



# **Service and Maintenance Manual**

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## Caring for Your Home

Quality Built Homes, Inc. has constructed your home with carefully selected materials and the effort of experienced craftsmen and laborers under the supervision of our field personnel, with the administrative support of our office personnel. Although this group works from detailed plans and specifications, no two homes are exactly alike. Each one is unique; a home is one of the last hand-built products left in the world. Over time, each behaves differently.

Although quality materials and workmanship have been used in creating your home, similar to an automobile, it requires care from the first day. Regular homeowner maintenance is essential to providing a quality home for a lifetime. This manual was assembled to assist you in that effort.

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

We are proud of the homes we build and the neighborhoods in which we build them. We strive to create lasting value. This is best achieved when you, as the homeowner, know and perform appropriate maintenance tasks. Periodic maintenance is necessary because of normal wear and tear, the inherent characteristics of the materials used in your home, and normal service required by the mechanical systems. Natural fluctuations in temperature and humidity also affect your home, resulting in maintenance items. The components of natural and manufactured materials interact with each other and the environment.

We recognize that it is impossible to anticipate and describe every attention needed for good home care. We focused on items that homeowners commonly ask about. The subjects are listed in alphabetical order to make finding answers to your questions convenient. Because we offer homebuyers a variety of floor plans and optional features, this manual may discuss components that are not present in your home.

### ***Prompt Attention***

In addition to routine care, many times immediate attention to a minor maintenance item saves you a more serious, time-consuming, and sometimes costly repair later. Note also that neglecting routine maintenance can void applicable warranty coverage on all or part of your home.

By caring for your new home attentively, you ensure uninterrupted warranty coverage as well as your enjoyment of it for years. The attention provided by each homeowner contributes significantly to the overall desirability of the community.

### ***Manufacturer Literature***

Please take time to read the literature (warranties and use and care guides) provided by the manufacturers of consumer products and other items in your home. The information contained in that material is not repeated here. Although much of the information may be familiar to you, some points may differ significantly from homes you have had in the past.

We make every effort to keep the information in this manual current. However, if any detail in our discussion conflicts with the manufacturer's recommendations, you should follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

Activate specific manufacturer's warranties by completing and mailing any registration cards included with their materials. In some cases, manufacturer's warranties may extend beyond the first year and it is in your best interests to know about such coverages.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

While we strive to build a defect-free home, we are realistic enough to know that, with repeated use, an item in the home may fail to perform as it should. When this occurs, we will make necessary corrections so the item meets our warranty guidelines. In support of this commitment, Quality Built Homes, Inc. provides you with a Professional Warranty Service Corporation warranty

#### ***Corrective Actions***

In addition to the information contained in the warranty itself, this manual includes details about the criteria we will use to evaluate concerns you report. The purpose is to let you know what our warranty commitment is for the typical concerns that can come up in a new home. The manual describes the corrective action we will take in a many common situations.

#### ***We Sometimes Break Our Own Rules—In Your Favor***

Our criteria for qualifying warranty repairs are based on typical industry practices in our region and meet or exceed those practices. Please note that we reserve the right, at our discretion, to exceed these guidelines if common sense or individual circumstances make that appropriate, without being obligated to exceed all guidelines to a similar degree or for other homeowners whose circumstances are different.

#### ***We Sometimes Say No***

With a product as complex as a home, different viewpoints regarding which tasks are homeowner maintenance responsibilities and which are Quality Built Homes, Inc. warranty responsibilities are possible. If you request warranty service on a maintenance item, we will explain to you the steps you should take to care for the item. We are available to answer your home-care questions during and after your warranty period. Providing normal maintenance for your home is your job.

#### ***Warranty Specimen Provided for Your Review***

You will receive the signed warranty application document at your closing. We provide a specimen copy for your review at the time you sign your purchase agreement. Please read through this information, as well as the service procedures and guidelines discussed on the following pages. If you have any questions, please contact us.

## Warranty Service Reporting Procedures

Providing warranty service for a new home is more complicated than for other products. When you purchased your home, you purchased hundreds of items and the work of 35 to 50 independent trade contractors. With so many details and people involved, a planned system is essential.

You are welcome to mail, fax, or drop off your list in person at our main office. Keep a copy for your records. This system permits Quality Built Homes, Inc. personnel to focus their time producing results for you and following up. Experience has taught us that accuracy and efficiency suffer when we work outside this system and sacrifice careful documentation.

To ensure your complete satisfaction with your home, 30 days after settlement, we will send a service list for you to fill out and mail back to our office. Please return your list promptly. Lists not returned within 90 days from settlement will not be honored. When we receive your list, a representative of our service department will contact you to set up an appointment to complete the repairs that are the responsibility of Quality Built Homes, Inc. It is necessary that you, your spouse, or someone over the age of 18 authorized by you be present the day service is scheduled. Service will be scheduled during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The 30-day inspection list is the last service list you will receive. Any concerns regarding your home past that point should be addressed to our service manager. He will decide if the repair requested is the responsibility of Quality Built Homes, Inc. or if it is normal homeowner maintenance. If it is the responsibility of Quality Built Homes, Inc., an appointment will be scheduled with you to complete any repair or service. Our service manager uses this service & Maintenance Manual and the standards of performance listed in the sample Builder's Warranty brochure you received at contract signing and again in your settlement package as a guideline for determining responsibility for service issues. The brochure lists standards of performance beginning on page 14 and explains conditions that are within normal range and conditions, which would require service or repair. You may verify any questions you have about standards of performance by consulting that brochure.

Although we do not anticipate it, if you have a service issue that you feel has not been properly handled by our service manager, please address your concern, *in writing*, to Quality Built Homes, Inc., Attn: Dale and/or Rodney Gertz. This procedure allows us to investigate the issue and properly answer your concerns. We will respond, in writing, within ten days of receipt of your written concern.

If you are still not satisfied after having submitted your written concern to Dale and/or Rodney Gertz, and reviewing their written response, you may complete a Binding Arbitration Request Form and submit it to Professional Warranty Service. Complete instructions and forms for doing so are covered in the Professional Warranty Service Corporation Builder's Warranty.

## Emergency Service

While emergency warranty situations are rare, when they occur, prompt response is essential. Begin by checking items you can check. Troubleshooting tips appear in this manual for several of your home's components:

- Air conditioning
- Electrical
- Heat system
- Plumbing
- Roof (leak)
- Water heater

Please refer to the individual categories to review these hints; you will find them at the end of the corresponding sections. Often the appropriate action by you can solve a problem immediately or mitigate the situation until a technician arrives.

If your review of the troubleshooting tips fails to solve the problem, during business hours, call Quality Built Homes, Inc.'s office:

**Monday thru Friday 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
(410) 535-0595**

In the event of an after-hours or weekend emergency, please contact the appropriate subcontractor or manufacturer directly. An emergency is deemed to be one that may make the premises uninhabitable or cause lasting damage. If you are unable to contact the responsible manufacturer or subcontractor in an emergency, or if that contact does not resolve the emergency, please call Quality Built Homes, Inc. during normal working hours or after hours, use the Quality Built Homes, Inc. emergency phone number. A representative of Quality Built Homes, Inc. will contact you to assist you in resolving the situation. In order that we can continue to offer this service, please do not use the emergency pager number for non-emergencies.

### **After hours, Weekends, Holidays:**

- 1. Contact the appropriate Subcontractor or Manufacturer.**
- 2. If that contact does not resolve the emergency, call:  
Quality Built Homes, Inc. Emergency Service – (443) 532-5118  
This service is available from 7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. weekends and holidays**

Our after-hours service personnel provide emergency responses to the following conditions:

- Total loss of heat when the outside temperature is below 50 degrees F
- Total loss of electricity
- Total loss of water
- Plumbing leak that requires the entire water supply to be shut off
- Gas leak (**A gas leak should be treated with the utmost precaution. A call to 911 is recommended. The fire department is trained to handle these situations.**)

Note that if a service (gas, electricity, water) is out in an entire area, attention from the local utility company is needed.

***Air Conditioning.*** Understandably, if your air conditioner is not working, you want it fixed pronto. In a typical scenario, many other homeowners across our region will discover they too need service on their air conditioners on the same hot day that you do. The trades who address these needs generally respond to calls on a first come, first served basis. If your call for service comes during this time period, you may have a lengthy wait for a technician to arrive. For this reason, we recommend that you operate your air conditioner as soon as warm temperatures begin. In this way, if service is needed, you can avoid the rush and get a more satisfactory response.

***Roof Leak.*** While we agree with homeowners that a roof leak is indeed an emergency, the reality is that repairs cannot safely or effectively be performed while the roof is wet. During business hours, contact our office with the information, take appropriate steps to mitigate damage, and we will follow up when conditions make repairs possible. (See *Roof* for more details.)

***Other Emergencies.*** In addition to emergency situations covered by our warranty, be prepared for other kinds of emergencies. Post phone numbers for the fire department, police, paramedics, poison control, and local utilities near phones in your home. Have companies in mind in the event you need a locksmith, water extraction, glass breakage repair, or sewer router service. If you are new to the area, neighbors may be able to recommend good service providers. Introduce your children to neighbors who might be available to help in an emergency if you are not home.

***Storm Damage or Other Natural Disaster.*** Contact your homeowner's insurance agent immediately. Contain damage as much as possible without endangering yourself. In extreme situations, photograph the damage.

### ***Kitchen Appliance Warranties***

The manufacturers of kitchen appliances have asked to work directly with homeowners if any repairs are needed for their products. Customer service phone numbers are listed in the use and care materials for each appliance. Be prepared to provide the model and serial number of the item and the closing date on your home.

Appliance warranties are generally for one year; refer to the literature provided by the manufacturer for complete information. Remember to mail in any registration cards you receive with manufacturer materials. Being in the manufacturer's system assures that in the event of a recall the company can contact you and arrange to provide the needed correction.

### **Warranty Item Processing Procedures**

When we receive a warranty service request, we may contact you for an inspection appointment. Warranty inspection appointments are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We inspect the items listed in your request to confirm warranty coverage and determine appropriate action.

If a trade contractor or an in-house employee is required to perform repairs, we will take the necessary steps to make the repairs. If the item is homeowner maintenance, we will review the maintenance steps with you and offer whatever informational assistance we can. Occasionally the inspection step is unnecessary. In that case, we issue the needed work orders and notify you that we have done so.

### **Help Us to Serve You**

We can provide service faster and more accurately if we have all the necessary information. With your warranty request, please include:

- Your name, address, and the phone numbers where you can be reached during business hours.
- A complete description of the problem, for example, “guest bath—cold water line leaks under sink,” rather than “plumbing problem.”
- Information about your availability or the best days or times to reach you. For instance, if calling you at work is acceptable, let us know. Otherwise, we will use your home phone number. If you are usually home on Thursday, mention that.

### ***Access to Your Home***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. conducts inspections of interior warranty items only when an adult is available to accompany our representative and point out the items you have listed. Both our in-house service technicians and those of our trades contractors will likewise perform repairs only when an adult is available to admit them to your home. An adult is a person 18 or older who has your authorization to admit service personnel and sign completed work orders.

We do not accept keys, nor will we permit our trade contractors to accept your key and work in your home without an adult present. While we recognize that this means processing warranty service items may take longer, we believe your peace of mind and security should be our first concern.

### ***Exterior Items***

Exterior items can usually be inspected and repaired without an adult present, provided access is available (for instance, no locked gate). If you prefer to meet with us and discuss the item(s) in question, we are happy to arrange an appointment to do that.

### ***Repair Appointments***

Depending on the work needed, at the conclusion of the inspection appointment, the service manager will ask you to designate a *work date*.

Although on occasion work must occur in sequence and more than one work date might be needed, this system works well in the majority of situations.

### ***Inspection and Work Hours***

Many homeowners ask whether evening and weekend appointment times are available. Quality Built Homes, Inc. understands the desire for appointments outside normal business hours. We recognize the trend to services being available “24/7” in many businesses. However, in investigating how such appointments could be arranged, we discovered many factors that make extended service hours impractical.

- A significant portion of repairs requires daylight for proper execution. This applies to drywall, paint, and exterior work of almost any type.
- We also found that most of the 35 to 50 independent trade contractors who helped us build your home—many of whom operate as small companies—were unable to work all week and also be available for extended hours. Therefore, the few repairs that could be performed in off-hours failed to eliminate the need for repair appointments during normal hours.
- Administrative staff and supervisors would need to be available to answer questions. Having some personnel work extended hours meant being short staffed during normal business hours.
- When we calculated the impact on wages and salaries for adding more personnel or compensating existing personnel for working non-traditional hours, we found that this affected overhead, and consequently the prices for our homes.

We are still looking for a workable long-term answer to this recognized dilemma. Meanwhile, our warranty hours will be as follows:

- Administrative staff: Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.
- Inspection appointments: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.
- Work appointments: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Evening and weekend appointments are reserved for emergency situations. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation with these policies.

### ***Pets***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. respects the pets that many homeowners count as members of their households. To prevent the possibility of an animal getting injured or lost, or giving in to its natural curiosity about tools and materials used for repairs, we ask that you restrict all animals to a comfortable location during any warranty visit, whether for inspection or warranty work. This policy is also for the protection of our employees and trades personnel.

### ***Your Belongings***

In all work that we perform for our homeowners, we are concerned that their personal belongings be protected. When warranty work is needed in your home, we ask that you remove vulnerable items or items that might make performing the repair difficult.

### ***Surfaces***

We expect all personnel who work in your home to arrive with appropriate materials to cover the work area, protecting it from damage and catching the dust or scraps from the work being performed. Similarly, all personnel should clean up the work area, removing whatever excess materials they brought in.

Repair personnel will routinely check the work area for any existing damage to surfaces.

### ***Signatures on Work Orders***

Signing a work order acknowledges that a technician worked in your home on the date shown and regarding the items listed. It does not negate any of your rights under the warranty nor does it release us from any confirmed warranty obligation. If you prefer not to sign the work order, the technician will note that, sign the work order, and return it to us for our records.

### ***Completion Time***

Regular review of outstanding work orders is part of our office routine. Checking with trades and homeowners alike, we strive to identify the cause for delays and get all warranty work completed within an appropriate and reasonable amount of time.

We intend to complete warranty work orders within 10 workdays of the inspection unless you are unavailable for access. If a back-ordered part or similar circumstance causes a delay, we will let you know. Likewise, when weather conditions prevent the timely completion of exterior items, we track those items and follow up to ensure that they are addressed when conditions are right. This can mean a wait of several weeks.

### ***Missed Appointments***

Good communication is one key to successful completion of warranty items. We strive to keep homeowners informed and to protect them from inconvenience. Unexpected events sometimes result in missed appointments.

If a Quality Built Homes, Inc. employee or a trade person will be late, he or she should contact you as soon as the delay is recognized, offering you a choice of a later time the same day or a completely different appointment. If you must miss an appointment, we appreciate being alerted as soon as you realize your schedule has changed so a new appointment can be scheduled.

# Air Conditioning

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Air conditioning can greatly enhance the comfort of your home, but if it is used improperly or inefficiently, wasted energy and frustration will result. These hints and suggestions are provided to help you maximize your air conditioning system.

Your air conditioning system is a whole-house system. The air conditioning unit is the mechanism that produces cooler air. The air conditioning system involves everything inside your home including, for example, drapes, blinds, and windows.

Your home air conditioning 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 drapes is intense enough to overcome the cooling effect of the air conditioning unit. For best results, close the drapes on these windows.

Time is very important in your expectations of an air conditioning system. 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 6:00 p.m. when the temperature has reached 90 degrees F and set your thermostat to 75 degrees, the air conditioning unit will begin cooling, but will take much longer to reach the desired temperature. During the whole day, the sun has been heating not only the air in the house, but the walls, the carpet, and the furniture. At 6:00 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 while the house is cooler, 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.

### *Adjust Vents*

Maximize air flow to occupied parts of your home by adjusting the vents. Likewise, when the seasons change, readjust them for comfortable heating.

### ***Compressor Level***

Maintain the air conditioning compressor in a level position to prevent inefficient operation and damage to the equipment.

*See also Grading and Drainage.*

### ***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. During the winter, humidifying the air in your home allows the air to retain more heat and is a general health benefit. Note: If condensation develops on your windows, you have taken a good thing too far and need to lower the setting on the humidifier.

### ***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.

### ***Temperature Variations***

Temperatures may vary from room to room by several degrees Fahrenheit. This is due to such variables as floor plan, orientation of the home on the lot, type and use of window coverings, and traffic through the home.

### **Troubleshooting Tips: No Air Conditioning**

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Thermostat is set to "cool" and the temperature is set below the room temperature.
- 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.)
- Disconnect 220 switch on the outside wall near the air conditioner is on.
- Switch on the side of the furnace is on.
- Filter is clean to allow air flow.
- Vents in individual rooms are open.
- Air returns are unobstructed.
- Air conditioner has not frozen from overuse.
- Condensation pump is working/plugged in, etc.

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

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

The air conditioning system should maintain a temperature of 78 degrees or a differential of 15 degrees from the outside temperature, measured in the center of each room at a height of 5 feet above the floor. Lower temperature settings are often possible, but neither the manufacturer nor Quality Built Homes, Inc. guarantees this.

#### ***Compressor***

The air conditioning compressor must be in a level position to operate correctly. If it settles during the warranty period, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct this.

#### ***Non-emergency***

Lack of air conditioning service is not an emergency. Air conditioning contractors in our region respond to air conditioning service requests on a first come, first served basis within their established service program.

## **Alarm System**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

If your home selections included prewire 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. We recommend that you test the system each month.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct wiring that does not perform as intended for the alarm system.

## Appliances

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Please refer to the manufacturers manuals.

### Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines

We confirm that all appliance surfaces are in acceptable condition during your orientation. We assign all appliance warranties to you, effective on the date of closing. The appliance manufacturers warrant their products directly to you according to the terms and conditions of these written warranties.

## Asphalt

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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. Avoid using your driveway for one week after it is installed. Keep people, bicycles, lawn mowers, and other traffic off of it.

### *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.

### *Hot Weather*

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

### *Nonresidential Traffic*

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.

### ***Sealcoating***

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 the more common 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.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty**

We perform any asphalt repairs by overlay patching. Quality Built Homes, Inc. is not responsible for the inevitable differences in color between the patch and the original surface. Sealcoating can eliminate this cosmetic condition and is your responsibility.

### ***Alligator Cracking***

If cracking that resembles the skin of an alligator develops under normal residential use, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair it during the first year. If improper use, such as heavy truck traffic, has caused the condition, repairs will be your responsibility.

### ***Settling***

Settling next to your garage floor of up to 1.5 inches across the width of the driveway is normal. Settling or depressions elsewhere in the driveway of up to one inch in any 8-foot radius are considered normal. We will repair settling that exceeds these measurements during the first year.

### ***Thermal Cracking***

Your driveway will exhibit thermal cracking, usually during the first 12 months. These cracks help your driveway adapt to heating and freezing cycles. Cracks should be evaluated in the hottest months—July or August. During the first year, we will repair cracks that exceed ½ inch in width.

## **Attic Access**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

The attic space is neither designed nor intended for storage. We provide access to this area for maintenance of mechanical equipment that may traverse the attic space. When you perform needed tasks in the attic, use caution and avoid stepping off wood members onto the drywall. This can result in personal injury or damage to the ceiling below. Your warranty does not cover such injury or damage.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Quality Built Homes, Inc. and the local building department inspect the attic before your closing to confirm insulation is correct.

## **Brass Fixtures**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

The manufacturer treats brass fixtures with a clear protective coating, electrostatically applied, to provide beauty and durability. This coating is not impervious to wear and tear. Atmospheric conditions, sunlight, caustic agents such as paints, and scratches from sharp objects can cause the protective coating to crack or peel, exposing the brass and resulting in spotting and discoloration.

#### ***Cleaning***

Initial care of these products requires only periodic cleaning with a mild, nonabrasive soap and buffing with a soft cloth.

#### ***Corrosion***

Unless you have ordered solid brass fixtures, the brass on your fixtures is a coating on top of a base metal. Water having a high mineral content is corrosive to any brass—coated or solid.

#### ***Tarnish***

Like sterling silver, brass will gradually tarnish and eventually take on an antique appearance.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation, we will confirm that brass fixtures are in acceptable condition. Quality Built Homes, Inc. does not warrant against corrosion damage to the external surfaces or internal workings of plumbing fixtures. This limitation includes solid brass or brass-coated fixtures.

# Brick

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Brick is one of the most durable and lowest maintenance finishes for a home's exterior. A record of your brick color is included in your selection sheets.

### *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.

### *Tuck-Pointing*

After several years, face brick may require tuck-pointing (repairing the mortar between the bricks). Otherwise, no regular maintenance is required.

### *Weep Holes*

You may notice small holes in the mortar along the lower row of bricks. 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.

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

We check the brickwork during the orientation to confirm correct installation of designated materials.

### *Cracks*

One time during the warranty period, we repair masonry cracks that exceed 3/16 inch.

# Cabinets

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Your 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 due to natural variations in wood and the way it takes stain.

### *Hinges*

If hinges catch or drawer glides become sluggish, a small amount of silicone lubricant will improve their performance.

### *Moisture*

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.

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation, we will confirm that all cabinet parts are installed and that their surfaces are in acceptable condition.

### *Alignment*

Doors, drawer fronts, and handles should be level and even.

### *Operation*

Cabinets should operate properly under normal use.

### *Separations*

During the first year, we will correct gaps between cabinets and the ceiling or cabinets and the walls by caulking or other means if the gap exceeds 1/8 inch (locations behind appliances are excepted from this repair).

### *Warping*

If doors or drawer fronts warp in excess of 1/4 inch within 24 inches, we will correct this by adjustment or replacement during the first year.

### ***Wood Grain***

Readily noticeable variations in wood grain and color are normal in all wood or wood veneer selections. Replacements are not made due to such variations.

## **Carpet**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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.

### ***Burns***

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.

### ***Cleaning***

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 wear down the fibers like sandpaper and dull the carpet. The most important thing you can do to protect your carpet is to vacuum it frequently.

Vacuum twice each week lightly and once a week thoroughly. Heavy traffic areas may require more frequent cleaning. A light vacuuming is three passes; a thorough job may need seven passes. A vacuum cleaner with a beater-bar agitates the pile and is more effective in bringing dirt to the surface for easy removal.

Vacuuming high-traffic areas daily helps keep them clean and maintains the upright position of the nap. Wipe spills and clean stains immediately. For best results, blot or dab any spill or stain; avoid rubbing. Test stain removers on an out-of-the-way area of the carpet, such as in a closet, to check for any undesirable effects.

Have your carpet professionally cleaned regularly, usually after 18 months in your home and then once a year after that.

### ***Crushing***

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.

### ***Fading***

Science has yet to develop a color that will not fade with time. All carpets will slowly lose some 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 temperature from getting too high, and reducing sunlight exposure with window coverings.

### ***Filtration***

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.

*See also Ghosting.*

### ***Fuzzing***

In loop carpets, fibers may break. Simply clip the excess fibers. If it continues, call a professional.

### ***Pilling***

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.

### ***Rippling***

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.

### ***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.

### ***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.

### ***Shedding***

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.

### ***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.

### ***Sprouting***

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.

### ***Stains***

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 India 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.

### *Static*

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.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During your orientation, we will confirm that your carpet is in acceptable condition. We will correct stains or spots noted at this time by cleaning, patching, or replacement. Quality Built Homes, Inc. is not responsible for dye lot variations if replacements are made.

### *Edges*

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

### *Seams*

Carpet seams will be visible. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair any gaps or fraying.

## **Caulking**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Time and weather will shrink and dry caulking so that it no longer provides a good seal. As routine maintenance, check the caulking and make needed repairs. Caulking compounds and dispenser guns are available at hardware stores. Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully to be certain that you select an appropriate caulk for the intended purpose.

### *Colored Caulk*

Colored caulking is available where larger selections are provided. As with any colored material, dye lots can vary.

### *Latex Caulk*

Latex caulking is appropriate for an area that requires painting, such as along the stair stringer or where wood trim meets the wall.

### ***Silicone Caulk***

Caulking that contains silicone will not accept paint; it works best where water is present, for example, where tub meets tile or a sink meets a countertop.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation, we confirm that appropriate areas are adequately caulked.

### ***One-Time Repair***

With the exception of the one-time repair service provided at the time of your 30-day list repairs, any caulking that is needed is your maintenance responsibility.

*See also Countertops, Expansion and Contraction, Stairs, and Wood Trim.*

## **Ceramic Tile**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***Cleaning***

Ceramic tile is one of the easiest floor coverings to maintain. 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 around tubs or showers in your home may be washed with any nonabrasive soap, detergent, or tile cleaner. Abrasive cleaners will dull the finish.

### ***Grout Discoloration***

Clean grout that becomes yellowed or stained with a fiber brush, cleanser, and water. Grout cleansers and whiteners are available at most hardware stores.

### ***Sealing Grout***

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

### ***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.

Tile around bathtubs 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.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation, we confirm that tile and grout areas are in acceptable condition. We will repair or replace cracked, badly chipped, or loose tiles noted at that time. Quality Built Homes, Inc. is not responsible for variations in color or discontinued patterns. New grout may vary in color from the original.

### ***One-Time Repair***

Cracks appearing in grouting of ceramic tiles at joints or junctions with other materials are commonly due to shrinkage. With the exception of the one-time repair service provided at the time of your 30-day list repairs, grouting is your maintenance responsibility. We are not responsible for color variations in grout or discontinued colored grout.

## **Concrete Flatwork**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

By maintaining good drainage, you protect your home's foundation and the concrete flatwork: the basement floor, porch, patio, driveway, garage floor, and sidewalks.

Concrete slabs are floating—they are not attached to the home's foundation walls. These are not a structural (load-bearing) element of the home and are covered by the one-year material and workmanship warranty.

### ***Cleaning***

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. We recommend sweeping for keeping exterior concrete clean. If washing is necessary, do this when temperatures are moderate. Repeated cleaning of the garage floor by hosing can increase soil movement by allowing water to penetrate any existing cracks. We recommend sweeping to clean the garage floor.

### ***Cracks***

A concrete slab 10 feet across shrinks approximately 5/8 inch as it cures. Some of this shrinkage shows up as cracks. Cracking of 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.

### ***Expansion Joints***

We install expansion joints to help control expansion. However, as the concrete shrinks during the curing process, moisture can penetrate under the concrete and lift the expansion joint. When this occurs, fill the resulting gap with a gray silicone sealant, which you can purchase at most hardware stores.

### ***Heavy Vehicles***

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

### ***Ice, Snow, and Chemicals***

Driving or parking on snow creates ice on the drive, which magnifies the effects of snow on the concrete surface. Remove ice and snow from concrete slabs as promptly as possible after snow storms. Protect concrete from abuse by chemical agents such as pet urine, fertilizers, radiator overflow, repeated hosing, or de-icing agents, such as road salt that can drip from vehicles. All of these items can cause spalling (chipping of the surface) of concrete.

### ***Sealer***

A concrete sealer, available at paint stores, will help you keep an unpainted concrete floor clean. Do not use soap on unpainted concrete. Instead, use plain water and washing soda or, if necessary, a scouring powder.

### ***Stamped Concrete***

Stamped Concrete driveways are treated with a sealer. Reapplying sealer is a homeowner maintenance item and will need to be repeated in two to three years. It is important to protect your concrete from abuse by chemical agents such as pet urine, fertilizers, radiator overflow, repeating hosing, and de-icing agents such as road salt. All of these items can cause spalling (chipping of the surface) of concrete and will deteriorate the sealer.

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Concrete slabs are floating—they are not attached to the home's foundation walls. Because these slabs are not a structural (load-bearing) element of the home, they are excluded from coverage under the structural warranty. The warranty coverage is for one year.

### ***Color***

Concrete slabs vary in color. Quality Built Homes, Inc. provides no correction for this condition.

### ***Cracks***

During the warranty period, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair concrete cracks that reach 3/16 of an inch in width or 1/8 of an inch in vertical displacement.

### ***Finished Floors***

During the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct cracks, settling, or heaving that rupture finish floor materials that we installed as part of the home as you originally purchased it.

### ***Level Floors***

Concrete floors in the habitable areas of the home will be level to within 1/4 inch within any 30-inch measurement with the exception of an area specifically designed to slope toward a floor drain.

### ***Separation, Settling, or Heaving***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct separation of concrete slabs from the home if separation exceeds one inch during the first year.

Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair slabs, stoops, steps or garage floors that settle or heave in excess of 1 inch or if such movement results in negative drainage (toward the house) or hazardous vertical displacement during the first year.

### ***Spalling (Surface Chips)***

Causes of spalling include repeated hosing of concrete for cleaning, animal urine, radiator overflow, fertilizer, uncleared snow and ice, ice-melting agents, and road salts from vehicles. Repair of spalling is a home maintenance task.

### ***Standing Water***

Water may stand on exterior concrete slabs for several hours after precipitation or from roof run-off. During the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct conditions that cause water to remain longer than 12 hours unless it is from roof run-off of melting snow or ice.

# Condensation

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

When warm, moist air comes into contact with cooler surfaces, the moisture condenses. Outside we see this as dew; inside you may see it as a layer of moisture on glass windows and doors. This condensation comes from high humidity within the home combined with low outside temperatures and inadequate ventilation. Family lifestyle significantly influences two out of three of these conditions.

### ***Humidifier Operation***

If your home includes a humidifier, closely observe manufacturer's directions for its use. Instructions to turn the humidifier off during air conditioning season are typical. Moderate settings in winter can maintain desired comfort levels without contributing too much moisture to your home. You may need to experiment to find the correct level for your family's lifestyle.

### ***New Construction***

Some experts have estimated that a typical new home contains 50 gallons of water. Water is part of lumber, concrete, drywall texture, paint, caulk, and other materials used in building. Wet weather during construction adds more. This moisture evaporates into the air as you live in your home—adding to the moisture generated by normal living activities. Over time, this source of moisture will diminish.

### ***Normal Activities***

As you live in your home, your daily lifestyle contributes to the moisture in the air also. Cooking, laundry, baths and showers, aquariums, plants, and so on all add water to the air in your home. Likewise, your daily routine can mitigate the amount of moisture in your home and reduce condensation on interior surfaces.

### ***Temperature***

Avoid setting your thermostat at extreme temperatures. Overheating your home will cause the materials to dry out faster, generating more moisture into the air; drying the materials out too fast, and also increases shrinkage cracks and separations.

### ***Ventilation***

Develop the habit of using exhaust fans in bathrooms and over the stove. When weather conditions permit, open windows so fresh air can circulate through your home. Keep the dryer exhaust hose clean and securely connected.

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Condensation results from weather conditions and a family's lifestyle. Quality Built Homes, Inc. has no control over these factors. The warranty coverage excludes condensation.

# **Countertops**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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.

### ***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.

### ***Cleaning***

Avoid abrasive cleaners that will damage the luster of the surface.

### ***Mats***

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

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During your orientation, we confirm that all countertops are in acceptable condition. We repair noticeable surface damage such as chips, cracks, and scratches noted on the orientation list. Repair of surface damage noted subsequent to this is one of your home maintenance responsibilities.

### ***Laminates***

Laminated countertops will have one or more discernible seams. During the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair gaps or differential at the seams that exceed 1/16 inch.

### ***Manufactured Marble***

Edges should be smooth and even. Where backsplash joints occur at corners, the top edges should be even within 1/16 inch.

### ***Granite***

Your granite will be sealed with two coats of an impregnator. Please be aware that the sealer will only block the absorption of liquids for a certain period of time, generally 10 to 20 minutes in most cases. Liquids that are allowed to remain on a surface for a prolonged period of time may be absorbed and stain your granite. You will need to reseal your granite once a year to prevent most spills from damaging your countertops (or floors). Use an impregnating fluoropolymer based sealer which will penetrate the stone and help protect it against water and oil based stains.

### ***Solid Surface (brand names, Hanex, Corian, etc.)***

Acrylic Solid Surface countertops are non-porous and solid through the entire material. To prevent any damages from heat, never place hot items directly on the countertop. Everyday cleaning should be done with a damp cloth or sponge. Basic stains can be cleaned with mild detergents or general all-purpose cleaners. Refer to the information provided in your warranty package that was provided to you at settlement for further details on care and maintenance.

### ***Separation from Wall***

Separation of countertops from walls, backsplash, and around sinks results from normal shrinkage of materials. With the exception of the one-time repair service provided at the time of your 30-day list repairs, caulking is your maintenance responsibility.

## **Dampproofing**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct conditions that allow actual water to enter the basement unless the cause is improper installation of landscaping or failure to adequately maintain drainage.

# Decks

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

### *Wood Decks:*

Wood decks add to the style and function of your home and are a high maintenance part of your home's exterior.

### *Effects of Exposure*

Wood decks are subject to shrinkage, cracking, splitting, cupping, and twisting. Nails or screws may work loose and will need routine maintenance. Plan to inspect your decks regularly, a minimum of once each year, and provide needed attention promptly to maintain an attractive appearance and forestall costly repairs. Quality Built Homes, Inc. recommends that you treat or restain your decks annually to keep them looking their best.

### *Foot Traffic*

As you use your decks, abrasives and grit on shoes can scratch or dent the wood surface. Regular sweeping and mats can mitigate this but will not completely prevent it.

### *Outdoor Furniture*

The surface of the decking can be damaged by moving grills, furniture, or other items. Use caution when moving such items to prevent scratches, gouges, and so on.

### *Sealing or Water Repellent*

To prolong the life and beauty of your deck, treat it periodically with a water repellent or wood preservative. Local home centers or hardware stores offer several products to consider for this purpose. Always follow manufacturer directions carefully.

### *Snow and Ice*

Heavy snow or ice that remains on the deck over long periods increases wear and tear on the deck. Prompt removal can reduce adverse effects. Use caution in shoveling to avoid needless scratching of the deck boards.

### *Color Variation*

Color variations are a natural result of the way in which wood accepts stain and are excluded from warranty coverage.

### ***Replacement Boards or Rails***

Shrinkage, cracking, splitting, cupping, and twisting are natural occurrences in wood decks and are excluded from warranty coverage. In extreme situations where personal safety is involved, if Quality Built Homes, Inc. provides replacement of boards or rails, the new material will not match existing pieces that have been exposed to elements and use. Quality Built Homes, Inc. does not provide corrections when problems occur due to lack of normal maintenance.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Exposed wood decks are constructed to meet structural and functional design. During the orientation, we will confirm that the wood decks are in satisfactory condition.

### ***Composite Material Decking***

Decks constructed of composite materials should be cleaned and maintained according to the decking manufacturer's recommendations. Most manufacturers do not recommend the use of a pressure washer. The use of a pressure washer with a greater than 1500 PSI and/or applied closer than 12" from the deck surface could damage the decking surface and result in a loss of warranty coverage. Refer to individual manufacturer for warranty information.

## **Doors and Locks**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***Interior Doors***

During the summer months, there is usually very little trouble with doors, but winter heating may change the moisture content of the wood causing temporary swelling.

### ***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.

### ***Weather Stripping***

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

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation, we confirm that all doors are in acceptable condition and correctly adjusted. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair construction damage to doors noted on the orientation list. Interior doors that warp greater than ¼ of an inch measured diagonally from corner to corner during the first year will be repaired.

### ***Adjustments***

Because of normal settling of the home, doors may require adjustment for proper fit. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will make such adjustments during the first year.

# **Drywall**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***Ceilings***

The ceilings in your home are easy to maintain: periodically remove dust or cobwebs as part of your normal cleaning and repaint as needed.

### ***Repairs***

With the exception of the one-time repair service provided at the time of your 30-day list repairs, care of drywall is your maintenance responsibility. Most drywall repairs can be easily made. This work is best done when you redecorate the room.

Repair hairline cracks with a coat of paint. You can repair slightly larger cracks with spackle or caulk. To correct a nail pop, reset the nail with a hammer and punch. Cover it with spackle, which is available at paint and hardware stores. Apply two or three thin coats. When dry, sand the surface with fine-grain sandpaper, and then paint. You can fill indentations caused by sharp objects in the same manner.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation, we confirm that drywall surfaces are in acceptable condition.

#### ***One Time Repairs***

At the time, your 30-day list repairs are scheduled, Quality Built Homes, Inc. 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 may be visible under certain lighting conditions or viewing angles.

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 may not match the surrounding area.

#### ***Lighting Conditions***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. 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), Quality Built Homes, Inc. 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.

# Easements

## Homeowner Use and Care Guidelines

Easements are areas where such things as utility supply lines can pass through your property. They permit service to your lot and adjacent lots, now and in the future. Your lot will also include drainage easements, meaning the runoff from adjacent lots passes across your property. Likewise, water from your property may run across a neighboring lot. Easements are recorded in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court and are permanent.

Trees, shrubs, gardens, play equipment, storage sheds, fences or other items which you install in or across these easements may be disturbed if service entities—such as the gas, electric, or phone companies—need access to lines for repairs or to connect service to nearby homesites.

Utility companies, the United States Postal Service, and others have the right to install equipment in easements. These might include streetlights, mailboxes, or junction boxes to name a few. Neither Quality Built Homes, Inc. nor you as the homeowner have the authority to prevent, interfere with, or alter these installations. Plans for the location of such items are subject to change by the various entities involved. Because they have no obligation to keep Quality Built Homes, Inc. informed of such changes, we are unable to predict specific sites that will include such equipment.

*See also Property Boundaries.*

# Electrical System

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Know the location of the breaker panel; it includes a main shut-off that controls all the electrical power to the home. Individual breakers control the separate circuits. Each breaker is marked to help you identify which breaker is connected to which major appliances, outlets, or other service. Should a failure occur in any part of your home, always check the breakers in the main panel box.

### ***Breakers***

Circuit breakers have three positions: on, off, and tripped. When a circuit breaker trips, it must first be turned off before it can be turned on. Switching the breaker directly from tripped to on will not restore service.

### ***Breakers 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. The starting of 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.

### ***Buzzing***

Fluorescent fixtures use transformer action to operate. This action sometimes causes a buzzing.

### ***Fixture Location***

We install light fixtures in the locations indicated on the plans. Moving fixtures to accommodate specific furniture arrangements or room use is your responsibility.

### ***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. 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.

*Caution: Never plug a refrigerator or food freezer into a GFCI-controlled outlet. The likelihood of the contents being ruined is high and the warranty does not cover such damage.*

Each GFCI circuit has a test and reset button. To test the circuit, 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. One GFCI breaker can control up to three or four outlets.

### ***Grounded System***

Your electrical system is a three-wire grounded system. Never remove the bare wire that connects to the box or device.

### ***Modifications***

If you wish to make any modifications, contact the electrician listed on the Emergency Phone Numbers you receive at the orientation. Having another electrician modify your electrical system during the warranty period can void that portion of your warranty.

### ***Outlets***

If an outlet is not working, check first to see if it is controlled by a wall switch or GFCI. Next, check the breaker.

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

### ***Underground Cables***

Before digging, check the location of buried service leads by calling the local utility locating service. Maintain positive drainage around the foundation to protect electrical service connections.

### ***Under Cabinet Lights***

The selection of optional under cabinet lighting provides either task lighting or atmosphere to your kitchen. We suggest you note the size and type of bulbs in these fixtures and keep replacements on hand.

## **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: NO ELECTRICAL SERVICE**

### ***No Electrical Service Anywhere in the Home***

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Service is not out in the entire area. If so, contact the utility company.
- Main breaker and individual breakers are all in the on position.

### ***No Electrical to One or More Outlets***

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the

- Main breaker and individual breakers are all in the on position.
- Applicable wall switch is on
- GFCI is set (see details on GFCIs, earlier in this section)
- Item you want to use is plugged in
- Item you want to use works in other outlets
- Bulb in the lamp is good

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

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation, we confirm that light fixtures are in acceptable condition and that all bulbs are working. Quality Built Homes, Inc.'s warranty excludes any fixture you supplied.

### ***Designed Load***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair any electrical wiring that fails to carry its designed load to meet specifications. If electrical outlets, switches, or fixtures do not function as intended during the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair or replace them.

### ***GFCI (Ground-Fault Circuit-Interrupters)***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. is not responsible for food spoilage that results from your plugging refrigerators or freezers into a GFCI outlet.

### ***Power Surge***

Power surges are the result of local conditions beyond the control of Quality Built Homes, Inc. and are excluded from warranty coverage. These can result in burned-out bulbs or damage to sensitive electronic equipment such as TVs, alarm systems, and computers. Damage resulting from lightning strikes is excluded from warranty coverage

## **Expansion and Contraction**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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 drywall and in paint, especially where moldings meet drywall, at mitered corners, and where tile grout meets tub or sink. While this can alarm an uninformed homeowner, it is normal.

Shrinkage of the wood members 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.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty**

Quality Built Homes, Inc. provides one-time repair service, at the time your 30-day list repairs are scheduled, to many of the effects of expansion and contraction. See individual categories such as drywall and caulk for details.

## **Fencing**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

#### ***Homeowner Association Design Review***

If you choose to add fencing after moving into your new home, keep in mind the need to obtain approval from the Design Review Committee of your homeowner's association. Specific requirements about style, height, and position on the lot are described in the current design review guidelines, which you can obtain from a committee member. Special requirements apply to homes on corner lots where drivers must have adequate visibility. Additionally, in some

communities, zoning laws may impact private fencing. Your responsibilities include checking on such details.

### ***Drainage***

In planning, installing, and maintaining fencing, allow existing drainage patterns to function unimpeded. When installing a fence, use caution in distributing soil removed to set posts to avoid blocking drainage swales. Plan enough space under the bottom of a wood fence for water to pass through.

Quality Built Homes, Inc. recommends that you engage the services of professionals to install your fence. Be certain to inform a fence installer of all design review requirements.

## **Fireplace**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Most of us feel a fireplace is an excellent way to create a warm, cozy atmosphere. However, without sufficient information, your use of the fireplace can result in heat (and dollars) being wasted. To help prevent that, consider the following points.

Look upon burning a fire as a luxury that adds much to the atmosphere but just a little to the heat in a home. About 10 percent of the heat produced by a fire is radiated into the house. In many older homes, the air used by the fireplace for combustion is replaced with cold outside air drawn in through cracks around doors and windows. However, your home is constructed so tightly that this does not happen. We install a fresh air vent to supply the fireplace with combustion air and reduce the amount of heated air the fire draws from your house. Open this vent before starting the fire as you do the damper.

Close the damper and cold air vent when the fireplace is not in use. Leaving these open is equivalent to having an open window in the house. If the fire is still burning, but you are finished enjoying it, use glass doors to prevent heated air from being drawn up the chimney until your damper can be closed.

One caution on the use of glass doors: do not close them over a roaring fire, especially if you are burning hard woods (such as oak or hickory) because this could break the glass. Also, when closing the doors over a burning fire, open the mesh screens first. This prevents excessive heat build-up on the mesh, which might result in warping or discoloration.

*Caution: Do not burn trash in the fireplace and never use any type of liquid fire starter.*

Remove old ashes and coals from under the grate when completely cool. A light layer is desirable as an insulator and will help to reflect heat.

### ***Chimney Cleaning***

Creosote and other wood-burning by-products accumulate inside the flue over a period of time. This build-up can be a fire hazard. The way you use your fireplace and the type of wood you burn determine the frequency of your chimney cleanings. For instance, burning soft woods or improperly seasoned woods necessitates more frequent cleaning. Hire a qualified chimney sweep for this cleaning.

### ***Spark Arrester***

If the spark arrester becomes clogged, the diminished air flow will affect the performance of the fireplace and may be a fire hazard. Have the arrester cleaned professionally when needed.

### ***Gas Fireplace***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. offers direct-vent gas fireplaces. If you ordered this type of fireplace, it is demonstrated during the orientation. Read and follow all manufacturers' directions.

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.

Excessive winds can cause a downdraft, which can blow out the pilot, requiring you to relight it before using the fireplace.

*Caution: The exterior vent cover for a direct-vent gas fireplace becomes extremely hot when the fireplace is operating.*

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Fireplaces are not intended to be the sole heat source in the home. The fireplace should function properly when Quality Built Homes, Inc.'s and the manufacturer's directions are followed.

### ***Chimney Separation***

Separation of a brick chimney from a newly constructed home may occur. During the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair separation from the main structure in excess of ½ inch in 10 feet. Caulking is acceptable in most cases.

### ***Cracks***

Normal shrinkage of mortar results in hairline cracks in masonry. During the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair cracks that exceed 1/8 inch in width. The repair consists of pointing or patching and the mortar color will be matched as closely as possible, but expect some variation.

Exterior masonry may have chips, irregular surfaces, and color variations, which occur during manufacturing, shipping, or handling. Unless such conditions affect the structural integrity of the home, no repair is provided.

The heat generated by use of gas fireplaces will sometimes cause cracks to develop in the brick refractory. Cracks that exceed 1/8" in width during the first year will be repaired.

### ***Discoloration***

Discoloration of the firebox or brick is a normal result of use and requires no corrective action. Mortar-style fireplaces may develop cracks due to temperature changes and other factors.

### ***Downdraft***

Although extremely high winds can result in a downdraft, this condition should be temporary and occasional. We will determine and correct continuous malfunction if caused by a construction or design defect.

### ***Glass Doors***

During the orientation, we confirm that glass fireplace doors, when included with the home, are in acceptable condition.

### ***Water Infiltration***

In unusually heavy or prolonged precipitation, especially when accompanied by high winds, some water can enter the home through the chimney. The warranty excludes this occurrence.

## **Foundation**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

The walls of the foundation are poured concrete with steel reinforcing rods. To protect your home's foundation, follow guidelines for installation and maintenance of landscaping and drainage in this manual.

### ***Cracks***

Surface cracks can develop in the wall. Surface cracks are not detrimental to the structural integrity of your home.

As part of your routine maintenance, you may wish to repair some of the small cracks that may appear. To do so you can purchase at a hardware store tubes of concrete sealant that fit into a standard size caulking gun. Using this and a putty knife you can work the product into the crack to sufficiently seal it. Color variations should be expected.

### ***Dampness***

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 from this condition. Condensation can form on water lines and drip onto the floor.

### ***Future Construction in Basement***

If you decide to perform additional construction in the basement, obtain guidelines from a licensed engineer, obtain a building permit, and comply with all codes and safety requirements. Quality Built Homes, Inc. does not warrant that you will be able to obtain such a permit because of the possibility that building codes may change.

### ***Cosmetic Imperfections***

Slight cosmetic imperfections in foundation walls, such as a visible seam where two pours meet or slight honeycombing (aggregate visible), are possible and require no repair unless they permit water to enter.

### ***Cracks***

Shrinkage or backfill cracks are not unusual in foundation walls, especially at the corners of basement windows. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will seal cracks that exceed 1/8 inch in width during the first year.

### ***Leaks***

During the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct conditions that allow actual water to enter the basement unless the cause is improper installation of landscaping or failure to adequately maintain drainage.

## **Garage Overhead Door**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Since the garage door is a large, moving object, periodic maintenance is necessary.

### ***Light Visible***

Garage overhead doors cannot be airtight. Some light will be visible around the edges and across the top of the door. Weather conditions may result in some precipitation entering around the door as well as some dust especially until most homes in the community have landscaping installed.

### ***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. **If you install a garage door opener after closing on your home, it is recommended that you disable the interior manual lock to prevent damage to the door.**

### ***Lubrication***

Every 6 months, apply a lubricant such as silicone spray to all moving parts: track, rollers, hinges, pulleys, and springs. Avoid over lubricating to prevent drips on vehicles or the concrete floor. At the same time, check to see that all hardware is tight and operating as intended without binding or scraping.

### ***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. Be familiar with the steps for manual operation of the door in the event of a power failure. **If you install a garage door opener after closing on your home, it is recommended that you disable the interior manual lock to prevent damage to the door.**

If Quality Built Homes, Inc. installed a door opener as one of your selections, during orientation we demonstrate the electric eye that provides a safety stop in the event someone crosses through the opening while the overhead door is in motion. Use care not to place tools or other stored items where they interfere with the function of the electric eye.

Expect to replace the battery in the garage opener remote controls about once a year. The battery is usually a 9-volt.

### ***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.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

The garage door should operate smoothly and with reasonable ease. The door can become misaligned and require adjustment, which Quality Built Homes, Inc. will provide during the first year unless the problem is caused by the installation of a garage door opener subsequent to closing on the home.

## Gas Shut-Offs

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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 orientation.

#### *Gas Leak*

**If you suspect a gas leak, leave the home and call the gas company immediately for emergency service. Do not turn any switches on or off as this creates a spark, which could cause an explosion.**

### Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines

The gas company is responsible for leaks up to the meter. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct leaks from the meter into the home during the first two years.

## Generator

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Carefully read and follow the manufacturer's literature for your specific generator model.

Please note that the generator requires periodic maintenance which may include an oil change, replacement oil filter, replacement of spark plugs, replacement of air filter and pre-filter. Depending upon the number of hours the generator has run, further service may be required.

## Ghosting

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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 complete 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 potential damage to your home. When this condition results from homeowners burning candles or other lifestyle choices, the resulting damage is excluded from our warranty coverage.

*See also Carpet/Filtration.*

## **Grading and Drainage**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

The final grades around your home have been inspected and approved for proper drainage of your lot. Our surveyor completes a drainage certification and then the local building authorities as well as Quality Built Homes, Inc. inspect the site. Yards drain from one to another. You and your neighbors share an overall drainage plan for the community. Use caution when installing landscaping, fencing, or additions to your home to prevent causing water problems on adjacent lots.

### ***Drainage***

Typically, the grade around your home should slope 6 inches in the first 10 feet. In most cases, drainage swales do not follow property boundaries. Maintain the slopes around your home to permit the water to drain away from the home as rapidly as possible. This is essential to protect your foundation. Failure to do so can result in major structural damage and will void your warranty.

### ***Exterior Finish Materials***

Maintain soil levels 6 inches below siding, or other exterior finish materials. Contact with the soil can cause deterioration of the exterior finish material and encourages pest infestations.

### ***Roof Water***

Do not remove the splash blocks from under the downspouts. Keep these in place at all times, sloped so the water drains away from your home quickly. The State of Maryland requires all subdivisions to provide management of water runoff during a rain event. Your home will have one or more dry wells to collect the first flush of water runoff from your roof. Periodic visual inspections should be made at the cap and any debris should be removed.

### ***Rototilling***

Rototilling can significantly change drainage swales. You can minimize this by rototilling parallel to the swales rather than across them.

### ***Settling***

The area we excavated for your home's foundation was larger than the home to allow room to work. In addition, some trenching is necessary for installation of utility lines. Although we replaced and compacted the soil, it does not return to its original density. Some settling will occur, especially after prolonged or heavy rainfall or melting of large amounts of snow. Settling can continue for several years. Inspect the perimeter of your home regularly for signs of settling and fill settled areas as needed to maintain positive drainage.

*See also Landscaping.*

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

We established the final grade to ensure adequate drainage away from the home. Maintaining this drainage is your responsibility. If you alter the drainage pattern after closing, or if changes in drainage occur due to lack of maintenance, the warranty is void.

### ***Backfill Settlement***

Backfilled or excavated areas around the foundation and at utility trenches should not interfere with the drainage away from your home. If these areas settle during the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will fill the areas one time.

### ***Erosion***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. is not responsible for weather-caused damage to unlandscaped yards after the final grade has been established or the closing date, whichever occurs last.

### ***Recommendations***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. documents the grades that exist at the time of delivery of your home or as soon thereafter as possible. The ground must be dry and free of frost to make these determinations. Once final grades are set, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will inspect drainage problems reported during the first year, compare grades to those originally established, and advise you on corrective actions you might take.

### ***Swales***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. does not alter drainage patterns to suit individual landscape plans. Typically, a lot receives water from and passes water on to other lots, so changes in grade often affect adjacent or nearby lots. Quality Built Homes, Inc. advises against making such changes. After heavy rain or snow, water may stand in swales up to 48 hours.

### ***Under Concrete***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. will fill visible sunken areas under concrete during the first year.

### ***Winter Grading***

Due to weather conditions, especially during winter and early spring, the final grade may not have been established at the time of closing. We document the status of your grading at the time of delivery. When conditions permit, grading work will continue. Confirm that we have completed your grading before beginning landscaping.

## **Grinder Pump (Basement)**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

If your home has a basement bathroom or laundry tub that requires a pump, take care not to allow anything other than toilet tissue to go down the drains. Products that clog the grinder pump include paper towels, diaper wipes, feminine hygiene products, etc. In addition, do not wash your cat and/or dog in the basement bathroom and/or laundry tub, as the pet hair will cause the grinder pump to clog.

## **Gutters and Downspouts**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Check gutters periodically and remove leaves or other debris. Materials that accumulate in gutters can slow water drainage from the roof, cause overflows, and clog the downspouts.

### ***Extensions or Splashblocks***

Extensions should discharge outside of rock or bark 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.

### ***Leaks***

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

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Gutters over 3 feet long are installed with a slight slope so that roof water will flow to the downspouts.

#### ***Leaks***

We correct leaks that occur during the first-year period.

#### ***Overflow***

Gutters may overflow during periods of excessively heavy rain. This is expected and requires no repair.

#### ***Standing Water***

Small amounts of water (up to one inch) will stand for short periods of time in gutters immediately after rain. No correction is required for these conditions.

## **Hardware**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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 or lubricate.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

We confirm that all hardware is in acceptable condition during orientation. The warranty excludes repairs for cosmetic damage subsequent to the orientation.

Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair hardware items that do not function as intended during the first year.

## **Hardwood Floors**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

In daily care of hardwood floor, preventive maintenance is the primary goal. Please refer to the flooring booklet you received at settlement for specific care instructions for your flooring. The following are some general guidelines.

### ***Cleaning***

Sweep daily 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 1 cup vinegar to one gallon of warm water. When damp-mopping, remove all excess water from the mop. Check with the hardwood company if your floor has a water-based finish.

### ***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.

### ***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.

### ***Mats and Area Rugs***

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.

### ***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.

### ***Spills***

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

### ***Sun Exposure***

Exposure to direct sunlight can cause irreparable 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***

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.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation, we will confirm that hardwood floors are in acceptable condition. We will correct any readily noticeable cosmetic defects listed during the orientation. You are responsible for routine maintenance of hardwood floors.

### ***Separations***

Shrinkage will result in separations between the members of hardwood floors. If these exceed 3/16 of an inch, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair them one time.

## **Heating System: Gas or Oil Forced Air**

### **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.

### ***Adjust Vents***

Experiment with the adjustable 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. This is an individual matter and you will need to balance the system for your own family's needs.

### ***Avoid Overheating***

Do not overheat your new home. Overheating can cause excessive shrinkage of framing lumber and may materially damage the home. In the beginning, use as little heat as possible and increase it gradually.

### ***Combustion Air***

Furnaces we install in basements or in utility closets over crawl spaces include a combustion air duct. The outside end of this duct is covered with a screen to minimize insect or animal from entering the duct. Cold air coming in though this duct means it is functioning as it should.

*Caution: 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***

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

### ***Filter***

A clean filter will help to keep your home clean and reduce dusting chores. Remember to change or clean the filter monthly. 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.

### ***Gas Odor***

**If you smell gas, leave the house immediately and call 911.**

### ***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 if you do not use air conditioning). This is caused by dust that has settled in the ducts and should pass quickly.

### ***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. (If your furnace is a high-efficiency model, it does not have a pilot or an on-off switch.)

### ***Registers***

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.

### ***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.

### ***Temperature***

Depending on the style of home, temperatures can normally vary from floor to floor. The furnace blower will typically cycle on and off more frequently and for shorter periods during severe cold spells.

### ***Thermostat***

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. Thermostats are calibrated to within plus or minus 5 degrees.

### ***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.

## **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: NO HEAT**

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Thermostat is set to “heat” and the temperature is set above the room temperature.
- Breaker on the main electrical panel is 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.)
- Switch on the side of the furnace is on.
- Gas line is open at the main meter and at the side of the furnace.
- Filter is clean to allow airflow.
- Vents in individual rooms are open.
- Air returns are unobstructed.

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

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

We will install heating systems according to local building codes, as well as to engineering designs of the particular model home.

Adequacy of the system is determined by its ability to establish a temperature of 70 degrees F, as measured in the center of the room, 5 feet above the floor. In extremely cold temperatures (10 degrees below or colder), the system should be able to maintain a temperature differential of 80 degrees from the outside temperature.

### ***Duct Placement***

The exact placement of heat ducts may vary from those positions shown in similar floor plans.

### ***Ductwork***

Although the heat system is not a sealed system, the ductwork should remain attached and securely fastened. During the first year, if it becomes unattached, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair as needed.

### ***Furnace Sounds***

Expansion or contraction of metal ductwork results in ticking or popping sounds. While eliminating all these sounds is impossible, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct oil canning. (Oil canning occurs when a large area of sheet metal like those found in air ducts makes a loud noise as it moves up and down in response to temperature changes.)

### ***Thermostat***

Thermostats are calibrated to plus or minus 5 degrees.

## **Heating System: Heat Pump**

### **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.

### ***Air Circulation Across Coils***

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 Conditioning and Heating***

A heat pump system operates differently from a gas or oil forced-air furnace. The same system provides both heat and air conditioning. This is possible because 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.

### ***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, for example, in the heat mode, air from the supply vents will typically range from 85 to 90 degrees F. The 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 will also 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 30 degrees F, 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.

### ***Night Setback***

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***

Registers will require adjustment from time to time to maximize your family's comfort. Do not completely close off more than one supply register at a time. This can restrict the airflow too much and reduce the efficiency of the system. A good technique is to completely open all the vents, 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.

### ***Return Air Vents***

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

## **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: NO HEAT OR AUXILIARY HEAT STAYS ON WHEN OUTSIDE TEMPERATURE IS 30 DEGREES OR ABOVE**

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Thermostat is set to “heat” and the temperature is set above the room temperature.
- Breaker on the main electrical panel is 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.)
- Filter is clean to allow airflow.
- Vents in individual rooms are open.
- Air returns are unobstructed.
- Outside unit is not blocked by snow or other materials.
- Outside coil does not have an excessive ice build-up.

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

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Refer to the manufacturer’s warranty for information regarding warranty coverage.

## **Humidity / Humidifier**

### **Humidity**

Relative humidity levels rising above 70% stimulate the growth of mold, mildew, bacteria and other biological allergens which generate musty basement odors. These conditions must also be prevented in micro-environments such as underneath carpeting, rugs or storage boxes. High humidity levels can cause warping and cupping of hardwood floors. A dehumidifier is recommended to help keep humidity levels in desired ranges of 50%-60%.

### **Humidifier**

Refer to the manufacturer’s warranty for information regarding coverage of the humidifier.

## **Insulation**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

The effectiveness of blown insulation is diminished if it is uneven. As the last step in any work done in your attic (for example, the installation of speaker wire), you should confirm that the insulation lays smooth and even. Do not step on drywall ceilings, because this can result in personal injury or damage to the drywall.

Electrical outlets normally emit noticeable amounts of cold air when outside temperatures are low.

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Quality Built Homes, Inc. will install insulation to meet or exceed the building codes applicable at the time of construction and outlined as part of your purchase agreement.

# **Landscaping**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Providing complete details on landscape design is beyond the scope of this manual. Many excellent books, videos, and computer software programs are available that offer this information. Local nurseries and landscape professionals can also assist you.

### ***Backfill***

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 through the backfill area 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. Avoid this through proper installation of landscaping and good maintenance of drainage.

Backfill areas will settle and require prompt attention to avoid damage to your home and voiding of the structural warranty.

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.

*See also Grading and Drainage.*

### ***Bark or Rock Beds***

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

### ***Erosion***

Until your yard is established and stable, erosion will be a potential concern. Heavy rains or roof runoff can erode soil. The sooner you restore the grade to its original condition, the less damage will occur.

Erosion is of special concern in drainage swales. If swales become filled with soil runoff, they may not drain the rest of the yard, causing further problems. Correcting erosion is your responsibility. You may need to protect newly planted seed with erosion matting or reseed to establish grass in swales. It can take several years to fully establish your lawn in such challenging areas.

### ***Hired Contractors***

You are responsible for changes to the drainage pattern made by any landscape, concrete, deck, or pool contractor. Discuss drainage with any company you hire to do an installation in your yard.

### ***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.

*See also Property Lines.*

### ***Requirements***

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

### ***Seeded Lawns***

QBH is responsible for establishing the proper grades and swales on your lot and for establishing a starter lawn, which consists of 95% ground cover. With starter lawns, there will be areas that require you to spot-seed. If settling, bare spots or erosion occur that are greater than 4 feet in diameter, upon your request, QBH will perform a one-time yard repair. Please note that the Builder's Warranty does not include the replacement of seeding. Because your yard is subject to natural elements beyond our control, bare spots and erosion occurring beyond the one-time yard repair will be your responsibility to correct. In order to develop it into a fully established lawn, you must water, fertilize, water, fertilize, water and more water. Also, we recommend that you enroll in a yard treatment program.

The most important time for your yard will be the first thirty (30) days. Begin to water immediately to establish a moist soil condition. Water every day to maintain a moist soil surface for 20 to 30 days. Set automatic timers for about 5 to 10 minutes, early in the morning, and again at mid-day. Watering a new lawn twice daily is essential until the new grass is up, then after one more week, reduce to once per day. Adjust this pattern according to season and temperature demands. In hot weather, disease and fungus will attack wet grass, so you must allow time for the grass to dry off before nightfall. The amount of water your lawn requires will vary depending on the type of soil you have, temperature, humidity, wind, and amount of rain. After the initial 30-day period, deep watering once per week is recommended during hot, dry periods. Water deeply instead of light frequent watering. Light frequent watering will result in shallow root systems and could lead to turf damage if the water is removed during stress periods or water restrictions.

As a homeowner with limited time, your first instinct is to mow at the lowest height possible so you don't have to mow as often. This is **NOT** a good practice. Low mowing heights weaken turf grass. In general, 3 inches is the proper height for cool season turf grasses in this area. On new grass, it is important to keep the lawn mower blade sharp so that the grass blades are cut rather than pulled out or torn. Throughout the summer, raise the mowing height to 3 ½ inches for added protection. More exposed surface area means more nutrients to the roots. A stronger root system provides better access to water and nutrients for the plant, which of course, results in healthier turf. One advantage to setting the mowing height higher is that it shades the soil and preserves moisture during crucial times of the year when lawns often go into dormancy from drought. Grass should never be cut less than 2 ½ inches in height.

Your lawn clippings contain over 50% of the nitrogen that lawns need. Lawn clippings can benefit your lawn in other ways, such as: crabgrass suppression, improved water infiltration into the soil, disease suppression, and acting as a temporary mulch to preserve soil moisture. The key to leaving clippings is that you must provide an even distribution of the clippings over the lawn. What that means is you do not want clumps of clippings that result from infrequent mowing.

Mowing frequency should depend on the growth of the plants. After fertilization or a heavy rain, your grass naturally grows faster. During these times of rapid growth, you should mow more often so that you are not removing more than 1/3 of the grass blade at one time. Likewise, in times of stress, such as in the extreme summer heat, you will naturally mow less. Again, mow often enough to keep with the 1/3 rule. During these times of stress, you should mow at the highest possible mowing height. Leaving more of the plant helps it to weather the summer months with only a brief, if at all, dormant period.

*Please Note:* Stones which surface to the top are normal and should be removed by hand by the Homeowner.

Your lawn will need to be fertilized and/or limed. Do not fertilize in hot weather, and always water after applying fertilizer. The most important item your new lawn will need is water, water, and more water. The Builder's Warranty does not include the replacement of seeding.

In some instances, Quality Built Homes, Inc. offers a Four Step Turf Care Program for the first year you own your home. If the program applies to you, you will be given a brochure explaining that program at settlement.

If the Four Step Turf Care Program is not offered in your subdivision, we would suggest that to properly start your lawn, you may wish to contact a lawn and garden center, a professional lawn service, or purchase books on lawn and garden care to properly develop your lawn and shrubs. Your lawn and/or shrubs will need regular and consistent attention. After final settlement, Quality Built Homes, Inc. cannot be responsible for seeing that this work is done.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty**

Quality Built Homes will repair and reseed bare spots greater than four feet in diameter in seeded lawns.

### ***Sod***

For the first two weeks after sod is installed, you need to keep the below-turf soil surface moist allowing the turf to become well rooted. Daily watering of approximately ¼ inch is generally what your new sod needs. During hot, dry, or windy periods, you may find that watering more frequently than once a day is what your sod needs.

### **Watering Tips:**

Follow these tips for watering your sod during the first 2 weeks:

1. Pull back a corner of the turf and push a screwdriver or other sharp tool into the soil. It should push in easily and have moisture along the first 3 or 4 inches or you need to apply more water.
2. Make absolutely certain that water is getting to all areas of your new lawn, regardless of the type of sprinkling system you use. Corners and edges are easily missed by many sprinklers and are particularly vulnerable to drying out faster than the center portion of your new lawn. Also, areas near buildings dry out faster because of reflected heat. Because of this, areas like these will probably need more water.
3. Runoff may occur on some soils and sloped areas before the soil is adequately moist. To conserve water and insure adequate soak-in, turn off the water when runoff begins. Then wait 30 minutes to an hour and restart the watering on the same area. Repeat this process, as necessary, until the sod and soil below it have received enough water.

Follow these tips after the initial 2-week period:

4. As the turf starts to knit its new roots into the soil, it will be difficult, impossible, and even harmful to pull back a corner to check beneath the turf. However, you can still use a sharp tool to check moisture depth by pushing it through the turf and into the soil.
5. Water as early in the morning as possible to take advantage of the daily start of the grass's normal growing cycle. Because wind speeds are generally lower in the morning and there is less loss of water to evaporation, mornings are prime time for watering sod.

6. If the temperature approaches 100 degrees Fahrenheit, or if high winds are constant for more than half of the day, reduce the temperature of your turf surface by lightly sprinkling the area. This sprinkling does not replace the need for longer, deeper watering, which will become even more critical to continue during adverse weather conditions.

After the first two weeks, your turf should be well established. However, it will need some more tender loving care for the remainder of the growing season. Most lawns do very well with a maximum total of one inch of water a week, coming either from rain or your sprinkler. Watering may be applied over the course of two settings, approximately 2 to 3 days apart. During this time, you must still water your sod evenly and enough so that the underlying soil is saturated to a depth of 4 to 6 inches.

7. Infrequent and deep watering is preferred over frequent and shallow watering because the roots will only grow as deeply as their available water supply. Deeply rooted grass has a larger “soil-water bank” to draw moisture from, and this will help the grass survive drought and hot weather that rapidly dries out the upper soil layer. During the remaining growing season for your new turf, infrequent or deep watering will help replenish the deep “soil-water bank” and will lead to happier, healthier turf.

### ***Trees and Shrubs:***

We again recommend that you purchase a book on garden and lawn care or consult a lawn and garden care professional. There are too many variables for us to offer you specific advice on caring for your recently planted trees and shrubs. As a general rule, recently planted trees and shrubs should be watered every other day for the first week, thence once a week if the temperatures are below 85 degrees, twice a week if above 85 degrees. It is important to soak the plants, not sprinkle the top of the mulch. Watering should continue through the fall of the first year. Trees generally need 5 gallons of water per week, more if it is hot. Shrubs and trees will need pruning and fertilizing.

### ***Stones***

The soil in your area may have stones and rocks. Removing these naturally occurring elements is a maintenance activity. When Quality Built Homes, Inc. installs your starter lawn, 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***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. values trees as one of the features that make up an attractive community and add value to the homes we build. We take steps to protect and preserve existing trees in the area of your home. Despite our efforts, existing trees located on construction sites can suffer damage from construction activities, which 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 flower beds 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 Quality Built Homes, Inc. are excluded from warranty coverage.

### ***Utility Lines***

A slight depression may develop in the front lawn along the line of the utility trench. To correct this, spread topsoil to level the area, and then reseed and straw.

Before any significant digging, check the location of buried service leads by calling the local utility locating service. In most cases, wires and pipes run in a straight line from the main service to the public supply.

*See also Easements.*

### ***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. Without proper homeowner care, your yard will quickly begin to show weeds. When soil is disturbed, dormant seeds come to the surface and germinate. The best control is a healthy lawn, achieved through regular care and attention.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty**

Shrubs and trees we install are warranted for one growing season. We will confirm the healthy condition of all plant materials during the orientation. Maintaining landscaping is your responsibility.

## Mildew

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Mildew is a fungus that spreads through the air in microscopic spores. They love moisture and feed on surfaces or dirt. On siding, they look 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.

Cleaning mildew from your home is your responsibility. Solutions that remove mildew are available from local paint or home improvement stores. Wear protective eyewear and rubber gloves for this task; the chemicals that remove mildew are unfriendly to humans.

### Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines

We will remove any mildew noted during the orientation. Quality Built Homes, Inc. warranty excludes mildew.

## Mirrors

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

To clean your 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. Acidic cleaners are usually those that contain ammonia or vinegar. Avoid getting glass cleaners on plumbing fixtures as some formulas can deteriorate the finish.

### Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm that all mirrors are in acceptable condition during the orientation. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct scratches, chips, or other damage to mirrors noted during the orientation.

## Paint and Stain

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Because of changes in the formula for paint (such as the elimination of lead to make paints safer), painted surfaces must 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 better results come from touching up rather than washing flat paint.

### ***Colors***

Your selection sheets are your record of the paint and stain colors. At settlement, you will receive a quart of wall paint, which has the manufacturer information, including color and product code. Interior stain is custom mixed to match our wood flooring colors. The polyurethane overcoat is semi-gloss satin finish. Exterior white paint is Duron Exterior Weathershield Semi-Gloss. Any good quality white exterior paint will match. Duron is a subsidiary of Sherwin-Williams and can be purchased at Sherwin-Williams stores.

### ***Exterior***

Regular attention will preserve the beauty and value of your home. 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 refinishing the exterior surface of your home approximately every two to three years or as often as your paint manufacturer suggests for your area and climate. Climatic conditions control the chemical structure of the paint used on the exterior. Over time, this finish will fade and dull a bit. Depending on the exposure to weather of each surface, the paint on some parts of your home may begin to show signs of deterioration sooner than others.

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 spray water on the exterior walls of your home. This will cause blistering, peeling, splintering, and other damage to the home.

### ***Severe Weather***

Hail and wind can cause a great deal of damage in a severe storm, so inspect the house after such weather. Promptly report damage caused by severe weather to your insurance company.

### ***Stain***

For minor interior stain touch-ups, a furniture-polish-and-stain treatment is inexpensive, easy to use, and will blend in with the wood grain. Follow directions on the bottle.

### ***Touch-Up***

When doing paint touch-ups, use a small roller or 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.

We provide samples of the wall paint used on your home. Store these with the lids tightly in place and in a location where they are not subjected to extreme temperatures.

### ***Wall Cracks***

We will perform a one-time repair of wall cracks during the completion of your 30-Day List. *See also Drywall.*

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During your orientation, we will confirm that all painted or stained surfaces are in acceptable condition. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will touch up paint as indicated on the orientation list. You are responsible for all subsequent touch-up, except painting we perform as part of another warranty repair.

### ***Cracking***

As it ages, exterior wood trim will develop minor cracks and raised grain. Much of this will occur during the first year. Raised grain permits moisture to get under the paint and can result in peeling. This is not a defect in materials or workmanship. Paint maintenance of wood trim is your responsibility.

### ***Fading***

Expect fading of exterior paint or stain caused by the effects of sun and weather. Quality Built Homes, Inc. warranty excludes this occurrence.

### ***Touch-Up Visible***

Paint touch-up is visible under certain lighting conditions.

### ***Wood Grain***

Because of wood characteristics, color variations will result when stain is applied to wood. This is natural and requires no repair. Today's water-based paints often make wood grain visible on painted trim. Quality Built Homes, Inc. does not provide corrections for this condition.

## **Pests and Wildlife**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Insects such as ants, spiders, wasps, and bees, and animal life such as woodpeckers, squirrels, mice, and snakes, may fail to recognize that your home belongs to you. Addressing concerns involving these pests and wildlife goes with being a homeowner. Informational resources include, among others, the state wildlife service, animal control authorities, the county extension service, pest control professionals, Internet, and public library.

## Phone Jacks

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Your home is equipped with telephone jacks as shown on the blueprints and selection sheets. Initiating phone service, additions to phone service, and moving phone outlets for decorating purposes or convenience are your responsibility.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair wiring that does not perform as intended from the phone service box into the home. From the service box outward, care of the wiring is the responsibility of the local telephone service company.

## Plumbing

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Your 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.

#### *Aerators*

Even though your plumbing lines have been flushed to remove dirt and foreign matter, small amounts of minerals may enter the line. Aerators on the faucets strain much of this from your water. Minerals caught in these aerators may cause the faucets to drip because washers wear more rapidly when they come in contact with foreign matter.

#### *Cleaning*

Follow manufacturer's directions for cleaning fixtures. Avoid abrasive cleansers. They remove the shiny finish and leave behind a porous surface that is difficult to keep clean. Clean plumbing fixtures with a soft sponge and soapy water (a nonabrasive cleaner or a liquid detergent is usually recommended by manufacturers). Then polish the fixtures with a dry cloth to prevent water

spots. Care for brass fixtures with a good-quality brass cleaner, available at most hardware stores.

### ***Clogs***

The main causes of toilet clogs are domestic items such as disposable diapers, excessive amounts of toilet paper, sanitary supplies, Q-tips, dental floss, and children's toys. Improper garbage disposal use also causes many plumbing clogs. Always use plenty of cold water when running the disposal. Allow the water to run 10 to 15 seconds after shutting off the disposal.

You can usually clear clogged traps with a plumber's helper (plunger). If you use chemical agents, follow directions carefully to avoid personal injury or damage to the fixtures.

### ***Fiberglass Fixtures***

For normal cleaning use a nonabrasive bathroom cleanser and sponge or nylon cleaning pad. Avoid steel wool, scrapers, and scouring pads. Auto wax can provide a shine and restore an attractive appearance.

### ***Freezing Pipes***

Provided the home is heated at a normal level, pipes should not freeze at temperatures above 0 degrees Fahrenheit. Set the heat at a minimum of 55 degrees F if you are away during winter months. Keep garage doors closed to protect plumbing lines running through this area from freezing temperatures.

In unusually frigid weather or if you will be gone more than a day or two, open cabinet doors to allow warm air to circulate around pipes. Use an ordinary hair dryer to thaw pipes that are frozen. Never use an open flame.

### ***Gold or Brass Finish***

Avoid using any abrasive cleaners on gold or antique brass fixtures. Use only mild detergent and water or a cleaning product recommended by the manufacturer.

### ***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.

Do not use bubble bath soaps in jetted tubs as this may damage the pump.

Auto wax will help seal and preserve your tub's surface. Avoid abrasive cleansers.

### ***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 Flush Toilets***

We want to draw your attention to a water-saving regulation that 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. The 1.6-gallon toilet turned out to be the size that overall consistently saves water.

As a result of implementing 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 and we have complied with the law. Similarly, flow restrictors are manufactured into most faucets and all showerheads and cannot be removed. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

### ***Low Pressure***

Occasional cleaning of the aerators on your faucets (normally every three to four months) will allow proper flow of water.

### ***Main Shut-Off***

The water supply to your home can be shut-off entirely in two locations. The first is at the street and the second is at the meter. We will point both out during your orientation. However, if you have a well, it can be shut off at the well tank and/or by flipping the breaker to the well pump.

### ***Marble or Manufactured Marble***

Marble and manufactured marble will not chip as readily as porcelain enamel but can 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 only hot water can damage the sink.

### ***Outside Faucets***

Outside faucets (sillcocks) are freeze-proof, but in order for this feature to be effective, you must remove hoses during cold weather, even if the faucet is located in your garage. If a hose is left attached, the water that remains in the hose can freeze and expand back into the pipe, causing a

break in the line. Repair of a broken line that feeds an exterior faucet is a maintenance item. Note that Quality Built Homes, Inc. does not warrant sillcocks against freezing.

### ***Porcelain***

You can damage porcelain enamel with a sharp blow from a heavy object or by scratching. Do not stand in the bathtub wearing shoes unless you have placed a protective layer of newspaper over the bottom of the tub. If you splatter paint onto the porcelain enamel surfaces during redecorating, wipe it up immediately. If a spot dries before you notice it, use a recommended solvent.

### ***Running Toilet***

To stop running water, check the shut-off float in the tank. You will most likely find it has lifted too high in the tank, preventing the valve from shutting off completely. In this case, 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. Also check the chain on the flush handle. If it is too tight, it will prevent the rubber stopper at the bottom of the tank from sealing, resulting in running water.

### ***Shut-Offs***

Your main water shut-off is located near your meter or well tank. You use this shut-off for major water emergencies such as a water line break or when you install a sprinkler system or build an addition to your home. 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.

If your home will be vacant for an extended period, it is recommended that you shut off the water main. This will avoid major damage in the event of a water leak.

### ***Stainless Steel***

Clean stainless-steel sinks with soap and water to preserve their luster. Avoid using abrasive cleaners or steel wool pads; these will damage the finish. Prevent bleach from coming into prolonged contact with the sink as it can pit the surface. An occasional cleaning with a good stainless-steel cleaner will enhance the finish. Rub in the direction of the polish or grain lines and dry the sink to prevent water spots.

Avoid leaving produce on a stainless-steel surface, since prolonged contact with produce can stain the finish. Also avoid using the sink as a cutting board; sharp knives will gouge the finish.

Local water conditions affect the appearance of stainless steel. A white film can develop on the sink if you have over-softened water or water with a high concentration of minerals. In hard water areas, a brown surface stain can form appearing like rust.

### ***Tank Care***

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

## **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: PLUMBING**

### ***No Water Anywhere in the Home***

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Main shut off on the meter inside your home is open.
- Individual shut-offs for each water-using item are open.

### ***No Hot Water***

See Water Heater

### ***Leak Involving One Sink, Tub, or Toilet***

- Check caulking and grout.
- Confirm shower door or tub enclosure was properly closed.
- Turn water supply off to that item.
- Use other facilities in your home and report problem on next business day.

### ***Leak Involving a Main Line***

- Turn water off in your home.
- Call emergency number for service.

### ***Back Up at One Toilet***

If only one toilet is affected, corrections occur during normal business hours.

- Shut off the water supply to the toilet involved.
- Use a plunger to clear the blockage.
- Use a snake to clear the blockage.
- If you've been in your home fewer than 30 days, contact Quality Built Homes, Inc. or the plumber listed on your Emergency Phone Numbers sheet.
- If you've been in your home over 30 days, contact a router service.

### ***Sewer Back Up Affecting Entire Home***

- If you've been in your home fewer than 30 days, contact Quality Built Homes, Inc. or the plumber listed on your Emergency Phone Numbers sheet.
- If you've been in your home over 30 days, contact a router service.
- Remove personal belongings to a safe location. If items are soiled, contact your homeowner insurance company.

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

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation, we will confirm that all plumbing fixtures are in acceptable condition and are functioning properly, and that all faucets and drains operate freely.

#### ***Clogged Drain***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct clogged drains that occur during the first 30 days after closing. If a household item is removed from a clogged drain during this time, we will bill you for the drain service. After the first 30 days, you are responsible for correcting clogged drains.

#### ***Cosmetic Damage***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct any fixture damage noted on the orientation list. Repairing chips, scratches, or other surface damage noted subsequent to the orientation list is your responsibility.

#### ***Exterior Faucets***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair leaks at exterior faucets noted on the orientation list. After orientation, repair of a broken line to an exterior faucet is your responsibility.

#### ***Leaks***

During the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair leaks in the plumbing system. If a plumbing leak caused by a warranted item results in drywall or floor covering damage, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair or replace items that were part of the home as originally purchased. We do not adjust for secondary damages (for example, damage to wallpaper, drapes, and personal belongings). Insurance should cover these items.

#### ***Noise***

Changes in temperature or the flow of the water itself will cause some noise in the pipes. This is normal and requires no repair. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair persistent water hammer. Expect temperatures to vary if water is used in more than one location in the home at the exact same time.

#### ***Supply***

During the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct construction conditions that disrupt the supply of water to your home if they involve service from the main water supply to your home, provided actions of yours have not caused the problem. Disruption of service due to failure of the water department system is the responsibility of the water department to correct.

## Property Boundaries

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

At closing you will receive a copy of a survey that shows your lot and the location of your home on the lot. The lot corners were staked with iron pipes in the ground and marked with wooden stakes by the developer at the time the subdivision was originally developed. Quality Built Homes, Inc. may or may not be the developer in your subdivision. Quality Built Homes, Inc. is not responsible for locating your lot corners. In most instances, you can locate the corners by using your house location survey as a guide and walking the lot. On occasion, the wooden stakes are no longer visible, but the iron rods remain at the corners, several inches below the surface, and can be located with the help of a metal detector. You may also wish to retain the services of a surveying/engineering firm to locate and re-mark the corners for you. The firm that produced your house location survey would be one of several that would be able to do so.

If you wish to install a fence, swimming pool, add a deck or patio to your home, or otherwise establish a permanent structure, we advise that you have professional surveyors locate and mark property boundaries to be certain they are accurate and you have found all corners.

*See also Easements.*

## Railings

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Stained or wrought iron railings in your home require little maintenance beyond occasional dusting or polishing. Protect railings from sharp objects or moisture. Cover them during move-in so large pieces of furniture do not cause dents or scratches.

Stained railings will show variation in the way the wood grain took the stain. Some designs show seams where pieces of wood came together to form the railing.

### Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines

During the orientation, we will confirm that all railings are in good condition. Quality Built Homes, Inc. installs railings in positions and locations to comply with applicable building codes. Railings should remain securely attached with normal use.

# Quality Built Homes, Inc. Service and Maintenance Manual

# Resilient Flooring

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Although resilient floors are designed for minimum care, they do have maintenance needs. Follow any 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. However, avoid using cleaning or finishing agents on the new floor until the adhesive has thoroughly set. This will take about two weeks.

### ***Color and Pattern***

Your color selection sheets provide a record of the brand, style, and color of floor coverings in your home. Please retain this information for future reference.

### ***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.

### ***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. If any scraps remain when installation of your floor covering is complete, we leave them in the hope that having the matching dye lot will make such repairs less apparent.

### ***No-Wax Flooring***

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.

### ***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. If a nail head becomes visible through resilient flooring, place a block of wood over it and hit the block with a hammer to reset the nail.

### ***Scrubbing and Buffing***

Frequent scrubbing or electric buffing is harder on floors than regular foot traffic. Use acrylic finishes if you scrub or buff.

### ***Seams***

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.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

We will confirm that resilient floor covering is in acceptable condition during your orientation. Quality Built Homes, Inc. warranty does not cover damage to resilient floors caused by moving furniture or appliances into the home. We can assist you in contacting professionals who can repair such damage if it occurs in your home. Quality Built Homes, Inc. is not responsible for discontinued selections.

### ***Adhesion***

Resilient floor covering should adhere. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair lifting or bubbling and nail pops that appear on the surface during the first year.

### ***Ridges***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. has sanded and filled the joints of underlayment to minimize the possibility of ridges showing through resilient floor coverings. Ridging is measured by centering a 6-inch straight edge perpendicular to the ridge with 3 inches of the straight edge on one side of the defect, held tightly to the floor. If the opposite end of the straight edge is 1/8 inch or more from the floor during the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair this condition.

### ***Seams***

Seams will occur and are sealed at the time of installation. During the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct gaps in excess of 1/16 inch where resilient flooring pieces meet or 1/8 inch where resilient flooring meets another material. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct curling at seams during the first year unless caused by excessive water.

# Roof

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

The shingles on your roof do not require any treatment or sealer. The less activity your roof experiences, the less likely it is that problems will occur.

### ***Clean Gutters***

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

### ***Ice Dam***

On occasion, depending on conditions and exposure, as rising heat from inside your home melts snow on the roof, the water runs down and when it reaches the cold eaves, it may freeze. An accumulation of this type of ice dams the subsequent runoff and the water begins to back up, sometimes working its way up and under shingles, ultimately leading into your home through windows or ceilings.

### ***Leaks***

If a leak occurs, try to detect the exact location. This will greatly simplify finding the area that requires repair when the roof is dry.

### ***Limit Walking***

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

### ***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.

## **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: ROOF LEAK**

Please keep in mind that roof leaks cannot be repaired while the roof is wet. However, you can get on the schedule when conditions dry out, so do call in your roof leak.

- Confirm the source of the water is the roof rather than from a  
Plumbing leak  
Open window on a higher floor  
Ice dam  
Clogged gutter or downspout  
Blowing rain or snow coming in through code required roof vents  
Gap in caulking
- Where practical, place a container under dripping water
- If a ceiling is involved, use a screwdriver to poke a small hole in the drywall to release the water thereby minimizing damage to the ceiling.
- Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.
- Remove personal belongings to prevent damage to them. If damage occurs, contact your homeowner insurance company to submit a claim.
- Report the leak to Quality Built Homes, Inc. during first available business hours.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair roof leaks other than those caused by severe weather, such as hail damage, or some action you have taken, such as walking on the roof. Roof repairs are made only when the roof is dry.

#### ***Ice Dam***

An ice build-up (ice dam) may develop in the eaves during extended periods of cold and snow. Your homeowner insurance may cover this damage, which is excluded from warranty.

#### ***Inclement Weather***

Storm damage is excluded from warranty coverage. Notify your homeowner insurance company if storm damage is discovered.

## **Rough Carpentry**

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

#### ***Floor Squeaks***

Some floor and stair squeaks are unavoidable. Although Quality Built Homes, Inc. does not warrant against floor squeaks, a reasonable effort will be made to correct them during the first year.

### ***Floor Deflection***

Floors will deflect (bend) when walked on. This will be more noticeable next to hutches, bookcases, pianos, chairs, and other heavy furniture. This is not a structural deficiency and Quality Built Homes, Inc. will take no action for this occurrence. Quality Built Homes, Inc. uses framing materials in accordance with local building codes.

### ***Floor Level***

During the first year, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct floors that are not level to within 1/4 inch within any 30-inch distance as measured perpendicular to any ridge or indentation.

### ***Plumb Walls***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct walls that are out of plumb more than 1/2 inch in an 8-foot distance or walls that are bowed more than 3/8 inch in any 30-inch measurement.

## **Septic System**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

A septic system consists of two basic parts. First a septic tank, and second an underground disposal field. Bacteria break down solids forming a sludge, which settles to the bottom, and the resulting wastewater is moved by incoming water out to the disposal field where it is filtered out into the soil. To help preserve the effectiveness of the system, keep these points in mind:

- Avoid disposing of chemicals such as solvents, oils, paints, and so on, through the septic system
- Avoid using commercial drain cleaners. They can kill the bacteria that are working to break down the solid waste matter.
- Food from a disposal decomposes more slowly and adds to the solids in the tank. Coffee grounds may clog the system.
- Avoid disposing of any paper product (diapers, sanitary supplies, paper towels and so on) other than toilet paper through the system.
- Avoid disposing of grease as this will build up and eventually clog the system.
- Do not rely on yeast or chemical additive to digest sludge. They are not an alternative to regular pumping and may harm the system.
- Drain surface water away from the disposal field. Eliminate unnecessary sources of water in the area of the disposal field.
- Conserve indoor water use to put less strain on the system. Correct leaky faucets or running toilets promptly. Keep in mind that a water softener will generate 30 to 85 gallons of water every regeneration cycle.
- Do not drive on the disposal field or build over it.

### ***Pumping the System***

Over time, the matter not broken down by the bacteria can clog the system. This will happen despite careful use and good maintenance. To prevent serious problems, regular pumping to clean out the tank is essential—**usually every 2 to 3 years, more often if usage is heavy. This is the most important thing you can do to help protect the system.**

### ***Stand Pipes***

There should be four visible 4” plastic stand pipes in your yard. These represent the main parts of your septic system.

- The first pipe will be at the house where the septic exits the house. It is a cleanout that when opened allows the pipes from the house to the septic tank to be cleaned out.
- There are two stand pipes located over the septic tank. These are for location purposes only. They are placed over the two access points to the septic tank. In order to pump the tank, the manholes under these pipes must be removed. The manholes are typically buried six to twelve inches below ground. If you wish to remove the stand pipes, you should carefully identify and record the manhole locations.
- The fourth stand pipe is located over the distribution box. The distribution box is the point where liquids from the tank are distributed to the drain fields. This stand pipe is a working cap, which allows visibility into the distribution box. It cannot be removed although it can be cut to grade level.

### ***System Failure***

Signs that your septic system is failing include:

- Black water with a foul odor backing up in drains or toilets.
- Toilets flush slowly.
- Water ponds on top of the disposal field.
- Grass stays green over the disposal field even in dry weather.

If you believe your system requires attention, call a professional to assess the situation. Have the system pumped. If a new system is required, a permit must be obtained from the county or municipality where your home is located.

### ***Water Softener***

Prior to installing a water softener, discuss with the vendor whether the system you are considering will adversely affect your septic system.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation, we confirm that the septic system is working properly and that you are familiar with the location of the tank and disposal field.

While we install the system in accordance with codes and plans based on your soil conditions, we do not warrant that the septic system will function indefinitely. Weather, ground water, environmental conditions, topography, as well as your family's habits can all generate unpredictable effects.

## Shower Doors and Tubs

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Shower doors and tubs require minimal care. Using a squeegee to remove water after a bath or shower will keep mineral residue and soap film to a minimum. A coating of wax can also help prevent buildup of minerals and soap.

Use cleaning products suggested by the manufacturer to avoid any damage to the trim and hardware.

Avoid hanging wet towels on corners of doors; the weight can pull the door out of alignment and cause it to leak.

Check and touch-up caulking on an as needed basis.

### Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines

During your orientation, we will confirm the good condition of all shower doors and tubs. In the event a scratch, chip or other blemish is noted at your orientation, we will make the appropriate repair. If the repair is required on the non-slip surface at the bottom of the tub, there may be a small area in which the non-slip surface is buffed out. This is standard industry practice and Quality Built Homes, Inc. will not replace the tub for small scratches and repairs. Quality Built Homes, Inc. warrants that shower doors and tubs will function according to manufacturer specifications.

## Siding

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Siding expands and contracts in response to changes in humidity and temperature. Slight waves are visible in siding under moist weather conditions; shrinkage and separations will be more noticeable under dry conditions. These behaviors cannot be entirely eliminated.

#### *Vinyl*

Vinyl siding will occasionally require cleaning. Start at the top to avoid streaking and use only cleaning products recommended by your siding manufacturer. Follow directions carefully.

*See also Paint and Wood Trim.*

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Quality Built Homes, Inc. warrants all siding to be free of defects in material and workmanship. We will confirm the good condition of the siding during your orientation. Subsequent damage to the siding will be your responsibility to repair.

During the first year, we will correct any separation at joints or where siding meets another material if the separation allows water to enter the home. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct delaminating siding.

## **Smoke Detectors**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Read the manufacturer's manual for detailed information on the care of your smoke detectors.

#### ***Battery***

If a smoke detector makes a chirping sound that is a sign that the battery needs to be replaced. Follow manufacturer instructions for installing a new battery. Most smoke detectors use a 9-volt battery.

#### ***Cleaning***

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

#### ***Locations***

Smoke detectors are installed in accordance with building codes, which dictate locations. Quality Built Homes, Inc. cannot omit any smoke detector and you should not remove or disable any smoke detector.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Quality Built Homes, Inc. does not represent that the smoke detectors will provide the protection for which they are installed or intended. We will test smoke detectors during the orientation to confirm that they are working and to familiarize you with the alarm. You are responsible for obtaining fire insurance.

# Stairs

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

No known method of installation prevents all vibration or squeaks in a staircase. A shrinkage crack will develop where the stairs meet the wall. When this occurs, apply a thin bead of latex caulk and, when dry, touch up with paint.

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Although Quality Built Homes, Inc. does not warrant against stair vibration and squeaks, a reasonable effort will be made to correct them during the first year.

# Sump Pump

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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.

### ***Continuous Operation***

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

### ***Discharge***

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.

### ***Power Supply***

The sump pump runs on electricity. If power goes off, the pump cannot operate. Storm water (not sewage) could then enter your basement. You may wish to install a back-up system to guard against this possibility. Homeowner insurance does not usually cover damage to your property from this source; you may want to obtain a rider to cover this.

### ***Roof Water***

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.

### ***Routine Check***

Periodically check to confirm the pump is plugged in, the circuit breaker is on and that the pump operates. To check the operation of your sump pump, 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.

### ***Trees and Shrubs***

Avoid planting trees or shrubs with aggressive root growth patterns near your home's foundation. The roots can make their way into the perimeter drain and eventually clog the system.

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During your orientation, we will discuss the sump pump and confirm it is operational. The pump is classified as an appliance and is warranted by the manufacturer.

## **Termites**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

We treat the foundation of your home for termites and provide you with a certificate confirming that treatment. Plan to renew this treatment annually or as directed by the literature that accompanies the certificate. Treatment for other types of insects or animal infestations is your responsibility.

### ***Regular Inspections***

Regularly inspect your home for signs of termites or conditions that would allow their attack.

- Check for wrinkles or waves in wood trim.
- Tap wood to see if it sounds or feels hollow.
- Inspect under the carpet tack strip by lifting the edge of carpet in the corner of a room. The tack strip is untreated and provides a convenient path for termites through your home.
- Watch for tubes of dirt, called mud tubes that extend from the soil up to your home.
- Keep soil away from any wood parts of your home.
- Be certain all roof water and precipitation moves quickly away from your home's foundation.
- Avoid storing wood on the ground and against your home.
- Before installing stepping stones, river rock, concrete, or so on, against the home, chemically treat the area that will be underneath the new material.
- If you add onto or change the exterior of your home, be sure to have the areas treated first.

If you believe you see signs of termites or if you have any questions, contact your termite treatment company for guidance.

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

We certify treatment of your foundation for termites at closing for five years. This is our final action for termites. Quality Built Homes, Inc. warranty excludes treatment for any other insect (such as ants) or animal (such as mice) infestations.

# **Ventilation**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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. Building codes require attic and crawl space vents to minimize accumulation of moisture.

### *Attic Vents*

Attic ventilation occurs through vents in the soffit (the underside of the overhangs) or on gable ends. Driving rain or snow sometimes enters the attic through these vents. Do not cover them to prevent this. Instead, cover the insulation in front of the vent. When you do this, precipitation that blows in safely evaporates and ventilation can still occur.

### *Crawl Space Vents*

Homes with crawl spaces usually include two or more vents. Open crawl space vents for summer months and close them for winter months, pulling insulation over them. Failure to close these vents and replace insulation may result in plumbing lines freezing in the crawl space. This occurrence is not covered by your warranty.

### *Daily 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 hood fan when you are cooking.
- Develop the habit of running the bath fans when bathrooms are in use.
- Air your house by opening windows for a time when weather permits.

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

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Quality Built Homes, Inc. warranty guidelines for active components (for example, exhaust fans) are discussed under the appropriate headings (such as electrical systems, heating system, and so on).

# Water Heater: Electric

## Homeowner Care and Maintenance

Carefully read the manufacturer's literature and warranty for your specific model of water heater.

### *Safety*

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

### *Temperature*

Temperature settings on an electric water heater will produce approximately the temperatures listed below:

Hot	120 degrees F
A	130 degrees F
B	140 degrees F
C	150 degrees F
Very Hot	160 degrees F

Quality Built Homes, Inc. sets the temperature at 120 degrees F. Higher settings can waste energy dollars and increase the danger of injury from scalding. Hot water will take longer to arrive at sinks, tubs, and showers that are farther from the water heater.

## **TROUBLE SHOOTING TIPS: NO HOT WATER**

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the

- Water heater breaker on your main electric panel is in the on position. (Remember if a breaker trips you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.)
- Temperature setting is not on "vacation" or too low.
- Water supply valve is open.

Refer to the manufacturer's literature for specific locations of these items and possibly other troubleshooting tips.

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

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty**

Refer to the manufacturer's warranty for complete information regarding warranty coverage on your water heater.

# **Water Heater: Gas**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Carefully read and follow the manufacturer's literature for your specific model of water heater.

### ***Condensation***

Condensation inside your new water heater may drip onto the burner flame. This causes no harm and in most cases, will disappear in a short period of time.

### ***Safety***

Vacuum the area around a gas-fired water heater to prevent dust from interfering with proper flame combustion. Avoid using the top of a heater as a storage shelf.

### ***Temperature***

The recommended thermostat setting for normal everyday use is "normal." Higher settings can result in wasted energy dollars and increase the danger of injury from scalding. Hot water will take longer to arrive at sinks, tubs, and showers that are farther from the water heater.

## **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: NO HOT WATER**

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Pilot is lit. (Directions will be found on the side of the tank.)
- Temperature setting is not too low.
- Water supply valve is open.

Refer to the manufacturer's literature for specific locations of these items and possibly other troubleshooting tips.

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

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Refer to the manufacturer's warranty for information regarding coverage of the water heater.  
*See also Plumbing*

# Water Heater: Tankless

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Carefully read and follow the manufacturer's literature for your specific model of hot water heater. Pay attention to the manufacturer's recommendation for service.

**Overview:** Tankless hot water heaters are designed to provide hot water on demand. When a hot water tap in your home is turned on, water enters the heater. A water flow sensor in the heater detects the water flow and the computer ignites the burner. Water circulates through the heat exchanger and gets hot. The computer will modulate the gas supply valve and water flow to produce the right amount of hot water at the correct temperature. When the tap is turned off, the unit shuts down.

# Well

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

A well consists of two main elements. One element is the hole or bore that houses the pumping equipment and functions as a conduit through which water flows upward to where the pump intake is set. This bore is lined with a pipe or casing. The second element is the intake usually is a screen at the bottom of the casing in a sand stratum or it can be the open bore hole in a consolidated rock stratum. Water from the well is pumped into a holding tank located inside the house where it is kept under pressure for distribution throughout the house. Two key elements are located near this tank. The shutoff switch to the well pump and the main water shutoff valve. To help preserve the effectiveness of the system, keep these points in mind:

- Keep surface water runoff from puddling around the well. Maintain at least 18" of clearance from the ground to the top of the well cap.
- Do not use gasoline, automotive products, solvents, pesticides, or excessive amounts of fertilizers near your well.
- Be careful never to hit the casing with a lawn mower or vehicle, or strike it with any force.
- Maintain your septic system. Improperly functioning septic systems are a major cause of well contamination.
- Your well should be disinfected with a chlorine solution any time work is done to the well, pump or any plumbing pipes in the house.

## **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: NO WATER**

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Electricity to the house is on.
- Breaker for the well pump has not been tripped.
- Shutoff switch for the well is turned on.
- The valve from the holding tank to the rest of the house is in the open position.

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

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

Prior to settlement we confirm that the well has been disinfected and that the water has passed water quality tests conducted by an independent lab. The well is under warranty from the installer for a period of one year.

# **Windows, Screens, and Sliding Glass Doors**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Contact a glass company for reglazing of any windows that break. Glass is difficult to install without special tools.

### ***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.

### ***Sliding Glass Doors***

Sliding glass doors are made with tempered glass, which is more difficult to break than ordinary glass. If broken, tempered glass breaks into small circular pieces rather than large splinters, which can easily cause injury.

Keep sliding door tracks clean for smooth operation and to prevent damage to the door frame. Silicone lubricants work well for these tracks. Acquaint yourself with the operation of sliding door hardware for maximum security.

Under certain lighting conditions, door glass may be hard to see. If you keep the screen fully closed when the glass door is open, your family will be accustomed to opening something before going through. You may want to apply a decal to the glass door to make it readily visible.

### ***Sticking Windows***

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.

### ***Tinting***

Applying tinting or foil lining to dual pane windows can result in broken windows due to heat build-up. Some manufacturers void their warranty on the windows if you apply tinting or foil lining. Contact the manufacturer to check on their current policy before you apply such coatings.

### ***Weep Holes***

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

## **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

We will confirm that all windows, screens, and sliding glass doors are in acceptable condition during the orientation. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will repair or replace broken windows or damaged screens noted on the orientation list. Windows should operate with reasonable ease and locks should perform as designed. If they do not, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will provide adjustments during the first year.

### ***Condensation***

Condensation on interior surfaces of the window and frame is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures. You influence the humidity level within your home; Quality Built Homes, Inc. provides no corrective measure for this condition.

Condensation that accumulates between the panes of glass in dual-glazed windows indicates a broken seal. The manufacturer will replace the window if this occurs during the warranty period.

### ***Infiltration***

Some air and dust will infiltrate around windows, especially before the installation of landscaping in the general area. Quality Built Homes, Inc. warranty excludes this occurrence.

### ***Scratches***

Quality Built Homes, Inc. confirms that all window glass is in acceptable condition at the orientation. Minor scratches on windows can result from delivery, handling, and other construction activities. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will replace windows that have scratches readily visible from a distance of 4 feet. Quality Built Homes, Inc. does not replace windows that have scratches visible only under certain lighting conditions.

### ***Tinting***

If you add tinting to dual-glazed windows, all warranties are voided. Damage can result from condensation or excessive heat build-up between the panes of glass. Refer to the manufacturer's literature for additional information.

*See also Ventilation*

## **Wood Trim**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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. You can usually correct this with caulking and touch-up painting.

Shrinkage may also 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. If the base shoe (small trim between base molding and the floor) appears to be lifting from the floor, this is probably due to slight shrinkage of the floor joists below. Again, you can correct this condition by removing the old nails and renailing. You may prefer to wait until after the first heating season to make any needed repairs at one time when redecorating.

*See also Expansion and Contraction*

### **Quality Built Homes, Inc. Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation, we will confirm that wood trim is in acceptable condition. Minor imperfections in wood materials will be visible and will require no action. Quality Built Homes, Inc. will correct readily noticeable construction damage such as chips and gouges listed during the orientation.

### ***Cracks***

At the time, your 30-day list repairs are scheduled, Quality Built Homes, Inc. will caulk and apply touch-up paint to cracks in trim components that exceed 3/16 inch. Paint or stain touch-up will not match. We will correct any separation at joints that allows water to enter the home.

# **Yards**

See Landscaping, Seeded Lawns Page 57).

## Maintenance Checklist

In addition to normal daily and weekly care, develop a schedule of preventative routines based on the information in this manual and the manufacturer literature you receive. A change of season creates special maintenance needs so plan for winterizing and summerizing your home.

- Check the condition of glazing compound, caulking and exterior paint. Replace or paint as needed (spring).
- Inspect the roof for snow damage; repair it if necessary (spring).
- Check for evidence of termites (spring).
- Check interior paint and redecorate when necessary.
- Seed and feed the lawn (spring and/or autumn); plant annuals (spring); do appropriate pruning of perennials (some in spring, others in summer or autumn); rake and compost leaves, mulch perennials that need winter protection.
- Remove hose connections and store hose to avoid freezing (autumn).
- Keep driveways, walks, and steps free of ice and snow to avoid damage to them and to prevent hazardous walking and driving conditions.
- Have your heating system cleaned and repaired if necessary (when not in use). If your unit has an air filter, replace it once a month during each heating season.
- If you have a separate air conditioning system, clean and change filters as the manufacturer recommends.
- Check cords and plugs of all electrical appliances for wear. If necessary, have them repaired or replaced.
- Test your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors for proper operation. Be sure to clean the unit (with a vacuum or swab), clean the filter (if any), and replace batteries and light bulbs when necessary.
- Inspect all doors and windows for proper operation and a tight fit. Clean all window tracks, clean and adjust the door thresholds, and check the weather-stripping on windows and doors. Preventing unwanted outside air from leaking into your home will reduce your energy bills.
- Clean weep holes on all window and door sliders. Dry lubricate all window tracks to aid in ease of operation.
- Make a careful inspection of your home, inside and out, to seek out problem areas before someone is injured.
- Test all lights located in infrequently used spaces to be sure they work when they are needed.

## **A Final Word**

Dear Homeowner:

We sincerely hope that this Manual has been informative and useful to you. We are committed to meeting the standards of performance set forth in this manual and in the Professional Warranty Service Corporation Builder's Limited Warranty.

Please do not hesitate to offer written feedback and comments on the contents of the manual. Our goal in creating this Manual is to offer clear, concise information that is accurate and easy to understand.

We thank you for purchasing a Quality Built home and hope that your new home gives you many years of comfort and enjoyment.