



Caring for Your Home

A Guide to Home Maintenance

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11.1 – Introduction

Your new home requires proper upkeep to keep it in good shape. We have provided this general guide to home maintenance to keep you informed about the major components of your home and how to care for them. For more detailed information, please always check the manufacturer's literature for specific information about the product.

You can save time, inconvenience, and expense by checking this section before calling for warranty or other service. Often, you can quickly solve a problem yourself, or identify an issue as a routine homeowner maintenance issue rather than a warranty concern.

The information in this section covers the entire spectrum of new homes that EYA builds. Therefore, some of the information may not apply to your specific home.

As always, our Warranty Service Department is committed to providing excellent service to our homeowners. Please feel free to contact us with questions.

11.2 – Air Conditioning

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Air conditioning can greatly enhance comfort—if it is used properly and efficiently. To keep your system working to its best capacity and to save energy and expense, follow these tips:

Keep windows and curtains closed. Your air conditioning system is a whole-house system. Its use is affected by everything inside your home, including curtains, blinds, and windows. It is a closed system, which means that the interior air is continually recycled and cooled until the desired air temperature is reached. Warm outside air disrupts the system and makes cooling impossible. Therefore, you should keep all windows closed. The heat from the sun shining through windows with open curtains is intense enough to overcome the cooling effect of the air conditioning unit. For best results, close the curtains on these windows.

Time your use properly: Unlike a light bulb, which reacts instantly when you turn on a switch, the air conditioning unit only begins a process when you set the thermostat. For example, if you come home at 6 p.m. when the temperature has reached 90 degrees and set your thermostat to 75 degrees, the air conditioning unit will begin cooling, but will take a great deal of time to

reach the desired temperature. Throughout the day, the sun has been heating not only the air in the house, but the walls, the carpet, and the furniture. By 6 p.m., the air conditioning unit starts cooling the air, but the walls, carpet, and furniture release heat and nullify this cooling. By the time the air conditioning unit has cooled the walls, carpet, and furniture, you may well have lost patience.

If evening cooling is your primary goal, set the thermostat at a moderate temperature in the morning when the house is cooler, thus allowing the system to maintain the cooler temperature. The temperature setting may then be lowered slightly when you arrive home, with better results. **Once the system is operating, setting the thermostat at 60 degrees will not cool the home any faster and can result in the unit freezing up and not performing at all. Extended use under these conditions can damage the unit.**

The air conditioning system is designed to maintain a temperature of 78 degrees in your home during local outdoor summer conditions of 91 degrees for the Washington area. This temperature differential can be as high as 15 degrees when outdoor temperatures go beyond 91 degrees.

Adjust air supply registers: Each room in your home, except closets, has either ceiling or wall supply registers. The registers are designed to adjust the amount of airflow in each room.

Replace air filters regularly: Behind the air-return grills or at the furnace are filters, which should be **replaced or cleaned every 30 days for the first six months and every 60 days thereafter**. They are required to keep the home dust from entering the system and will aid the system in running efficiently and economically. **Failure to maintain and clean filters may cause damage to the furnace heat exchanger or air conditioning compressor due to lack of air flow and will void the warranty on your compressor and other components of your system.**

Use the fan setting on your thermostat: The thermostat is designed to control the system to your individual temperature setting. Maintain a temperature setting of 68 to 78 degrees for best results. Your thermostat has two control modes, one for heating and one for cooling. There are two settings for the fan on the furnace/air conditioner, on and auto. During warm weather, you may be more comfortable with the "on" setting. The fan allows air to continuously circulate even when the compressor is not running. This will help even out temperature differentials between rooms and provide residual dehumidification as air passes across the coils.

Care for condensate lines: Drain lines run from the air conditioning coil at the furnace to carry water created by dehumidifying air during the cooling cycle. Water travels through the primary condensate line. On extremely hot or humid days, you may notice some water in the overflow drain pan. This is due to the insulation casing of the evaporator coils that may be sweating on the outside of the cabinet. If water is coming from the backup line or filling the pan underneath the air conditioning coil at the furnace in the attic, this indicates the primary line is clogged and should be cleaned. Always confirm that this line is dripping during the cooling cycle. **Condensate lines should be cleaned at least once a year, or as needed.** Should the condensate line back up into the overflow drain pan, flow switches will automatically shut off the system. This added precaution will prevent overflow and water damage. Failure to maintain condensate lines could result in damage to your unit. For further details, please refer to your operator's manual for cleaning instructions.

Care for humidifier: **If a humidifier is installed on the furnace system, turn it off when you use the air conditioning.** Otherwise, the additional moisture can cause a freeze-up of the cooling system.

Get to know the manufacturer's instructions: The manufacturer's manual specifies maintenance for the condenser. Review and follow these points carefully. Since the air conditioning system is combined with the heating system, follow the maintenance instructions for your furnace as part of maintaining your air conditioning system.

Expect some temperature variations: Temperatures may vary from room to room by several degrees. This is due to such variables as floor plan, orientation of the home, type and use of window coverings, and traffic through the home.

Get a professional inspection: For optimum performance and efficiency, have your system inspected annually by a qualified HVAC professional. Please refer to the manufacturer's instruction manual for recommended maintenance and cleaning.

Troubleshooting Tips

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Thermostat is set to “cool” and the temperature is set below the room temperature.
- Blower panel cover is installed correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. Similar to the way a clothes dryer door operates, this panel pushes in a button that lets the fan motor know it is safe to come on. If that button is not pushed in, the furnace will not operate.
- Air conditioner and furnace breakers on the main electrical panel are on. (Remember if a breaker trips you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.)
- 220 switch on the outside wall near the air conditioner is on.
- Switch on the side of the furnace is on.
- Fuse in furnace is good. (See manufacturer literature for size and location.)
- Filter is clean to allow airflow.
- Vents in individual rooms are open.
- Air returns are unobstructed.
- Air conditioner has not frozen from overuse.

Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.

Lack of air conditioning service is not an emergency. Air conditioning contractors in our region respond to air conditioning service requests during normal business hours and in the order received.

11.3 — Alarm System

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Arrange for phone service: Please ensure that the phone company has activated a dial tone in your home prior to the initial alarm setup.

Get a demonstration and proper codes: If your home selections included pre-wire for an alarm system, you will arrange for the final connection and activation after you move-in. The alarm company will demonstrate the system, instruct you in its use, and provide identification codes for your family.

Test the system: We recommend that you test the system each month.

11.4 — Appliances

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Get to know the manuals: Read and follow all manufacturers' instructions for the use and maintenance of each appliance in your home and keep them available for reference.

Check the circuit breaker: When there is a problem, always check this first to be sure it is still on.

Manufacturers provide customer service: If a problem arises with an appliance, call the customer service number listed in the manufacturer's warranty. When calling, please make sure you have your closing date, serial and model of appliance, and a detailed description of the problem. Should you require service on a gas appliance, individual gas valves have been installed so that the technician can isolate the appliance for service without disrupting gas to the remainder of the home.

Register your appliances: Please remember to register your appliances with the manufacturer immediately upon closing on your new home.

11.5 — Asphalt Driveways

Asphalt is a flexible and specialized surface. Like any other surface in your home, it requires protection from things that can damage it. Over time, the effects of weather and earth movement will cause minor settling and cracking of asphalt. These are normal reactions to the elements and do not constitute improperly installed asphalt or defective material.

EYA performs asphalt repair by patching, which results in differences in colors between the patch and the original surface.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Let it rest for one week: To give your driveway a chance to set, avoid using it for one week after it is installed. Keep people, bicycles, lawn mowers, and other traffic off of it.

Avoid chemical spills: Asphalt is a petroleum product. Gasoline, oil, turpentine, and other solvents or petroleum products can dissolve or damage the surface. Wash such spills with soap and water immediately, and then rinse them thoroughly with plain water.

Use special care in hot weather: Avoid any concentrated or prolonged loads on your asphalt, particularly in hot weather. High-heel shoes, motorcycle or bicycle kickstands, trailers, or even cars left in the same spot for long periods can create depressions or punctures in asphalt.

Keep heavy traffic away: Prohibit commercial or other extremely heavy vehicles such as moving vans or other large delivery trucks from pulling onto your driveway. We design and install asphalt drives for conventional residential vehicle use only: family cars, vans, light trucks, bicycles, and so on.

Do sealcoating correctly: Exposure to sunlight and other weather conditions will fade your driveway, allowing the surface gravel material to be more visible. This is a normal condition and not a material or structural problem. You do not need to treat the surface of your asphalt driveway. However, if you choose to treat it, wait a minimum of 12 months and use a dilute asphalt emulsion, rather than coal tar sealant. The sealing process will usually fill hairline cracks. Larger cracks can be filled or patched with a sand-and-sealer mixture prior to resealing.

Expect settling: Settling next to your garage floor of up to one-and-a-half inches across the width of the driveway is normal. Depressions in the driveway are not unusual and are not considered a warranty item.

11.6 — Attic Space

Unless otherwise indicated, the attic space is neither designed nor intended for storage. We provide access to this area for homeowner maintenance only. The trusses were built for the sole purpose of supporting the roof of the home, and any other use could result in severe damage to the home.

11.7 — Basements

If the lower level of your home is underground, the temperature of the surrounding soil as well as any concrete walls and flooring cause temperatures to remain fairly constant and relatively cold. This, combined with the fact that the concrete absorbs moisture, causes basements to feel more cool or humid when compared to the rest of the home.

11.8 — Bathtubs, Sinks, and Showers

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Clean frequently and properly: To maintain their original shine, bathtubs, sinks, and showers should be cleaned frequently with a **mild, non-abrasive detergent**. It also helps to wipe these areas after every use. This prevents the build-up of hard-to-remove soap and scum. Never walk in your shower or tub with shoes on, as it will scratch the surface. Also, the use of rubber mats is not recommended as they cause surface blisters and trap fungus and mold.

Maintain caulking: If the caulking around your bathtub or sink appears dried out or cracked, remove the old caulking and replace it. This can be done with either a caulking gun or straight from an applicator tube. It is a good idea to fill the bathtub before caulking. The weight of the tub can cause the floor joist to deflect minimally, making the gap wider. **It is critical to maintain caulking where tub and shower meet the floor to ensure water doesn't seep underneath and rot the supporting wood.** It is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain all caulking.

11.9 — Brick and Stone

Brick, stone, and mortar are durable and low maintenance finishes that may be found on your homes exterior. A record of what is on your home is included in your Purchase Agreement. Color variations in brick, stone, and mortar are a normal occurrence for both initial installation and subsequent repairs. Small cracks in the mortar are to be expected and are not a defect in the material or workmanship. Brick, stone, and mortar are not impervious to moisture. Flashing and weeps are designed to alleviate any moisture that gets behind brick, stone, and mortar.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Pressure wash correctly: If pressure washing, use caution and as little force as possible, so that moisture doesn't get behind brick, stone, or mortar.

Deal correctly with efflorescence: The white, powdery substance that sometimes accumulates on brick surfaces is called efflorescence. This is a natural phenomenon and cannot be prevented. In some cases, you can remove it by scrubbing with a stiff brush and vinegar. Consult your home center or hardware store for commercial products to remove efflorescence.

Keep weep holes and wicks clear: You may notice small holes in the mortar along the lower row of bricks and windowsills. These holes allow moisture that has accumulated behind the brick to escape. Do not fill these weep holes or permit landscaping materials to cover them. Should you notice what appears to be a small piece of string protruding from a stone façade, this is a wick, which is utilized to help moisture escape.

11.10 — Cabinets

Your Option Selection sheets are your record of the brand, style, and color of cabinets in your home. If you selected wood or wood veneer cabinets, expect differences in grain and color between and within the cabinet components because of natural variations in wood and the way it takes stain.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Choose the right cleaning products: Products such as lemon oil or polishes that include scratch cover are suggested for wood cabinet care. Follow container directions. Use such products a maximum of once every 3 to 6 months to avoid excessive build-up. Avoid paraffin-based spray waxes and washing cabinets with water, as both will damage the luster of the finish.

Keep hinges and drawer guides in shape: If hinges catch or drawer glides become sluggish, a small amount of silicone lubricant will improve their performance. Door hinges are adjustable and can be easily realigned with a screwdriver.

Fixing Lazy Susan adjustment: If your kitchen comes with a "Lazy Susan", or a corner revolving cabinet, it may at time come out of adjustment. This is normal because of the presence of moving parts. If this happens, follow the step-by-step adjustment instructions affixed to the inside of the cabinet.

Keep moisture away: Damage to cabinet surfaces and warping can result from operating appliances that generate large amounts of moisture (such as a crockpot) too near the cabinet. When operating such appliances, place them in a location that is not directly under a cabinet.

11.11 – Carpet

Your selection sheets provide a record of the brand, style, and color of floor coverings in your home. Please retain this information for future reference. Refer to the various manufacturers' recommendations for additional information on the care of your floor coverings.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Clean regularly and properly: You can add years to the life of your carpet with regular care. Carpet wears out because of foot traffic and dirt particles that get trampled deep into the pile beyond the suction of the vacuum. The dirt particles behave like sandpaper, to wear down the fibers and dull the carpet. The most important thing you can do to protect your carpet is to vacuum it frequently. Vacuuming high-traffic areas regularly helps keep them clean and maintains the upright positions of the nap.

Clean spills and stains: Wipe spills and clean stains immediately. For best results, blot or dab any spill or stain and avoid rubbing. Test stain removers on inconspicuous areas of the carpet, such as in a closet, to check for any undesirable effects. Have your carpet professionally cleaned regularly.

Treat burns immediately: Take care of any kind of burn immediately. First snip off the darkened fibers. Then use a soapless cleaner and sponge with water. If the burn is extensive, talk with a professional about replacing the damaged area.

Avoid crushing pile: Furniture and traffic may crush a carpet's pile fibers. Frequent vacuuming in high-traffic areas and glides or cups under heavy pieces of furniture can help prevent this. **Rotating your furniture to change the traffic pattern in a room promotes more even wear.** Some carpets resist matting and crushing because of their level of fiber, but this does not imply or guarantee that no matting or crushing will occur. Heavy-traffic areas such as halls and stairways are more susceptible to wear and crushing. This is considered normal wear.

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

Carpet staining at doors and walls: If interior doors are kept closed while the air conditioning is operating, air circulation from the closed room flows through the small space at the bottom of the door. This forces the air over the carpet fibers, which in turn act as a filter, catching particulate pollution. Over time, a noticeable stain develops at the threshold – especially with lighter carpet colors. This condition can also occur at the edge of carpeting along exterior walls. Burning candles or inefficient combustion of gas appliances exacerbate this condition. Whenever possible, keep your interior doors open.

Deal with fuzzing and pilling: In loop carpets, fibers may break. Simply clip the excess fibers. If it continues, call a professional. Pilling or small balls of fiber can appear on your carpet, depending on the type of carpet fiber and the type of traffic. If this occurs, clip off the pills. If they cover a large area, seek professional advice.

Fix rippling correctly: With wall-to-wall carpeting, high humidity may cause rippling. If the carpet remains rippled after the humidity has left, have a professional re-stretch the carpeting using a power stretcher, not a knee-kicker.

Expect some seams: Carpet usually comes in 12-foot widths, making seams necessary in most rooms. Visible seams are not a defect unless they have been improperly made or unless the material has a defect, making the seam appear more pronounced than normal. **The more dense and uniform the carpet texture, the more visible the seams will be. Carpet styles with low, tight naps result in the most visible seams.** Seams are never more visible than when the carpet is first installed. Usually with time, use, and vacuuming the seams become less visible. **You can see examples in the model homes of how carpet seams diminish after they have been vacuumed repeatedly and have experienced traffic.**

Vacuum to fix shading: Shading is an inherent quality of fine-cut pile carpets. Household traffic causes pile fibers to assume different angles; as a result, the carpet appears darker or lighter in these areas. A good vacuuming, which makes the pile all go in the same direction, provides a temporary remedy.

Expect shedding at first: New carpeting, especially pile, sheds bits of fiber for a period of time. Eventually these loose fibers are removed by vacuuming. **Shedding usually occurs more with wool carpeting than with nylon or other synthetics.**

Cut off snags: Sharp-edged objects can grab or snag the carpet fiber. When this occurs, cut off the snag. If the snag is especially large, call a professional.

Don't pull at sprouts: Occasionally you may find small tufts of fiber sprouting above carpet surface. Simply use scissors to cut off the sprout. Do not attempt to pull it, because other fibers will come out in the process.

Take care with spot removal: No carpet is stain-proof. Although your carpet manufacturer designates your carpet as stain-resistant, some substances may still cause permanent staining. These include hair dyes, shoe polish, paints, and ink. Some substances destroy or change the color of carpets, including bleaches, acne medications, drain cleaners, plant food, insecticides, and food or beverages with strongly colored natural dyes as found in some brands of mustard and herbal tea. Refer to your care and maintenance brochures for recommended cleaning procedures for your particular fiber. Pretest any spot-removal solution in an inconspicuous area before using it in a large area. Apply several drops of the solution, hold a white tissue on the area, and count to ten. Examine both tissue and carpet for dye transfer and check for carpet damage.

Try anti-static measures: Cooler temperatures outside often contribute to static electricity inside. To avoid the problem, look for carpets made with anti-static. You can also install a humidifier to help control static build-up.

11.12 — Caulking

Changes in temperature and humidity cause all building materials to expand and contract. Dissimilar materials expand and contract at different rates. This movement results in separation between materials, particularly dissimilar ones. You will see the effects in small cracks in drywall and in paint, especially where molding meets drywall, at mitered corners, and where tile grout meets tubs or sinks. While this can alarm an uninformed homeowner, it is normal.

EYA will touch up caulking one time during your first year warranty period. It is suggested that this be performed towards the end of the warranty period or after the first heating season.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Re-caulk more during the first year or two: Anticipate that you will need to re-caulk areas of your home more during the first year or two of occupancy than will be typical in the life of your home. Time and weather will shrink and dry caulking so that it no longer provides a good seal.

Establish a maintenance schedule: As routine maintenance, check the caulking and make needed repairs twice a year.

Check vulnerable areas: Areas particularly susceptible to cracking are trim that runs along the stairs, crown molding, around kitchen countertops and backsplashes, exterior trim, and windows.

11.13 — Ceramic Tile

Your selection sheets include the brand and color of your ceramic tile.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Clean properly: Tile is one of the easiest floor coverings to maintain. Sand, grit, and dirt do the most damage to floors due to their abrasiveness, so simply vacuum when needed. Occasionally, a wet mopping with warm water may be appropriate. Avoid adding detergent to the water. If you feel a cleaning agent is required, use a mild solution of warm water and dishwasher crystals (they will not result in a heavy, difficult-to-remove lather on the grout). Rinse thoroughly. The ceramic tile installed on walls or countertops in your home may be washed with any nonabrasive soap, detergent, or tile cleaner. **Abrasive cleaners will dull the finish.** To remove soap scum, use a non-acidic soap or a solution of ammonia (1/2 gallon of ammonia to each gallon of water). Frequent use of ammonia will eventually result in dulling of the surface.

Clean grout and reapply sealant: Clean grout that becomes yellowed or stained with a fiber brush, cleanser, and water. If you sealed your grout, you will need to reapply the sealant. Grout cleansers and whiteners are available at most hardware stores. Staining agents should be mopped up immediately to avoid permanent stains on the grout.

Sealing and warranty: Sealing grout is your decision and responsibility. Once grout has been sealed, ongoing maintenance of that seal is necessary and limited warranty coverage on grout that has been sealed is void.

Expect separations: Expect slight separations to occur in the grout between tiles. This grout is for decorative purposes only; it does not hold the tile in place. Cracks in the grout can be filled using premixed grout purchased from flooring or hardware stores. Follow package directions.

Keep tub caulked: Tile around bathtubs or countertops may appear to be pulling up after a time. This is caused by normal shrinkage of grout or caulk and shrinkage of wood members as they dry out. If this occurs, the best remedy is to purchase tub caulk or premixed grout from a hardware store. Follow directions on the container. This maintenance is important to protect the underlying surface from water damage.

Use the one-time grout repair benefit: Cracks appearing in grouting of ceramic tiles at joints or junctions with other materials are commonly due to shrinkage. EYA will repair grouting, if necessary, one time during the first year. We are not responsible for color variations in grout or discontinued colored grout. Any grouting or caulking that is needed after that time is your responsibility.

11.14 – Circuit Breakers

The electrical wiring and equipment in your home are protected by circuit breakers. These are the safety valves of your home's electrical system. Circuit breakers may be reset by first switching the breaker to the FULL OFF and then back to FULL ON.

Master circuit breakers: Every home built by EYA has a master breaker. It is located in the electrical service panel box. When this breaker is tripped, all of the electricity in the house is cut off.

In case of power failure: First, determine if your neighbors have power. If not, notify your electric company. If the power failure has occurred only in your home, check the master circuit breaker. If one breaker trips continuously, you may be overloading that circuit.

11.15 – Concrete Flatwork

By maintaining good drainage, you protect your home's foundation and the concrete flatwork. It is, however, impossible to stop concrete from cracking, so some cracking should be expected. Areas where water can collect around concrete flatwork can cause damage. Grading should be such that water flows away from concrete.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Clean properly: Avoid washing exterior concrete slabs with cold water from an outside faucet when temperatures are high and the sun has been shining on the concrete. The abrupt change in temperature can damage the surface bond of the concrete. If washing is necessary, do this when temperatures are moderate. In addition, repeated washings can increase soil movement by allowing water to penetrate any existing cracks. We recommend you sweep concrete surfaces to keep them clean.

Seal cracks: Cracks are an inherent characteristic of concrete. Most cracks are superficial and do not penetrate the slab. A concrete slab often shrinks as it cures, which results in cracking. Cracking in concrete flatwork also results from temperature changes that cause expansion and contraction. During the summer, moisture finds its way under the concrete along the edges or through cracks in the surface. In winter, this moisture forms frost that can lift the concrete, increasing the cracking. Maintaining drainage away from all concrete slabs will minimize cracking from this cause. As cracks occur, seal them with a waterproof concrete caulk (available at hardware or home improvement stores) to prevent moisture from penetrating to the soil beneath.

Keep heavy traffic away: Prohibit commercial or other extremely heavy vehicles such as moving vans and other large delivery trucks from pulling onto your concrete. We design and install concrete drives for conventional residential use only.

Watch out for deicers and chemicals: Deicers, such as salt and chemical solutions applied to the street and highways during the winter, may damage your driveway, sidewalk, and garage floor. These harmful residues may be picked up on the undercarriage of your car and may drip onto the concrete surfaces when you park your car in the driveway or in the garage. These residues eventually cause scaling and pitting of exposed concrete surfaces.

Apply sealer twice a year: Apply a sealer to exposed concrete surfaces twice a year, once before cold weather and again in April or May after a thorough cleaning of the surface. Concrete sealers will help protect and keep clean your concrete slabs, your exposed concrete surfaces, and unpainted concrete floors. Sealing is your job and responsibility. Once you have sealed the concrete, ongoing maintenance of that seal is necessary. Sealers are available at local home improvement or paint stores. Do not use soap on unpainted concrete. Instead, use plain water and washing soda or, if necessary, a scouring powder.

11.16 – Condensation

Condensation on interior surfaces of the windows and frames comes from high humidity within the home combined with low outside temperatures. Family lifestyle significantly influences these conditions.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Use good ventilation: Please be sure to follow the guidelines for Ventilation listed under section 11.54 section of this manual.

Care for humidifier: If your home includes a humidifier, closely observe manufactures directions for its use, especially during periods of cooler temperatures. Turn off the humidifier during summer months.

11.17 – Countertops

Countertops are created from a variety of materials, such as laminate, cultured marble, tile, Corian, concrete, and granite. Each material has unique care and cleaning requirements. Please refer to the product care instructions provided to you at your Pre-Settlement Orientation.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Keep good kitchen habits: No matter which material your countertops are made from, use a cutting board to protect your counters when you cut or chop. Protect the counter from heat and from extremely hot pans. If you cannot put your hand on it, do not put it on the counter. Do not use countertops as ironing boards and do not set lighted cigarettes on the edge of the counter. Protect granite, marble, and tile countertops from exposure to oils.

Maintain caulking: The caulking between the countertop and the wall, along the joint at the backsplash (the section of counter that extends a few inches up the wall along the counter area), and around the sink may shrink, leaving a slight gap. Maintaining a good seal in these locations is important to keep moisture from reaching the wood under the laminates and to prevent warping.

Clean properly: Avoid abrasive cleaners, which will damage the luster of the surface. For normal cleaning, your countertops should be wiped with a damp cloth or sponge. Periodically polish the entire surface with a countertop polish found at your local grocery or hardware store.

For troublesome stains, lightly scrub with a liquid dish detergent and rinse well with water. For troublesome spills (glue, nail polish, etc.) lightly rub the affected area with nail polish remover or mineral spirits and rinse well with water. Do not attempt to scrape or sand anything off your countertops. Countertops are not heat resistant, so burns will most likely not be repairable.

Remove drain mats: Rubber drain mats should be removed after use, as they can trap moisture beneath them and cause problems to your countertop surface.

11.18 — Damp proofing

We spray your foundation walls with an asphalt waterproofing material. Although we make every effort to assure a dry basement, during times of excessive moisture you may notice some dampness. Over time, natural compaction of soils in the backfill areas will usually eliminate this condition. Careful maintenance of positive drainage will also protect your basement from this condition. If water is penetrating the concrete foundation during your warranty period, please contact Customer Service.

11.19 — Disposal

For precise directions on the operation of your disposal, consult the manufacturer's instructions. Here are some tips:

Disposal basics: Remember to run cold water when using the disposal to cool the high-speed motor. Avoid putting large amounts of fibrous materials down the disposal, and never put anti-clog chemicals down the disposal.

Using the reset button: Should the disposal become overloaded with a substance it cannot grind, it will turn itself off. If this happens, move the switch to OFF, remove the obstruction, wait about three minutes, push the reset button, and turn the disposal back ON. If this still does not start, turn it OFF again and check to make sure you have not tripped a circuit breaker. If the circuit breaker has been affected, trip the breaker, use the Allen wrench provided with your disposal to turn the rotating plate until it rotates freely. The place to insert the Allen wrench is the bottom of the disposal in the center. Restore current, push the reset button again, and turn the disposal back on.

11.20 — Doors and Locks

The doors installed in your home are wood products subject to such natural characteristics of wood as shrinkage and warpage. Natural fluctuations caused by humidity and the use of forced air furnaces, showers, and dishwashers, interior doors may occasionally require minor adjustments.

Troubleshooting Door Problems

Bi-fold doors: Interior bi-fold doors sometimes stick or warp because of weather conditions. Apply a silicone lubricant to the tracks to minimize this inconvenience.

Failure to latch: If a door will not latch because of minor settling, you can correct this by making a new opening in the jamb for the latch plate (remortising) and raising or lowering the plate accordingly.

Hinges: You can remedy a squeaky door hinge by removing the hinge pin and applying a silicone lubricant to it. Avoid using oil, as it can gum up or attract dirt. Graphite works well as a lubricant but can create a gray smudge on the door or floor covering beneath the hinge if too much is applied.

Keys: Keep a duplicate privacy lock key where children cannot reach it in the event a youngster locks him- or herself in a room. The top edge of the door casing is often used as a place to keep the key. A small screwdriver or similarly shaped device can open some types of privacy locks.

Locks: Lubricate door locks with graphite or other waterproof lubricant. Avoid oil, as it will gum up.

Shrinkage: Use putty, filler, or latex caulk to fill any minor separations that develop at mitered joints in door trim. Follow with painting. Panels of wood doors shrink and expand in response to changes in temperature and humidity. **Touching up the paint or stain on unfinished exposed areas is your home maintenance responsibility.**

Slamming: **Slamming doors can damage both doors and jambs and can even cause cracking in walls.** Teach children not to hang on the doorknob and swing back and forth; this works loose the hardware and causes the door to sag.

Sticking: The most common cause of a sticking door is the natural expansion of lumber caused by changes in humidity. When swelling during a damp season causes sticking, do not plane the door unless it continues to stick after the weather changes.

Before planing a door because of sticking, try two other steps:

- Apply either a paste wax, light coat of paraffin, or candle wax to the sticking surface.
- Tighten the screws that hold the doorjamb or doorframe.

If planing is necessary even after these measures, use sandpaper to smooth the door and paint the sanded area to seal against moisture.

Warping: If a door warps slightly, keeping it closed as much as possible often returns it to normal.

Weather stripping: Weather stripping and exterior door thresholds occasionally require adjustment or replacement.

11.21 — Drains

Each plumbing fixture in your home has a drain trap, a J-shaped piece designed to provide a water barrier between your home and sewer gas. The trap holds water, which prevents the air-borne bacteria and odor of the sewer gas from entering the house. If any fixture is used infrequently, it should be turned on at regular intervals to restore the water barrier. Traps, because of their shape, are also the point at which drains are most likely to get clogged. When the

drain stops up, first use a plunger. Be sure the rubber cap of the plunger covers the drain opening and the water covers well above the cup edge. Working the plunger up and down rhythmically 10 or 20 times in succession will build up pressure in the pipe and do more than sporadic, separate plunges.

If the plunger doesn't work, try using a plumber's snake. Be sure to turn the handle of the snake in the same direction when moving it as you did in inserting it. This will keep any matter attached to the snake from coming loose before it is removed.

11.22 — Drywall

During the first year or two in your new home, additional drying of framing materials and settlement will occur. This movement may cause settlement cracks, tape tears, and nail pops on your interior walls and ceilings. These are considered normal homeowner maintenance repairs.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

One-time repairs: One time during the materials and workmanship warranty, EYA will repair drywall shrinkage cracks and nail pops and will touch up the repaired area using the same paint color that was on the surface when the home was delivered. Touch-ups will be visible.

Repainting the entire wall or the entire room to correct this is your choice and responsibility. You are also responsible for custom paint colors or wallpaper that has been applied subsequent to closing. Due to the effects of time on paint and wallpaper, as well as possible dye lot variations, touch-ups are unlikely to match the surrounding area.

Lighting conditions: EYA does not repair drywall flaws that are only visible under particular lighting conditions.

Related warranty repairs: If a drywall repair is needed as a result of poor workmanship (such as blisters in tape) or other warranty-based repair (such as a plumbing leak), EYA completes the repair by touching up the repaired area with the same paint that was on the surface when the home was delivered. If more than one-third of the wall is involved, we will repaint the wall corner to corner. You are responsible for custom paint colors or wallpaper that has been applied subsequent to closing. The effects of time on paint and wallpaper, as well as possible dye lot variations, mean touch-up may not match the surrounding area.

Nail pops: Nail pops are simply nails protruding from framing materials. The result is a bump or blister in the drywall surface. Follow the steps below to repair a nail pop:

1. Drive the protruding nail or screw all the way through the gypsum board or remove it entirely.
2. Drive another drywall nail or screw an inch or two above or below the nail pop area. The head of the fastener should be below the paper surface creating a slight dimple, but not tearing the paper.
3. Cover the dimpled area heavily with a spackling compound, let it dry, and sand it smooth (a second application of spackling compound may be necessary prior to sanding and repainting the surface).

Cracks and seams: Settlement cracks and tape tears can be repaired in a similar manner as a nail pop:

1. Cut a small "V" joint along the length of the crack about 1/8" deep and 1/8" wide.
2. Fill the "V" joint heavily with spackling compound, and place drywall tape over the joint compound, coering the entire length of the original drywall crack.
3. Allow the joint compound to dry thoroughly and place subsequent layers of joint compound directly over the taped areas.
4. Each subsequent layer of joint compound must dry thoroughly before another layer can be applied.
5. Upon reaching desired finish, lightly sand the surface until smooth and repaint the area.

11.23 — Electrical System

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Here is a guide to the major elements of your electrical system and their basic maintenance.

Breakers: Know the location of the breaker panel; it includes a main shut-off that controls all the electrical power to the home. Some homes have more than one breaker panel and each panel has its own main shut-off. Individual breakers control the separate circuits, which are marked to help you identify which outlets and appliances are generally attached to that circuit. Should a failure occur in any part of your home, always check the breakers in the main panel box. If an individual outlet is not working, first check to see if a wall switch or GFCI (see below) controls it. If not, check the breaker. Circuit breakers have three positions: on, off, and tripped. When a circuit breaker trips, it must first be turned off before it can be turned on. Switching the breaker directly from tripped to on will not restore service.

Breaker tripping: Breakers trip because of overloads caused by plugging too many appliances into the circuit, a worn cord or defective appliance, or operating an appliance with too high a voltage requirement for the circuit. Starting an electric motor can also trip a breaker. If any circuit trips repeatedly, unplug all items connected to it and reset. If it trips when nothing is connected to it, you need an electrician. If the circuit remains on, one of the items you unplugged is defective and will require repair or replacement.

GFCI (Ground-Fault Circuit-Interrupters): GFCI receptacles have a built-in element that senses fluctuations in power. Quite simply, the GFCI is a circuit breaker for up to three or four outlets on an individual circuit. Building codes require installation of these receptacles in bathrooms, the kitchen, outside, and the garage (areas where an individual can come into contact with water while holding an electric appliance or tool). Heavy appliances such as freezers or power tools will trip the GFCI breaker. Occasionally, a circuit will be protected by a GFCI breaker located in the breaker panel rather than a GFCI breaker located along the circuit path. Location is the only difference in both function and protection.

Each GFCI circuit has a test and reset button. Periodically, press the test button. This will trip the circuit. To return service, press the reset button. If a GFCI breaker trips during normal use, it may indicate a faulty appliance and you will need to investigate the problem.

Caution: Never plug a refrigerator or food freezer into a GFCI-controlled outlet. The likelihood of the contents being ruined is high and the limited warranty does not cover such damage. A dedicated circuit should power these appliances.

Fixture location: We install light fixtures in the approximate locations and quantities indicated on the plans. Please understand that the specific number and location will vary according to floor and/or roof truss locations and framing layout. Electrical outlets in particular are governed by field conditions and code interpretations. We make no representation that they will be similar to our models or plans, only that the electrical outlet locations comply with codes. Moving fixtures to accommodate specific furniture arrangements or room use is your responsibility.

Light bulbs and recessed lights: You are responsible for replacing burned-out bulbs other than those noted during

your orientation. All recessed light fixtures that are located in your home come equipped with a thermal overload device that will automatically turn off a light when the temperature is too high inside the fixture. Do not use light bulbs with wattage greater than the maximum stated on the light fixture. A higher wattage bulb may activate the thermal overload device and automatically shut down the light fixture.

Underground cables: Before digging, check the location of buried service leads by calling the local utility locating service (Miss Utility).

11.24 — Electric Water Heater

Carefully read the manufacturer's literature and warranty for your specific model of water heater. This literature will explain specific feature for your water heater model as well operation, safety precautions, maintenance, and troubleshooting.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance

Here is a guide to some of the major elements and maintenance tasks.

Draining the tank: Review and follow the manufacturer's timetable and instructions for draining several gallons of water from the bottom of the water heater. **This reduces build-up of chemical deposits from the water, thereby prolonging the life of the tanks as well as saving energy dollars.** Carefully follow the instructions in the manufacturer's literature.

Element cleaning: **The heating elements in the water heater will require periodic cleaning.** The frequency of cleaning will be determined in part by the quality of the water in your area. Again, refer to the manufacturer's literature for step-by-step instructions and drawings, or contact an authorized service company.

No Hot Water: If you discover you have no hot water, check the circuit breaker, the temperature setting, and the water-supply valve before calling for service. Please keep in mind that hot water will take longer to arrive at sinks, tubs, and showers that are far from the water heater. Hot water recovery time also takes longer in winter months.

Pressure relief valve maintenance: **At least once each year, manually operate the pressure relief valve.** Stay clear of the discharge area to avoid injury. See manufacturer's literature for diagrams and detailed instructions.

Safety: Keep the area around the water heater clear of stored household items. Never use the top of the water heater as a storage shelf.

Temperature: The following chart may be used as a guide in determining the proper water temperature for your home. However, please keep in mind that in some local jurisdictions, adjusting the temperature at the water heater will have no effect at the showerhead due to anti-scald devices required by the jurisdiction.

Temperature Time to Produce Serious Burn

- 120 Degrees Fahrenheit: More than 5 minutes
- 125 Degrees Fahrenheit: One and a half to two minutes
- 130 Degrees Fahrenheit: About 30 seconds
- 135 Degrees Fahrenheit: About 10 seconds
- 140 Degrees Fahrenheit: Less than 5 seconds
- 145 Degrees Fahrenheit: Less than 3 seconds
- 150 Degrees Fahrenheit: Less than one and a half seconds
- 155 Degrees Fahrenheit: About one second

11.25 — Exterior Trim

Exterior painting and caulking is the responsibility of the homeowner. It is recommended that you check the caulking and exterior paint around the home and repair as necessary.

Changes in temperature and humidity cause all building materials to expand and contract. Dissimilar materials expand or contract at different rates. This movement results in separation between materials, particularly dissimilar ones. You will see the effects in small cracks in exterior trim, especially at mitered corners, and butt joints. While this can alarm a homeowner, it is normal.

Some minor movement of the exterior trim elements of your home is inevitable and occurs in every new home. Although this is most noticeable during the first year, it may continue beyond that time. In most cases, caulk and paint are all that you need to conceal this minor evidence of a natural phenomenon. Even though properly installed, caulking shrinks and cracks. Maintenance of caulking is your responsibility.

11.26 — Iron Fencing

Wrought iron is subject to rusting if it is not maintained. Use touch-up paint on any scratches or chips. **Inspect the fence twice a year and touch up as needed, then plan to repaint the entire fence every one to two years to keep it looking its best.**

Prevent sprinklers from spraying your wrought iron fence or rails. Check monthly to confirm that water does not stand around the fence posts. Make corrections to drainage as needed to prevent this.

11.27 — Gas Fireplace

Your gas fireplace comes with a set of instructions, which is attached to the gas line. Read and follow all manufacturers' instructions. Gas fireplaces typically require less care than a traditional drawing fireplace.

Homeowner use and maintenance

Ignition: A slight delay between turning the switch on and flame ignition is normal. The flames should ignite gently and silently. If you notice any deviation from this and any gas smell, immediately shut off the switch and report it to the gas company. If you are experiencing trouble with your remote control, ensure that the batteries in both the remote and the wall switch are fully charged.

NOTE: The exterior vent cover and the glass doors of a direct-vent gas fireplace become extremely hot when the fireplace is operating. Use caution in placing objects on your mantle as the high heat rising from the fireplace can melt or damage items.

Odor: Ceramic logs will emit a chemical odor during the first several hours of use of a new gas fireplace. This is normal and should typically lessen after operating the fireplace for 8 to 10 hours.

11.28 — Foundation

In areas of your lower level that are below grade, the walls of your foundation are steel reinforced poured concrete that are sprayed with a damp-proofing material. Concrete basement walls should be considered water resistant rather than waterproof. To protect your home's foundation, follow guidelines for installation and maintenance of landscaping and drainage in this manual.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Cracks: It is not uncommon for poured-in-place concrete walls to develop surface cracks. Surface cracks are not detrimental to the structural integrity of your home.

Dampness: Although we make every effort to ensure a dry basement, you may notice some dampness during times of excessive moisture. You should carefully maintain the perimeter of your home so that water can drain away from foundation, as ponding water against your foundation may lead to interior dampness. Over time, with natural compaction of soils in the backfill areas, you will notice less settlement around your home. Careful maintenance of positive drainage will protect your foundation.

11.29 — Garage Overhead Door

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Your garage door will require periodic maintenance. Every six months apply multi-purpose grease to the weather stripping as well as all moving parts (tracks, rollers, hinges, pulleys, and springs). At the same time, check to see that all hardware is tight and operating as intended without binding or scraping. Avoid over lubricating to prevent drips on vehicles or the concrete floor.

In addition to these general recommendations, follow the manufacturers' recommended requirements. Although the garage doors are typically insulated, they are not designed to be airtight. Light may be visible at the edges of the door and, under certain weather conditions, precipitation may enter your garage through these edges.

Lock: If the lock becomes stiff, apply a silicone or graphite lubricant. Do not use oil on a lock, as it will stiffen in winter and make the lock difficult to operate. Do not use the lock if you have an automatic garage door opener.

Automatic opener: To prevent damage to a garage door opener, be sure the door is completely unlocked and the rope-pull has been removed before using the operator. If you have an opener installed after closing on your home, we suggest that you order it from the company that provided and installed the garage door to assure uninterrupted warranty coverage. Please make sure that you follow the door manufacturer's installation guidelines, including reinforcement of the top panel. Be familiar with the steps for manual operation of the door in the event of a power failure.

Safety: Follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe and reliable operation. Do not allow anyone except the operator near the door when it is in motion. Keep hands and fingers away from all parts of the door except the handle. Do not allow children to play with or around the door.

For your safety, after the expiration of the one-year warranty, have any needed adjustments made by a qualified specialist. The door springs are under a considerable amount of tension and require special tools and knowledge for accurate and safe servicing. Have the door inspected by a professional garage door technician after any significant impact to the door.

11.30 — Gas Shut-Offs

You will find shut-offs on gas lines near their connection to each item that operates on gas. In addition, there is a main shut-off at the meter. We point these out during the pre settlement orientation. If you suspect a gas leak, leave the home and call the gas company immediately for emergency service.

To shut off the gas to a specific appliance, locate the gas valve (which is usually located within a couple feet to the appliance) and turn the handle so that it is perpendicular to the pipe or hosing. A handle that points the same direction as the pipe or hosing is in the open position.

11.31 — Ghosting

Recent feedback from homeowners (in both old and new homes) regarding black sooty stains which develop on surfaces in homes (on carpet, walls, ceilings, appliances, mirrors, and around area rugs—to list a few examples) have caused much investigation and research.

The conclusion of the research and laboratory tests has been that the majority of this staining or "ghosting" results from pollution of the air in the home caused by burning scented candles. Incomplete combustion of hydrocarbons as these candles burn contributes a considerable amount of soot to the air. This sooty substance then settles or accumulates on surfaces of the home. The sooty deposits are extremely difficult to remove; on some surfaces (light-colored carpet, for instance), they are impossible to clean completely away. The popularity of scented candles has increased many-fold in recent years. If this is an activity that is part of your lifestyle, we caution you about the potential damage to your home. When this condition results from homeowners burning candles or other lifestyle choices, the resulting damage is excluded from our limited warranty coverage.

11.32 — Grading and Drainage

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Upon completion of the final grade of your lot and installation of your sodded lawn, the drainage pattern has been established for your lot. It is not uncommon for localized settlement to occur. It is important that you maintain the original pattern as water is designed to flow away from your home and return to the environment in a path that does not damage downstream properties.

Drainage patterns should be considered for any landscaping done on your property. **It is critical that the original drainage configuration be maintained.** Altering of this drainage pattern may result in standing/ponding water and/or foundation leaks.

Maintain slopes: Maintain the slopes around your home to permit the water to drain away from the home as rapidly

as possible. The grading plan was designed by a civil engineer to handle storm water runoff and to ensure proper, positive drainage away from your homesite. No standing water should remain in your yard 24 hours after a rain with the exception of in a swale or where a sump pump discharges, which sometimes will hold water for up to 48 hours. Periods of unusually heavy rainfall, snow, or extended frost can alter these timeframes, and is not considered a deficiency.

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

Settling: During the first year of occupancy, you may expect some soil settlement around the foundation walls and utility trenches of your new home. Settlement may interfere with proper flow of storm water away from your home, and/or across your property. As a homeowner, you will need to correct deviations by filling the low area with soil and reseeding the area. The establishment of grass is critical to erosion control. For settlement that may occur near your foundation, you will need to remove shrubbery, fill the low areas, replant, and mulch.

During the final grading of your home, large rocks and construction debris are removed. It is inevitable, however, that rocks and stones may surface over time. This is a normal occurrence in new home construction and will cease as your lawn matures.

11.33 — Gutters and Downspouts

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Gutters are installed on your home to accommodate normal rainfalls. During periods of excessively heavy rain some gutters will overflow. Periodically check gutters and remove leaves or other debris. During a light to normal rain, check gutters for overflow. After the rainstorm, ensure that no debris has collected in the gutter or that downspout is clogged. It is not uncommon for small amounts of water to stand in gutters after a rain.

Extensions or splashblocks: Make sure that splash blocks are always in place at the outfall of all downspouts and the grade falls away from the house with a good cover of grass adjacent to each splash block. Extensions should discharge outside of mulch beds so that water is not dammed behind the edging materials that might be used.

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

Snow and ice: Clear excess snow from downspouts as soon as possible to allow the gutter to drain and to prevent damage. Severe ice or snow build-up can damage gutters, and such damage is not covered by the limited warranty.

11.34 — Hardware

Doorknobs and locks should operate correctly with little attention. Over time, they may need slight adjustments due to normal shrinkage of the framing. Occasionally, you may need to tighten screws. Doors with “dummy” knobs (those without working knobs on other side of door, which are typically found on closet or pantry doors) use spring-loaded rollers located at the top of the door. Occasionally these will stick and will require lubrication.

11.35 — Hardwood Floors

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

In daily care of hardwood floor, preventive maintenance is the primary goal. Please refer to the manufacturer's recommendations for cleaning and buffing your hardwood floors.

Should your hardwood floors require repairs, it is customary to remove the damaged boards and insert new boards using a limited number of face nails, similar to the nailing found at your wall edges.

Clean properly: Sweep on a daily basis or as needed. Never wet-mop a hardwood floor. Excessive water causes wood to expand and can possibly damage the floor. When polyurethane finishes become soiled, damp-mop with a mixture of one-cup vinegar to one gallon of warm water. When damp-mopping, remove all excess water from the mop.

Prevent dimples: Placing heavy furniture or dropping heavy or sharp objects on hardwood floors can result in dimples.

Filmy appearance: A white, filmy appearance can result from moisture, often from wet shoes or boots.

Protect floors from furniture legs: Install proper floor protectors on furniture placed on hardwood floors. Protectors will allow chairs to move easily over the floor without scuffing. Regularly clean the protectors to remove any grit that may have accumulated.

Humidity: Wood floors respond noticeably to changes in humidity in your home. Especially during winter months the individual planks or pieces expand and contract as water content changes. A humidifier helps but does not eliminate this reaction.

Use mats and area rugs with care: Use protective mats at the exterior doors to help prevent sand and grit from getting on the floor. Gritty sand is wood flooring's worst enemy. However, be aware that rubber backing on area rugs or mats can cause yellowing and warping of the floor surface.

Pet damage: Over time, the claws of household pets such as dogs and cats may dimple your hardwood floor.

Potted plants: Do not set potted plants directly on the hardwood floor.

Expect some separation: Expect some shrinkage around heat vents or any heat-producing appliances, or during seasonal weather changes.

Use care with shoes: Keep high heels in good repair. Heels that have lost their protective cap (thus exposing the fastening nail) will exert over 8,000 pounds of pressure per square inch on the floor. **That's enough to damage hardened concrete; it will mark your wood floor.**

Clean spills: Clean up food spills immediately with a dry cloth. Use a vinegar-and-warm-water solution for tough food spills.

Splinters are normal: When floors are new, small splinters of wood can appear.

Protect floors from sun exposure: Exposure to direct sunlight can cause irreparable discoloring and damage to

hardwood floors. To preserve the beauty of your hardwood floors, install and use window coverings in these areas.

Traffic paths: A dulling of the finish in heavy traffic areas is likely.

Warping is common: Warping will occur if the floor repeatedly becomes wet or is thoroughly soaked even once. Slight warping in the area of heat vents or heat-producing appliances is also typical.

Use care with wax: Never use a wax that is not recommended by the manufacturer.

11.36 — Heating System

Your heating and air conditioning system consists of an airhandler (heat pump system) or furnace (gas system), including filter, thermostat, ductwork, registers, cooling unit (condenser), compressor unit, and coil. Depending on size, some EYA-built homes have multiple systems. The heating system is designed to maintain a temperature of 70 degrees as measured in the center of the room five feet above the floor during typical outdoor conditions for the Washington Metro Area. Temperature differentials can increase as the outdoor temperature drops below the design conditions.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Good maintenance of your furnace can save energy dollars and prolong the life of the furnace. Carefully read and follow the manufacturer's literature on use and maintenance. The guidelines here include general information only. Provide professional service for your system at least once every two years.

Adjust vents to suit: You will need to balance the system for your needs by adjusting the registers in your home to establish the best heat flow for your lifestyle. Generally, you can reduce the heat in seldom-used or interior rooms. Rooms farther away from the furnace will usually need to be opened wider. Some adjustment may also be necessary during the air-conditioning season. **A good technique for accomplishing this is to completely open all the vents, and then gradually move the temperature setting up until the coolest room is comfortable. Once the coolest room is comfortable, gradually close the vents in the warmer rooms until all rooms are comfortable as well.** Reverse the process for air conditioning.

Blower panel should be positioned correctly: Should you open the front cover of your air handler/furnace, you need to position the panel correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. This panel presses a button that tells the blower it is safe to operate. If this panel is not properly aligned the fan will not operate.

Blocked vents can be dangerous: Gas furnaces installed in basements, utility room, and/or attics of your home require adequate ventilation. In many situations, you may have a louvered door and/or high and low air vent.

NOTE: Never cover or block the combustion air vent in any way. Outside air is needed to supply the furnace with sufficient oxygen. Blocking the combustion air vent will cause the furnace to draw air down the vent pipe and pull poisonous gases back into your home.

Ductwork noise is normal: Some popping or pinging sounds are the natural result of ductwork heating and cooling in response to airflow as the system operates.

Filter must be changed: Remember to change or clean the filter on a regular basis. A clogged filter can slow airflow and cause cold spots in your home. **Although it takes less than one minute to change the filter, this is one of the most frequently overlooked details of normal furnace care.** Buy filters in larger quantities for the sake of convenience. If you have a permanent, washable, removable filter, you need to clean this monthly. Use water only to clean the filter, tap to dry or air dry, and leave unit off for a brief period. Do not use soaps or detergents on the filter. If you have an electronic air cleaner, read the manufacturers literature and follow all instructions for efficient operation and maintenance of your system.

Furniture makes a difference: The heating system was designed with a furnished home in mind. **If you move in during the cooler part of the year and have not yet acquired all of your draperies and furnishings, the home may seem cooler than you would expect.**

If you smell gas: Leave your home immediately and call your local gas company.

New or idle system odor: A new heating system may emit an odor for a few moments when you first turn it on. An established system may emit an odor after being unused for an extended time (such as after the summer months). This is caused by dust that has settled in the ducts and should pass quickly.

Watch the on-off switch: The furnace has an on-off blower switch. This switch looks like a regular light switch and is located in a metal box outside the furnace. When turned off, this switch overrides all furnace commands and shuts down the blower. This is usually done only when maintenance service is being performed, although **young children have been known to turn the furnace off using this switch.**

Adjust registers and dampers:

Heat register covers are removable and adjustable. You are responsible for adjusting the dampers in these covers to regulate the heat flow within the home. Registers in the rooms farther away from the furnace will usually need to be opened wider. EYA does not caulk around the registers so that they may be removed for cleaning.

Return air vents: For maximum comfort and efficient energy use, arrange furniture and draperies to allow unobstructed airflow from registers and to cold air returns.

Dealing with temperature variations: Depending on the style of home, temperatures can normally vary from floor to floor by as much as 10 degrees or more on extremely cold days. The furnace blower will typically cycle on and off more frequently and for shorter periods during severe cold spells. You may find it more comfortable to switch the setting on your thermostat from Auto to On (which keeps air continuously circulating) to have a more even temperature range in your home.

Efficient thermostat adjustments: The furnace will come on automatically when the temperature at the thermostat registers below the setting you have selected. **Once the furnace is on, setting the thermostat to a higher temperature will not heat the home faster.** Conversely, lowering your thermostat for air conditioning will not accelerate that process either. Thermostats are calibrated to within plus or minus 5 degrees.

If you have a programmable thermostat, read the manufacturer's literature and follow all instructions for efficient operation of your system.

Try a trial run: Have a trial run early in the fall to test the furnace. (The same applies to air-conditioning in the spring.) If service is needed, it is much better to discover that before the heating season.

11.37 — Heat Pump

A heat pump system operates differently from a gas forced-air furnace. The same system provides both heat and air conditioning. This is possible because a refrigerant flows back and forth in the coils of the heat pump, controlled by a reversing valve. In the heating mode, the heat pump removes heat from the outside air and transfers it to the inside air. In the cooling mode, it does just the opposite, removing heat from the inside air and discharging it outside of the home. The thermostat inside your home controls this heating or cooling activity.

Homeowner Care and Maintenance

If your home contains a heat pump system, you should be aware of the performance characteristics unique to these systems. As with any system, read the manufacturer's literature and follow all instructions for efficient operation and maintenance of your system. **Clean or replace filters once a month. Provide professional service for your system at least once every two years.**

Keep the outside unit clear: Keep the outside unit clear of any materials that would interfere with air circulation. Snow, ice, landscaping materials, trash, leaves, and other accumulating items can cause inefficiency or damage the unit.

Air temperature at vents: Do not expect dramatic temperature differences in the air coming from the vents as is common with other kinds of systems. The coils used in a heat-pump system operate at lower temperatures than those common in a gas forced-air system. As a result, in the heat mode, for example, air from the supply vents will not feel hot, though the air discharged is warmer than the air in the room by as much as 20 degrees.

Auxiliary heat system: At lower outside temperatures, less heat is available for the heat pump to draw from the exterior air.

Therefore, from time to time the auxiliary heat system will come on to maintain the temperature you set at the thermostat. The auxiliary system also will come on whenever the temperature at the thermostat is moved 1.5 degrees or more at one time. If the light stays on when the outside temperature is more than 33 degrees, contact a service person.

Defrost cycle: When the heat pump is operating in the heat mode, the coils outside may reach below freezing temperatures. Moisture in the air will condense into frost and accumulate on the coils under these circumstances. From time to time, the system will go into defrost mode to clear accumulated frost from the coils. This is a normal part of the operation of the system and will occur automatically. During the defrost cycle, the outside fan will stop temporarily.

The temperature of airflow into the home will be a bit lower during the defrost cycle. The defrost cycle can only occur once every 90 minutes and lasts no longer than 10 minutes.

Keep thermostat setting consistent: Unless you have a night setback thermostat designed to work with a heat pump system, do not turn the thermostat down in the evenings. Adjust the temperature a fraction of a degree at a time until a comfortable, permanent setting is found.

Register adjustment: You will need to balance the system for your needs by adjusting the registers in your home to establish the best heat flow for your lifestyle. Generally, you can reduce the heat in seldom-used or interior rooms. Rooms farther away from the furnace will usually need to be opened wider. Some adjustment may also be necessary during the air conditioning season.

A good technique for accomplishing this is to completely open all the vents, and then gradually move the temperature setting up until the coolest room is comfortable. Once the coolest room is comfortable, gradually close the vents in the warmer rooms until all rooms are comfortable as well. Reverse the process for air conditioning.

Keep return air vents clear: As with any heating system, return air vents must be clear so air flows through the ducts unimpeded. Avoid placing furniture where it blocks the return air vents.

11.38 — Humidifier

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Operate a humidifier only when heating your home, not when operating the air conditioner. The humidifier should be adjusted to the manufacturer's recommended settings and suggested timetable. It is a homeowner's responsibility to monitor and maintain appropriate moisture levels in your home as excessive moisture can lead to mold and mildew.

Your humidifier requires periodic cleaning, usually once a year prior to the start of the heating season. The purpose of the cleaning is to remove mold, mildew, bacteria, and mineral deposits that may have formed. In addition, most humidifiers have filters that require replacement on a regular basis.

11.39 — Insulation

If your home has an attic, it is filled with blow insulation that is generally a uniform thickness throughout the attic (sloped ceiling areas are covered with batt insulation). As the last step in any work performed in your attic (for example, the installation of a TV antenna), you should confirm that the insulation remains smooth and even. Do not step on the drywall ceilings, because this can result in personal injury or damage to the drywall.

Unless otherwise specified, do not use the attic space for storage. Any items placed on top of the insulation will result in heat loss and possible condensation problems.

11.40 — Landscaping

The quality and appearance of your newly sodded lawn and newly installed landscaping will depend on the care and

attention you provide, especially in the early months following installation. In some communities, the Homeowners Association will maintain this landscaping, so check your documents to see what you are responsible for. Proper watering is essential for all new lawns and landscape material as their root structure is immature and vulnerable to drought and high temperatures.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The following is a general guide to the major elements and tasks associated with maintaining your landscaping.

Backfill: If your home's lower level is below grade, we construct the foundation of your home beginning with an excavation into the earth. When the foundation walls are complete, the area surrounding them is backfilled. Soil in this area is not as compact as undisturbed ground. Water can penetrate the backfill to the lower areas of your foundation. This can cause potentially severe problems, such as wet basements, cracks in foundation walls, and floor-slab movement. You can avoid this through proper installation of landscaping and good maintenance of drainage.

Keep downspout extensions in the down position to channel roof runoff away from the foundation area of your home. Routine inspection of downspouts, backfill areas, and other drainage components is an excellent maintenance habit. Backfill areas that settle will require prompt attention to avoid damage to your home and voiding of the structural warranty. You will need to correct deviations by filling the low area with soil and reseeding the area. The establishment of grass is critical to erosion control. For settlement that may occur near your foundation, you will need to remove your shrubbery, fill the low areas, replant, and mulch.

Changing the landscape plan and using contractors: You are responsible for changes to the drainage pattern made by any landscape contractor. Before making any changes, please refer to your Homeowners Association Rules to make sure any changes you make are within required guidelines. Remember to consider drainage patterns and how they affect your neighbors, both uphill and downhill.

Mulch or rock beds: Do not allow edging around decorative rock or mulch beds to dam the free flow of water away from the home. You can use a non-woven landscape fabric between the soil and rock or bark to restrict weed growth while still permitting normal evaporation of ground moisture.

Drainage: Prior to seeding or installing sod, your yard was final graded. The grading plan was designed by a civil engineer to handle storm water runoff for the entire community and to ensure proper, positive drainage away from your home.

It is important you inspect drainage from time to time and ensure it is functioning properly. **Be careful that any landscaping improvements you have made do not interfere with the flow of storm water runoff (and are allowed by your Homeowners Association).** Avoid planting or building anything in a drainage swale.

Irrigation: Your community may have an irrigation system for open landscape areas. If so, the upkeep of this system is the responsibility of the Homeowners Association. **Periodically check the system to make sure sprinklers are not spraying water on the exterior walls of your home.** This will cause blistering, peeling, splintering, and other damage to the home. Should you notice any problems, contact your homeowners association.

Natural Areas:

During construction, we remove construction debris from natural areas. Removing dead wood, tree limbs, fallen trees, or other natural items is your responsibility.

Planning: Locate plants and irrigation heads out of the way of pedestrian or bicycle traffic and car bumpers. Space groves of trees or single trees to allow for efficient mowing and growth. Group plants with similar water, sun, and space requirements together.

Plant selection: Plant with regard to your local climate. Favor native over exotic species. Consider ultimate size, shape, and growth of the species.

Requirements: Check with your local building department and homeowners association before designing, installing, or changing landscaping for any regulations that they require you to follow.

Sod: Newly placed sod requires extra water for several weeks. If your Homeowners Association is not responsible for watering any areas, please water in the cool part of the day (ideally just before sunrise) at regular intervals for the first three weeks. Be aware that new sod and the extra watering it requires can sometimes create drainage concerns (in your yard or your neighbor's) that will disappear when the yard is established and requires normal watering.

Rocks and stones: The soil in your area may have stones and rocks. Removing these naturally occurring elements is a maintenance activity. When EYA installs sod, large rocks will be picked up and surface raking performed. You will need to provide continued attention to this condition as you care for your yard.

Trees: EYA values trees as one of the features that make up an attractive community and that add value to the homes we build. We take steps to protect and preserve existing trees in the area of your home. In spite of our efforts, existing trees located on construction sites can suffer damage from construction activities. This damage may manifest months after the completion of construction. Damage to existing trees can be caused by such things as compaction of soil in the root zone, changing patterns of water flow on the lot, disturbing the root system, and removing other trees to make room for the home. The newly exposed tree may react to conditions it is unaccustomed to.

- Caring for existing trees, including pruning dead branches or removing these trees altogether is your responsibility.
- Remember to water trees during the summer or during warm dry periods in the winter.
- Mulch around trees and avoid tilling or planting flowerbeds around trees. This is especially important while trees are recovering from the construction process.
- Trees and other plant materials that exist on the lot when construction begins and are not part of any landscaping installed by EYA are excluded from warranty coverage.

Utility lines: A slight depression may develop in the yard along the line of the utility trench. To correct this, roll back the sod, spread topsoil underneath to level the area, and then relay the sod. Before any significant digging, check the location of buried service leads by calling Miss Utility. In most cases, wires and pipes run in a straight line from the main service to the public supply.

Waiting to Landscape: If you leave ground unlandscaped, it erodes. Correcting erosion that occurs after closing is your responsibility.

Weeds: Weeds will appear in your new lawn whether seed or sod is used. The best control is a healthy lawn, achieved through regular care and attention.

11.41 — Mirrors

To clean mirrors, use any reliable liquid glass cleaner or polisher available at most hardware or grocery stores. Avoid acidic cleaners and splashing water under the mirror. Either can cause the silvering to deteriorate. Avoid getting glass cleaners on plumbing fixtures as some formulas can deteriorate the finish.

11.42 — Mold

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), “it is impossible to get rid of all mold and mold spores indoors: some mold spores will be found floating through the air and in house dust.” (“[Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings](#)”, EPA Document 402-K-01-001.)

Though the presence of mold inside of the home can never be completely eliminated, you can take positive steps to reduce the occurrence of mold growth in your home. Some of the steps recommended by the EPA are as follows:

- Mildew is a fungus that spreads through the air in microscopic spores. They love moisture and feed on surfaces or dirt. On siding, it looks like a layer of dirt. To determine whether you are dealing with mildew or dirt, wipe the surface with a cloth or sponge dampened with bleach. If the bleach causes the surface to lose its dark appearance, you are most likely seeing mildew.
- When water leaks or spills occur indoors, act quickly. If wet or damp materials or areas are dried 24 to 48 hours after a leak or spill happens, mold will usually not grow.
- Clean and repair roof gutters regularly.
- Make sure the ground slopes away from the building foundation so that water does not enter or collect around the foundation.
- Keep air-conditioning drip pans clean and the drain lines unobstructed and flowing properly.
- Keep indoor humidity low. If possible, keep indoor humidity below 60 percent relative humidity.
- If you see condensation or moisture collecting on windows, walls or pipes, act quickly to dry the wet surface and reduce the moisture/water source. Condensation can be a sign of high humidity.
- Use air conditioners and/or heaters as required.
- Run the bathroom fan or open the window when showering. Use exhaust fans or open windows whenever cooking, running the dishwasher or dishwashing, etc.
- Cover cold surfaces, such as cold water pipes, with insulation.

For more information on mold and the health effects of mold, consider consulting the publication referenced above. The websites for the US Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) contain additional information on this issue.

11.43 — Paint and Stain

Paint manufacturers have made their paints more environmentally friendly by eliminating lead and mercury. These changes, although positive, have reduced the durability and longevity of paint. Additionally, today’s water based paints and stains often make wood grain visible on trim.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Cleaning vs. touchup: If necessary, painted surfaces may be washed gently using mild soap and as little water as possible. Avoid abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, or scrub brushes. Flat paints show washing marks more easily than gloss paints do. Often, homeowners prefer the results of touching up paint in lieu of washing.

Caulking: Time, weather, and settlement will shrink, dry, and split caulking so that it no longer provides a good seal. It is important to inspect and repair caulking prior to painting the interior or exterior of your home.

Maintain exterior painting: Check the painted and stained surfaces of your home's exterior annually. Repaint before much chipping or wearing away of the original finish occurs; this will save the cost of extensive surface preparation. **Plan on recaulking and repainting the exterior surface of your home within 2 years of settlement and then approximately every two to three years thereafter.** When you repaint the exterior of your home, begin by resetting popped nails and removing blistered or peeling portions of paint with a wire brush or putty knife. Sand, spot with primer, and then paint the entire area. Use a quality exterior paint formulated for local climate conditions. Avoid having sprinklers or lawn irrigation systems spray water on the exterior walls of your home. This will cause blistering, peeling, splintering, and other damage to the home.

Touch-ups: Paints and stain will fade due to the effects of sun, weather, and living conditions. Therefore, touch-ups may not match due to these factors, as well as dye lot variations and certain lighting conditions. When doing paint touch-ups, use a small brush, applying paint only to the damaged spot. Touch-up may not match the surrounding area exactly, even if the same paint mix is used. When it is time to repaint a room, prepare the wall surfaces first by cleaning with a mild soap and water mixture or a reliable cleaning product.

Fixing wall cracks: Prior to repainting a room, you will want to make necessary drywall repairs. See section 11.22, Drywall, for tips and guidelines.

11.44 — Phone Jacks

Your home is equipped with telephone jacks as shown on the blueprints and selection sheets. In addition, your home may have also come with multi-media outlets, which offer phone jacks as well as cable jacks. Initiating phone service, additions to phone service, and moving phone outlets for decorating purposes or convenience are your responsibility.

11.45 — Plumbing

Your home's plumbing system has been installed under the direction of a licensed plumbing contractor in accordance with local plumbing codes and has been inspected by local building authorities. Water supply and drainage from all lines and fixtures was satisfactory when tested prior to your move-in date. A licensed plumber must conduct any alterations to your plumbing system. We recommend you use the original contractor to maintain your warranty.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

A plumbing system has many parts, most of which require little maintenance. Proper cleaning, occasional minor attention, and preventive care will assure many years of good service from this system. The following is a guide to the plumbing elements in your home and the basics on how to maintain them.

Water-saving toilets: Toilets used today in residential construction typically do not perform as well as the toilets in the home you grew up in. A water-saving regulation went into effect in 1993, which prohibits the manufacture of toilets that use more than 1.6 gallons of water per flush. In the search for a balance among comfort, convenience, and sensible use of natural resources, the government conducted several studies and determined the 1.6-gallon toilet consistently saved the most water.

As a result of this standard, flushing twice is occasionally necessary to completely empty the toilet bowl. Even though you flush twice on occasion, rest assured that overall you are saving water. Similarly, flow restrictors manufactured into faucets and showerheads cannot be removed. We regret any inconvenience this may cause. However, we must comply with federal regulations.

Aerators: Faucet aerators are small, round, screened attachments commonly found screwed to the mouth of kitchen and bathroom faucets. These attachments add air to the water as it leaves the faucet, which reduces splashing and reduces water use. These aerators should be removed and cleaned frequently, at least once per month during the first three months, and every three to four months thereafter.

Caulking and grout: The normal high moisture content common in bathrooms, the weight of the tub when filled with water, settling of the home over time, and the normal contraction and expansion of materials will cause separation between the tub or shower stall and adjacent tiled wall surfaces in your home. This condition can be remedied by applying a flexible caulking sealant. Other common areas where this occurs include bathroom vanities and side splashes as well as the kitchen sink and counter.

Cleaning plumbing fixtures: The surfaces of your new plumbing fixtures are not indestructible. Continue to protect the fixtures by taking the following precautions and following the manufacturer's directions for cleaning fixtures:

- Avoid abrasive cleansers.
- Clean plumbing fixtures with a soft sponge and soapy water (a nonabrasive cleaner or a liquid detergent is usually recommended by manufacturers).
- Polish the fixtures with a dry cloth to prevent water spots.

Clogs: Your home's sewer lines have been tested and inspected to ensure against blockages before you moved into our new home. Flooding that occurs over the rim of a sink or toilet is the homeowner's responsibility unless a construction defect is demonstrated to be the cause. Avoid disposal of items such as disposable diapers, excessive amounts of toilet paper, sanitary supplies, Q-tips, dental floss, and children's toys into the systems. If you are experiencing a clog or a slow running drain, you can usually clear the clog with a plunger or chemical agent. If using chemical agents, follow directions carefully to avoid personal injury or damage to the fixture. If the cause of the stoppage is not immediately evident, call a plumber. Improper garbage disposal use also causes many plumbing clogs. **Always use plenty of cold water when running the disposal.** This recommendation also applies to grease; supplied with a steady flow of cold

water, the grease congeals and is cut up by the blades. If you use hot water, the grease remains a liquid, then cools and solidifies in the sewer line. Allow the water to run 10 to 15 seconds after shutting off the disposal.

Extended absence: If you plan to be away for an extended period, you should drain your water supply lines. To do this, shut off the main supply line and open the faucets to relieve pressure in the lines. You may also wish to shut off the water heater. Check manufacturer's directions for additional hints and instructions.

Frozen pipes and outside hose bibs: Never leave your home without heat during cold weather. A home should be heated to at least 65

degrees or greater to help prevent frozen pipes. Unused rooms may have water lines in their walls, so never completely close the heating vents in these rooms. Drain hose-bib water lines before cold weather and disconnect all hoses. If freezing should occur, we recommend you contact a plumber for advice or assistance.

Jetted tubs: If your home includes a jetted tub follow manufacturer directions for its use and care. **Never operate the jets unless the water level is at least one inch above the jets.** Be cautious about using the tub if you are pregnant or have heart disease or high blood pressure; discuss the use of the tub with your doctor. Tie or pin long hair to keep it from away from the jets where it might become tangled—a potentially dangerous event. **Clean and disinfect the system every one to two months, depending on usage.** To do this, fill the tub with lukewarm water and add one cup of liquid chlorine bleach. Run the jets for 10 to 15 minutes drain and fill again. Run for 10 minutes with plain water, drain.

Laundry tub: If you have a laundry-room tub, the faucet does not have an aerator. This is to allow the laundry tub faucet to accept a hose connection. In some jurisdictions, an anti-siphoning device is also attached.

Leaks: If a major plumbing leak occurs, the first step is to turn off the supply of water to the area involved. This may mean shutting off the water to the entire home. Then contact the appropriate contractor.

Low pressure: Overall, community water pressure is generally a function of the location and elevation of the community relative to the municipal water source. In areas where pressure is abnormally high, regulators are installed to reduce the pressure in the water piping inside your home and protect the plumbing system and appliances such as the dishwasher, clothes washer, etc. It is very important that you do not attempt to adjust the pressure regulator, as a plumber should perform this work.

Main shut-off: There is a main shut-off valve for the water supply in your home. The location of this valve will be pointed out to you in your Pre-settlement Orientation.

Marble or manufactured marble: Marble, manufactured marble, and porcelain enamel will be damaged by a sharp blow. Avoid abrasive

cleansers or razor blades on manufactured marble; both damage the surface. Always mix hot and cold water at manufactured marble sinks; running hot water alone can damage the sink.

Outside faucets: Use the following steps to winterize your outside hose bibs. Reverse these steps after temperatures rise above freezing in the spring.

1. Shut off all individual hose bib water supply valves (often located in a utility room).
2. Go outside, remove any garden hoses, and open hose bibs. Leave hose bib in open position all winter.
3. Return to individual hose bib water supply valve and remove bleeder cap. Keep in a safe place for easy retrieval for spring.

Running toilet: If your toilet is running, lift the lid off the tank and inspect the chain on the flush handle. Make sure that it allows the rubber stopper at the bottom of the tank to seal. Also check the tank float. You may find it has lifted too high in the tank, preventing the valve from shutting off completely. In this case, gently bend the float rod down until it stops the water at the correct level. The float should be free and not rub the side of the tank or any other parts. Recommended maintenance should include replacing the flapper valve in the bottom of the tank. Please note that toilets have different types of internal mechanisms and the above advice may not be applicable to your specific toilet.

Shut-offs: Your main water shut-off is usually located near where the main water service pipe enters your home. You use this shut-off for major water emergencies such as a water line break. Each toilet has a shut-off on the water line under the tank. Hot and cold shut-offs for each sink are on the water lines under the sink. It is important to remember that shut-off valves for your hose bibs are typically located in the utility room. Your washing machine has shut-off valves that you may consider using when leaving your home, as the rubber hoses that supply washing machines have been known to fail as they age.

Fire sprinklers: A residential fire sprinkler system has been installed throughout your home. This system has been designed to protect you and your family from the danger of fire. The fire sprinkler system has been hydraulically calculated to operate under the worst water-supply conditions, and was approved by a local fire inspector for compliance with plans and local building codes. We sincerely hope that your system is never called upon to perform, however if it is, proper care and maintenance will ensure that it will function properly. **You should routinely inspect sprinkler heads to make sure they are not blocked and that the backflow prevention valve has a tag that denotes its next inspection date and provide seasonal service to maintain proper functioning.**

Some helpful hints about your fire sprinkler system:

- The sprinkler system operates automatically upon the fusing of a glass bulb in the sprinkler head by heat source of any kind emitting temperature higher than 155 degrees.
- Only one sprinkler head operates at a time.
- There is a control manifold located in the mechanical room at the main water supply. The water gauge should have positive pressure at all times.
- Never turn off the water supply to the sprinkler system or attempt to make repairs to the system. Only a licensed mechanical contractor should be contacted for repairs.
- Please read the important manufacturer's information about sprinkler head maintenance and protection.

11.46 — Radon

Radon is a naturally occurring gas emitted by certain types of soil and rock. As a result of natural geological conditions, some areas may pose a greater risk than others. EYA typically provides a building-code-mandated passive radon-venting stack in your home.

We claim no expertise on either the identification of, or methods to reduce, radon level, or the risks associated with

radon exposure. According to some experts, exposure to elevated levels of radon for a sufficient period of time may increase the risk of cancer.

For More Information: You may obtain more information by visiting [www.epa.gov/radon](#), call the hot line at 1-800-SOS-RADON or contacting the United States Environmental Protection Agency at the following address:

The United States Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Air and Radiation
EPA Region 3, 1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
1-800-438-2474

11.47 — Resilient Flooring

Your Option Selection sheet provides a record of the brand, style, and color of floor coverings in your home. Please retain this information for future reference.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The basics: Although resilient floors are designed for minimum care, they do have maintenance needs. Follow manufacturer's specific recommendations for care and cleaning. **Some resilient floors require regular application of a good floor finish.** This assures you of retaining a high gloss.

Limit water: Wipe up spills and vacuum crumbs instead of washing resilient floors frequently with water. Limit mopping or washing with water; excessive amounts of water on resilient floors can penetrate seams and get under edges, causing the material to lift and curl.

Take care in moving furniture: Moving appliances across resilient floor covering can result in tears and wrinkles. Install coasters on furniture legs to prevent permanent damage. If you damage the resilient floor, you can have it successfully patched by professionals. Please be aware that the dye lots may vary in color.

The finish can scuff: The resilient flooring installed in your home is the no-wax type. No-wax means a clear, tough coating that provides both a shiny appearance and a durable surface. However, even this surface will scuff or mark. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for maintaining the finish.

Minimizing raised nail heads: Raised nail heads are the result of movements of the floor joist caused by natural shrinkage and deflection. We have used special nails and glued the underlayment to help minimize this movement.

Preventing and handling seam lift: All resilient floors have seams that are visible. Any brand or type of resilient flooring may separate slightly due to shrinkage. Seams can lift or curl if excessive moisture is allowed to penetrate them. You can use a special caulking at tub or floor joints to seal seams at those locations. Avoid getting large amounts of water on the floor from baths and showers.

11.48 — Roof

The roof on your new home is constructed of quality materials that are virtually maintenance free and should last for many years. The roof cap, vent stacks, flashing, and pipe collars do require periodic inspection. Due to the safety issues related to walking on a roof, you should hire a professional to do any work on your roof.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Clean gutters regularly: Maintain the gutters and downspouts so that they are free of debris and able to quickly drain precipitation from the roof.

Watch for ice dams: On occasion, depending on conditions and exposure, rising heat from inside your home can melt snow on the roof. The snowmelt that reaches cold eaves can freeze. An accumulation of ice can dam up subsequent runoff, and snow melt begins to back up, sometimes working its way up and under shingles and ultimately leaking into your home through windows or ceilings.

Dealing with leaks: If a leak occurs, try to detect its exact location. This will greatly simplify finding the area that requires repair later, when the roof is dry. If you experience a roof leak, please contact the EYA Customer Service department. Any secondary damages that may have occurred are the responsibility of the homeowner or your insurance company.

Limit walking on the roof: Your weight and movement can loosen roofing material and in turn result in leaks. Never walk on the roof of your home when the shingles are wet—they are slippery.

Inspect your roof after severe weather: After severe storms, do a visual inspection of the roof for damages. Notify your insurance company if you find pieces of shingle in the yard or shingle edges lifted on the roof.

11.49 — Rooftop Terraces

Some EYA homes come with rooftop terraces or flat roofs. Unlike traditional roofs that are pitched upwards and have shingles, these are gradually sloping and use membranes to cover them. A factory authorized roofing contractor has installed this material, and the material is backed by a limited manufacturer's warranty.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance

Check the drain: The portion of the rooftop terraces that is walked on is low maintenance. However, you must regularly check the drain (if applicable) to ensure that it is not clogged. Please read the manufacturer's literature for additional maintenance guidelines.

Watch for mildew: Depending on sun exposure, rooftop terraces might be subject to mildew formation in dark spots. Should you see any, clean up immediately.

11.50 — Siding

There are two main types of siding EYA uses in the construction of its homes: vinyl siding and fiber cement board. Please refer to the manufacturer's literature for recommended maintenance and care. Should siding damage occur, you should have a professional contractor remove and replace the damaged piece. With both types of siding, slight waves will be visible in response to changes in humidity and temperature, which cause the sheathing underneath to expand and contract. These conditions cannot be entirely eliminated.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Fiber Cement Boards: Cement-based siding will require repainting and caulking just as wood products do. The timing will vary with climatic conditions. Maintain caulking to minimize moisture entry into the siding. Note that some paint colors will require more maintenance than others and some sides of the home may show signs of wear sooner, based on their exposure to the elements.

Vinyl Siding: Vinyl siding will occasionally require cleaning. Start at the top to avoid streaking and use a cleaning product recommended by your siding manufacturer. Follow directions carefully.

11.51 — Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

These detectors are proven life-saving devices. At least one smoke detector is located on each level of your new home and one carbon monoxide detector is in your home.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Know your manual: Please read carefully and follow the manufacturer's instructions for testing, maintenance, and service.

Change the batteries: Your detectors are wired into the electrical system of your home and also have a nine-volt battery backup. If an intermittent low-volume single beep occurs (not the regular sounding of the alarm), the battery requires replacement. Refer to the owner's manual for specifics on replacing batteries. Don't rely solely on the electrical system—you must have fresh batteries in your detectors all the time. **Many fire departments recommend changing batteries in your detectors when you reset your clocks in the spring and fall.** Please refer to the manufacturer's manual for detailed information on the care of your smoke detectors.

Clean properly: For your safety, clean each smoke detector periodically to prevent a false alarm or lack of response in a fire. **After cleaning, push the test button to confirm the alarm is working.**

11.52 — Sump Pump

If conditions on your lot made it appropriate, the foundation design includes a perimeter drain and

sump pump. The perimeter drain runs around the foundation to gather water and channel it to the sump pit, or crock. When the water reaches a certain level, the pump comes on and pumps the water out of your home.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Get to know the manual: Read and follow the manufacturer's directions for use and care of your sump pump.

Continuous operation is OK: The pump may run often or even continuously during a heavy storm or long periods of rain. This is normal under such conditions.

Keep discharge clear: Know where the discharge for your sump pump system is and keep the end of the drain clear of debris so that water can flow out easily.

Keep an eye on the power: The sump pump runs on electricity. If power goes off, the pump cannot operate. Storm water (not sewage) could then enter your basement. **Homeowner insurance does not usually cover damage to your property from this source; you may want to obtain a rider to cover this.**

Keep roof water out of the sump pump: Ensure that roof water drains quickly away from the home to avoid circulating it through your sump pump. Keep downspout extensions or splash blocks in place to channel water away from your home.

Do regular checks: Periodically check to confirm the pump is plugged in, the circuit breaker is on, and the pump operates. To check operation, pour five gallons of water into the sump pump crock (hole). The pump should come on and pump the water out. Follow this procedure once a year.

11.53 — Termites

We treat the foundation for termites and, at settlement, provide you with a certificate confirming that treatment. **Plan to renew this treatment annually or as directed by the literature that accompanies the certificate.** Treatments for other types of insects or animals such as ants, spiders, ladybugs, crickets, or mice are homeowner maintenance responsibilities.

11.54 — Ventilation

Homes today are built more tightly than ever. This saves energy dollars but creates a potential concern. Condensation, cooking odors, indoor pollutants, radon, and carbon monoxide may all accumulate. We provide mechanical and passive methods for ventilating homes. Your attention to ventilation is important to health and safety.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Maintain attic ventilation: Building codes require attic ventilation to minimize accumulation of moisture. Attic ventilation occurs through vents in the soffit (the underside of the overhangs) and ridge vents. Under extreme weather conditions, driving rain or snow sometimes enters the attic through these vents.

Follow these habits: Your daily habits can help keep your home well ventilated:

- Do not cover or interfere in any way with the fresh air supply to your furnace.
- Develop the habit of running the bath fans when in use.
- Air your house by opening windows for a time when weather permits.

Reduce condensation: Proper ventilation will prevent excessive moisture from forming on the inside of the windows. This helps reduce cleaning chores considerably.

11.55 — Windows, Screens, and Sliding Glass Doors

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Clean correctly: Clean surfaces with warm, clear water. **Do not use powdered cleaner.** Clean glass as needed with vinegar and water or a commercial glass cleaner.

Control humidity to control condensation: Condensation on interior surfaces of the window and frame is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures. Your family's lifestyle controls the humidity level within your home. If your home includes a humidifier, closely observe the manufacturer's directions for its use and check section 11.38, Humidifier, of this manual for other tips.

Fixing sticks: Most sliding windows (both vertical and horizontal) are designed for a 10-pound pull. If sticking occurs or excessive pressure is required to open or close a window, apply a silicone lubricant. This is available at hardware stores. Avoid petroleum-based products.

Use professional re-glazing: Contact the manufacturer for re-glazing of any windows that break. Glass is difficult to install without special tools.

11.56 — Wood Trim

Shrinkage of wood trim occurs during the first two years or longer, depending on temperature and humidity. All lumber is more vulnerable to shrinkage during the heating season. Maintaining a moderate and stable temperature helps to minimize the effects of shrinkage. Wood will shrink less lengthwise than across the grain. Wood shrinkage can result in separation at joints of trim pieces. Minor imperfections in wood materials will be visible. This can usually be corrected with caulking and touch-up paint.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Restoring wall trim: Shrinkage may cause a piece of trim to pull away from the wall. If this occurs, drive in another nail close to, but not exactly in, the existing nail hole. Fill the old nail hole with putty and touch up with paint as needed.

Repair base shoe: If the base shoe (small trim between base molding and the floor) appears to be lifting from the

floor. Again, you can correct this condition by removing the old nails and renailing.

Time your repairs: You may prefer to wait until after the first heating season to make any needed repairs at one time when redecorating.

Expect raised grain: Because of the effects of weather on natural wood, you should expect raised grain to develop. This is normal and not a defect in the wood or paint.