into months.

FALL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Have furnace or heating system serviced by a qualified service company every two years for a gas furnace, and every year for an oil furnace.
- ☐ Open furnace humidifier damper on units with central air conditioning and clean humidifier.
- ☐ Turn ON gas furnace pilot light.
- ☐ Check and clean or replace furnace air filters each month during the heating season. Ventilation system, such as heat recovery ventilator, filters should be checked every two months.
- ☐ Remove the grilles on forced air systems and vacuum inside the ducts.
- ☐ If the heat recovery ventilator has been shut off for the summer, clean the filters and the core, and pour water down the condensate drain to test it.
- ☐ Check sump pump and line to ensure proper operation, and to ascertain that there are no line obstructions or visible leaks.
- ☐ Remove screens from the inside of casement windows to allow air from the heating system to keep condensation off window glass.
- ☐ Ensure all doors to the outside shut tightly, and check other doors for ease of use. Renew door weatherstripping if required.
- ☐ If there is a door between your house and the garage, check the adjustment of the self-closing device to ensure it closes the door completely.
- ☐ Ensure windows are closed tightly.
- ☐ Ensure that the ground around your home slopes away from the foundation wall, so that water does not drain into your basement.
- ☐ Clean leaves from eavestroughs and roof, and test downspouts to ensure proper drainage from the roof.
- ☐ Drain and store outdoor hoses. Close valve to outdoor hose connection and drain the hose bib (exterior faucet), unless your house has frost proof hose bibs.
- ☐ If you have a septic tank, measure the sludge and scum to determine if the tank needs to be emptied before the spring. Tanks should be pumped out at least once every three years.
- ☐ Winterize landscaping, for example, store outdoor furniture, prepare gardens and, if necessary, protect young trees or bushes for winter.
- ☐ Unplug the sump pump and empty the basin of any standing water.
- ☐ Remove any debris from the basin and make sure the sump pump inlet screen is clear and not obstructed.
- ☐ Plug the pump in and pour five gallons of water into the sump to verify that the float switch turns the pump on and off properly.

WINTER CHECKLIST

- ☐ Check and clean or replace furnace air filters each month during the heating season. Ventilation system, such as heat recovery ventilator, filters should be checked every two months.
- ☐ After consulting your hot water tank owner's manual, drain water from the clean-out valve at the bottom of your hot water tank to control sediment and maintain efficiency.
- ☐ Clean humidifier two or three times during the winter season.
- ☐ Vacuum bathroom fan grille.
- ☐ Vacuum fire and smoke detectors, as dust or spider webs can prevent them from functioning.
- ☐ Vacuum radiator grilles on back of refrigerators and freezers, and empty and clean drip trays. Check gauge on all fire extinguishers; recharge or replace if necessary.
- ☐ Check fire escape routes, door and window locks and hardware, and lighting around outside of house; ensure family has good security habits.
- ☐ Check the basement floor drain to ensure the trap contains water. Refill with water if necessary.
- ☐ Monitor your home for excessive moisture levels – for example, condensation on your windows, which can cause damage over time.
- ☐ Check all faucets for signs of dripping and change washers as needed. Faucets requiring frequent replacement of washers may be in need of repair.
- ☐ If you have a plumbing fixture that is not used frequently, such as a laundry tub or spare bathroom sink, tub or shower stall, run some water briefly to keep water in the trap.
- ☐ Clean drains in dishwasher, sinks, bathtubs and shower stalls.
- ☐ Test plumbing shut-off valves to ensure they are working and to prevent them from seizing.
- ☐ Examine windows and doors for ice accumulation or cold air leaks. If found, make a note to repair or replace in the spring.
- ☐ Examine attic for frost accumulation. Check roof for ice dams or icicles. To prevent ice damming, a heat trace can be installed on the roof in areas of concern.
- ☐ Check that all exterior vents are not blocked with snow.
- ☐ Monitoring the humidity levels within the home in the winter as this is when homes can dry out and cause hardwood, drywall and trim damages.
- ☐ Check electrical cords, plugs and outlets for all indoor and outdoor seasonal lights to ensure fire safety: if worn, or if plugs or cords feel warm to the touch, replace immediately.
- ☐ Unplug the sump pump and empty the basin of any standing water.
- ☐ Remove any debris from the basin and make sure the sump pump inlet screen is clear and not obstructed.
- ☐ Plug the pump in and pour five gallons of water into the sump to verify that the float switch turns the pump on and off properly.
- ☐ Examine all down spouts and exterior vents to ensure they are not blocked with ice or snow.

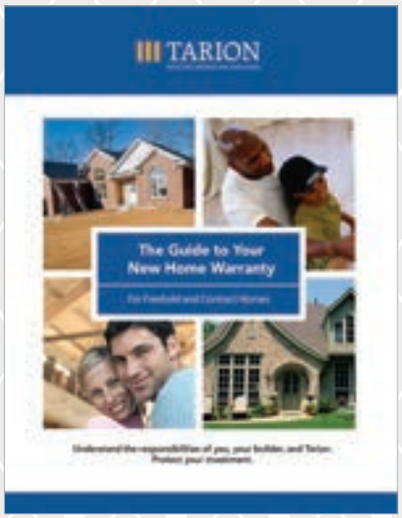
SPRING CHECKLIST

- ☐ After consulting your hot water tank owner's manual, carefully test the temperature and pressure relief valve to ensure it is not stuck. **Caution: This test may release hot water that can cause burns.**
- ☐ Check and clean or replace furnace air filters each month during the heating season. Ventilation system, for example heat recovery ventilator, filters should be checked every two months.
- ☐ Have fireplace cleaned and serviced as needed.
- ☐ Shut down and clean furnace humidifier, and close the furnace humidifier damper on units with central air conditioning.
- ☐ Check air conditioning system and have serviced every two or three years.
- ☐ Clean or replace air conditioning filter (if applicable).
- ☐ Check dehumidifier and clean if necessary.
- ☐ Turn OFF gas furnace and fireplace pilot lights where possible.
- ☐ Check smoke, carbon monoxide and security alarms and replace batteries.
- ☐ Clean windows, screens and hardware, and replace. Check screens first and repair or replace if needed.
- ☐ Open valve to outside hose connection after all danger of frost has passed.
- ☐ Examine the foundation walls for cracks, leaks or signs of moisture, and repair as required.
- ☐ Ensure sump pump is operating properly before the spring thaw sets in. Ensure discharge pipe is connected and allows water to drain away from the foundation.
- ☐ Re-level any exterior steps or decks which moved due to frost or settling.
- ☐ Check eavestroughs and downspouts for loose joints and secure attachment to your home, clear any obstructions, and ensure water flows away from your foundation.
- ☐ Clear all drainage ditches and culverts of debris.
- ☐ Undertake spring landscape maintenance and, if necessary, fertilize young trees.
- ☐ Unplug the sump pump and empty the basin of any standing water.
- ☐ Remove any debris from the basin and make sure the sump pump inlet screen is clear and not obstructed.
- ☐ Plug the pump in and pour five gallons of water into the sump to verify that the float switch turns the pump on and off properly.

SUMMER CHECKLIST

- ☐ Monitor basement humidity and avoid relative humidity levels above 60 per cent. Use a dehumidifier to maintain safe relative humidity. Clean or replace air conditioning filter, and wash or replace ventilation system filters if necessary.
- ☐ Check basement pipes for condensation or dripping, and take corrective action, for example, reduce humidity and or insulate cold water pipes.
- ☐ Check the basement floor drain to ensure the trap contains water. Refill with water if necessary.
- ☐ If you have a plumbing fixture that is not used frequently, for example, a laundry tub or spare bathroom sink, tub or shower stall, run some water briefly to keep water in the trap.
- ☐ Deep clean carpets and rugs. Vacuum bathroom fan grill.
- ☐ Disconnect the duct connected to the dryer and vacuum lint from duct, the areas surrounding your clothes dryer and your dryer's vent hood outside.
- ☐ Check security of all guardrails and handrails.
- ☐ Check smooth functioning of all windows and lubricate as required.
- ☐ Lubricate door hinges and tighten screws as needed.
- ☐ Lubricate garage door hardware and ensure it is operating properly.
- ☐ Lubricate automatic garage door opener motor, chain, etc. and ensure that the auto-reverse mechanism is properly adjusted.
- ☐ Check and replace damaged caulking and weather-stripping around windows and doorways, including the doorway between the garage and the house.
- ☐ Inspect electrical service lines for secure attachment where they enter your house, and make sure there is no water leakage into the house along the electrical conduit.
- ☐ Check exterior wood siding and trim for signs of deterioration; clean, replace or refinish as needed.
- ☐ Check for and seal off any holes in exterior cladding that could be an entry point for small pests, such as bats and squirrels.
- ☐ Remove any plants that contact, or roots that penetrate, the siding or brick.
- ☐ Use binoculars to check the roof's general condition, and note any sagging that could indicate structural problems requiring further investigation from inside the attic. Note the condition of all shingles for possible repair or replacement, and examine all roof flashings, such as at chimney and roof joints, for any signs of cracking or leakage.
- ☐ Repair driveway and walkways as needed.
- ☐ Repair any damaged steps that present a safety problem.
- ☐ Unplug the sump pump and empty the basin of any standing water.
- ☐ Remove any debris from the basin and make sure the sump pump inlet screen is clear and not obstructed.
- ☐ Plug the pump in and pour five gallons of water into the sump to verify that the float switch turns the pump on and off properly.

TARION'S HOMEOWNER'S
INFORMATION PACKAGE



We recommend you take a moment to read through the Tarion Homeowner's Information Package,

a Guide to Your New Home Warranty which can be found here: **www.tarion.com/resources/hip/fh-hip/Pages/default.aspx**

Additionally, we also recommend signing up for Tarion MyHome.

With this useful tool, many tasks related to managing your warranty, such as remembering deadlines and keeping track of the correspondence, is done for you. Please find the link here: **https://myhome.tarion.com/hop**

EMERGENCY
PROCEDURE & CONTACT

Should severe conditions occur, which constitute an emergency situation, for example:

1. Total loss of heat (between September 15 and May 15)
2. Gas Leak
3. Total loss of electricity
4. Total loss of water supply
5. Total sewage stoppage
6. Plumbing leak that requires complete water shut off
7. Major collapse of any part of the home's exterior or interior structure
8. Major water penetration on the interior walls or ceiling
9. A large pool of standing water inside the home
10. Any situation where, the home is uninhabitable for health and safety reasons.

Please contact our Dunsire Emergency On-call at 1.888.519.2346 ext.130 for immediate assistance.

DUNSIRE DEVELOPMENTS

BRINGING COMMUNITY TO LIFE

1.888.519.2346 | info@dunsire.com | dunsire.com |