

Section 7: Helpful Hints and Guidelines

- Alphabetical Listing From Air Conditioning to Wood Trim

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 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 90 degrees will *not* cool the house 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 airflow to occupied parts of your home by adjusting the vents. Likewise, when the seasons change, readjust them for comfortable heating.

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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

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.
- Blower panel cover is installed correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. Similar to the way the clothes dryer door operates, this panel pushes in a button that lets the fan motor know it is safe to come on. If that button is not pushed in, the furnace will not operate.
- Air conditioner and furnace breakers on the main electrical panel are on. (Remember, if a breaker trips, you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.)
- 220 switch on the outside wall near the air conditioner is on
- Switch on the side of the furnace is on
- Fuse in furnace is good. (See manufacturer literature for size and location.)
- Filter is clean to allow air flow (should be changed every 30-60 days)
- Vents in individual rooms are open
- Air returns are unobstructed
- Air conditioner has not frozen from overuse

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

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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 Atherton Homes guarantee this.

Compressor

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

Coolant

The outside temperature must be 70 degrees F or higher for the contractor to add coolant to the system. If your home was completed during the winter months, this charging of the system is unlikely to be complete and will need to be performed in the spring. Although we check and document this at orientation, your call to remind us is welcome in the spring.

Non-emergency

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

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.

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Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Atherton Homes will correct wiring that does not perform as intended for the alarm system. Atherton Homes makes no representation that the alarm system will provide the protection for which it is installed or intended.

Appliances

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Please refer to individual manuals for each appliance. Manuals should have been left in a kitchen drawer prior to your move in. Warranty service is provided by GE customer service (800-432-2737).

Atherton Homes Limited 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.

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 limited warranty does not cover such injury or damage.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Atherton Homes 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, electro statically 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.

Polish

When peeling, spotting, or discoloration occurs, you can sometimes restore the beauty of the metal by completely removing the remaining coating and hand polishing the item with a suitable brass polish. Applying a light coat of wax and buffing with a soft cloth helps maintain the gloss.

Tarnish

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

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During the orientation, we will confirm that brass fixtures are in acceptable condition. Atherton Homes does not warranty against corrosion damage to the external surfaces or internal workings of plumbing or light 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 sheet.

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 holes or permit landscaping materials to cover them.

Atherton Homes Limited 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.

Cleaning

Only mild soap and water are suggested for the first year to allow the stain to cure. After the first year products such as lemon oil or polishes that include scratch cover are suggested for wood cabinet care. Follow container directions. Use such products a maximum of once every 3 to 6 months to avoid excessive build-up. Avoid paraffin-based spray waxes and washing cabinets with water, as this may damage the luster of the finish. *Also, see memo on the next page dated 2/23/00.*

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 crock pot) too near the cabinet. When operating such appliances, place them in a location that is not directly under a cabinet.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During the orientation, we will confirm that all cabinet parts are installed and that their surfaces are in acceptable condition. Also, refer to the cabinet manufacturers limited warranty.

Alignment

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

MEMO dated February 23, 2000

From:

Barbosa Cabinets, Inc.
25520 Schulte Court
Tracy, CA 95376
209-836-2501 Fax 209-836-0847

Subject: Cleaning of Cabinets

This letter is to inform you, your company and all subcontractors about our official policy on cleaning and “wiping down” our finished cabinets.

The type of clear finish used at Barbosa Cabinets, Inc. is a catalyzed Conversion Varnish. This Conversion Varnish is water and chemical resistant, and will provide years of durable and carefree appearance. However, it is very important that the following steps be taken to ensure that nothing will contaminate the finish before, or after any of our customer service visits.

Care during the first 30 days from date of delivery:

- Use only a lightly dampened cloth with clean water to wipe off dust and dirt.
- DO NOT use cleaning fluid, polishing oil, lemon oil or any other oil or wax to clean cabinets.
- To remove grease, oil, paint, etc. use a slightly damp cloth with mild soap and water only.
- Avoid using any spray lacquers to touch up nicks and other minor damage.

Any deviation from these parameters will void our warranty and make it impossible for us to do any touch up that may be required.

Care after one year from date of delivery:

- At this time, it is acceptable to use lemon oil, furniture polish, or other similar products to clean these cabinets. Even though this is not required to preserve the finish, these types of products will help hide minor scratches.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us maintain a quality finish that will last for years to come.

Sincerely,
Bob Reed - Field Service Director

Operation

Cabinets should operate properly under normal use.

Separations

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 excluded 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.

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.

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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 covering.

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 acts 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 piles. 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 had left, have a professional restretch the carpeting using a power stretcher, not a knee-kicker.

Seams

Carpet usually comes in 12-foot widths, making seams 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 the 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.

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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 Indian 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.

Atherton Homes Limited 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. Atherton Homes 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. Atherton Homes 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.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

One-Time Repair

We will touch up caulking one time during your material and workmanship period. We suggest that this be performed with your 11-month service.

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

Atherton Homes Limited 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 the time. Atherton Homes 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. Atherton Homes will repair grouting, if necessary, one time during the first year. We are not responsible for color variations in grout or discontinued colored grout. Any grouting or caulking that is needed after that time is your responsibility.

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. Repeat 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 temperatures changes that cause expansion and contraction.

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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 into your driveway. We design and install concrete drives for conventional residential vehicle use only: family cars, vans, light trucks, bicycles, and so on.

Chemicals

Protect concrete from abuse by chemical agents such as pet urine, fertilizers, radiator overflow, repeat 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.

Post-Tension Slabs

If your home is built on a post-tension slab, avoid any action that penetrates the concrete. The risk of hitting a cable or tendon, which is under considerable tension, makes such actions dangerous.

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.

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Color

Concrete slabs vary in color. Atherton Homes provides no correction for this condition.

Cracks

If concrete cracks reach 3/16 of an inch in width or vertical displacement, Atherton Homes will patch or repair them one time during the warranty year. Subsequently, concrete slab maintenance is your responsibility. If you prefer to have the slab replaced, we will obtain a price for you and assist in scheduling the work upon receipt of your payment. However, we advise against this expense since the new slab will crack as well.

Finished Floors

Atherton Homes 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 ¼ inch within any 32-inch measurement with the exception of an area specifically designed to slope toward a floor drain.

Separation

Atherton Homes will correct separation of concrete slabs from the home if separation exceeds one inch.

Settling or Heaving

Atherton Homes will repair slabs that settle or heave in excess of 2 inches or if such movement results in negative drainage (toward the house) or hazardous vertical displacement.

Spalling (Surface Chips)

Causes of spalling include repeat 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..

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Standing Water

Water may stand on exterior concrete for several hours after precipitation or from roof run-off. Atherton Homes 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.

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 the interior surfaces.

Temperature

Avoid setting your thermostat at extreme temperatures. Heating your home will cause the materials to dry out faster, generating more moisture into the air; drying the materials out too fast 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. It is also helpful to keep all interior doors open during the day.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Condensation results from weather conditions and a family's lifestyle. Atherton Homes has no control over these factors. The limited warranty coverage excluded 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.

Wax

Wax is not necessary, but it can be used to make counters gleam.
See also Ceramic Tile.

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Atherton Homes Limited 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.

Laminates

Laminated countertops will have one or more discernible seams. Atherton Homes 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.

Separation from Wall

Separation of countertops from walls, backsplash, and around sinks, results from normal shrinkage of materials. Atherton Homes will recaulk these areas one time during the materials and workmanship warranty. Subsequently caulking will be your home maintenance responsibility.

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. Natural fluctuations caused by humidity and the use of forced air furnaces, showers, and dishwashers, interior doors may occasionally require minor adjustments.

Bi-fold Doors

Interior bifolds sometimes stick or warp because of weather conditions. Apply a silicone lubricant to the tracks to minimize this inconvenience.

Exterior Finish

To ensure longer life for your exterior wood doors, plan to refinish them at least once a year. Stained exterior doors with clear finishes tend to weather faster than painted doors. Treat the finish with a wood preserver every three months to preserve the varnish and prevent the door from drying and cracking. Reseal stained exterior doors whenever the finish begins cracking or crazing.

Failure to Latch

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

Hinges

You can remedy a squeaky door hinge by removing the hinge pin and applying a silicone lubricant but can create a gray smudge on the door or floor covering beneath the hinge if too much is applied.

Locks

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

Shrinkage

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

Slamming

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

Sticking

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

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Before planning a door because of sticking, try two other steps: first apply either a paste wax, light coat of paraffin, or candle wax to the sticking surface; or second, tighten the screws that hold the door jamb or doorframe. If planning is necessary even after these measures, use sandpaper to smooth the door and paint the sanded area to seal against moisture.

Warping

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

Weather Stripping

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

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During the orientation we confirm that all doors are in acceptable condition and correctly adjusted. Atherton Homes will repair construction damage to doors noted on the orientation list.

Adjustments

Because of normal settling of the home, doors may require adjustment for proper fit. Atherton Homes will make such adjustments.

Panel Shrinkage

Panels of wood doors shrink and expand in response to changes in temperature and humidity. Although touching up the paint or stain on unfinished exposed areas is your home maintenance responsibility, Atherton Homes will repair split panels that allow light to be visible.

Warping

Atherton Homes will repair doors that warp in excess of ¼ inch.

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.

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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 by Atherton Homes, 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 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.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

One-Time Repairs

One-time during the materials and workmanship warranty, Atherton Homes will repair drywall cracks which exceed 1/8 inch and nail pops and will touch up the repaired area using the same paint color that was on the surface when the home was delivered. Touch-ups will be visible. Cracks less than 1/8 inch are homeowner maintenance items.

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

Lighting Conditions

Atherton Homes 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 plumbing leak), Atherton Homes completes the repair by
Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

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.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance 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 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 entitles – such as the gas, electric, or phone companies – need access to lines for repairs or to connect service to nearby home sites.

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 Atherton Homes 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 Atherton Homes informed of such changes, we are unable to predict specific sites that will include such equipment.

See also Property Boundaries.

See also Exhibit G, Provisions and Checklist included with your contract.

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.

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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 work 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 the 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 limited warranty does not cover such damage.

Each GFCI circuit has a test and reset button. Once each month, 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.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

Grounding System

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

Light Bulbs

You are responsible for replacing burned-out bulbs other than those noted during your orientation.

Luminous Light Panels

Translucent panels covering ceiling lights are made of polystyrene plastic. To clean, gently push up, tilting the panel slightly and remove it from the fixture frame. Wash with a diluted (1 to 2 percent) solution of mild detergent and warm water. Do not rinse; the soap film that remains reduces static electricity that attracts dust.

Over time, the plastic panel may yellow and will become brittle and may need to be replaced if it cracks or breaks. Replacement material can be found at home center and hardware stores. Most suppliers will cut the panel to fit so if you need to purchase a replacement be sure to note the size you need.

Bulbs for these fixtures can be purchased at home centers or hardware stores. Avoid exceeding the wattage indicated inside the fixture.

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 limited 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. 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. In most cases, wires run in a straight line from the service panel to the nearest public utility pad. Maintain positive drainage around the foundation to protect electrical service connections.

Under or Over Cabinet Lights

The selection of optional under or over 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 GFCI's, 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.

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Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

Designed Load

Atherton Homes 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, Atherton Homes will repair or replace them.

GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters)

Atherton Homes 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 Atherton Homes and are excluded from limited 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 are excluded from limited 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 and contract at different rates. This movement results in separation between materials, particularly dissimilar ones. You will see the effects in small cracks in drywall and in paint, especially where moldings meet drywall, at mitered corners, and where tile grout meets tub or sink. While this can alarm an uninitiated 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.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty

Atherton Homes provides one-time repairs to many of the effects of expansion and contraction.

See individual categories such as drywall and caulk for details.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

Fencing

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

When Atherton Homes installs fencing as part of your new home, we confirm its good condition during your orientation. All types of fencing requires some routine attention. Wood fences are not considered a part of the actual structure of the property and therefore are not covered under the builder warranty. Any defects in the wood fence must be disclosed at the New Home Buyer Orientation.

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.

Variation

Height and location of Atherton Homes installed fences will vary with lot size, topography, and shape. Atherton Homes must meet the requirements of the Design Review process just as any homeowner would.

Wood Fences

The lumber used to construct wood fences is rough cedar. Over time it will crack, warp, and split. Unless extreme, these conditions require no action on your part. As the wood ages and shrinks, nails may come loose and require attention. Also check the posts and any gates twice a year and tighten hardware or make needed adjustments. The posts are all treated, but Atherton Homes does not treat the fence boards, therefore it is the homeowner's responsibility once they have closed escrow. We recommend that you paint or seal your wood fence every three years. Do not allow irrigation sprinklers to spray directly onto the fence.

See also, Exhibit G, Provisions and Checklist within your contract.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty

Fencing is part of your home purchase. We will confirm the acceptable condition of the fence during your orientation. Fence boards that have loose or dislodged knots that are larger than 1 inch, boards that are split top to bottom and where the split is 3/8 inch wide, and boards that are warped more than 1 inch in a 6 foot length are all considered unacceptable and will be replaced

as long as they have been reported at the orientation. Any items found or reported after the close of escrow will not be replaced.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

Fireplace

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

See also Fire Prevention

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.

Your objective in building a fire should be a clean, steady, slow-burning fire. Begin with a small fire to allow the components of the fireplace to heat up slowly. Failure to do so may damage the fireplace and can void the warranty. Start the fire by burning kindling and newspaper under the grate; two to three layers of logs stacked with air space between, largest logs to the rear, works best. One sheet of paper burned on top of the stack will help the chimney start to draw. Any logs 6 inches in diameter or larger should be split.

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.

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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 airflow will affect the performance of the fireplace and may be a fire hazard. Have the arrester cleaned professionally when needed.

Gas Fireplace

Atherton Homes offer 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.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Fireplaces are not intended to be the sole heat source in the home. The fireplace should function properly when Atherton Homes and the manufacturers directions are followed.

Chimney Separation

Separation of a brick chimney from a newly constructed home may occur. Atherton Homes will repair separation from the main structure in excess of ½ inch in 10 feet. Caulking is acceptable in most cases.

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Cracks

Normal shrinkage of mortar results in hairline cracks in masonry. Atherton Homes 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.

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 determine and correct continuous malfunction if caused by a construction of 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 limited warranty excludes this occurrence.

Foundation

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

We install the foundation of your home according to the recommendations of our consulting engineer. 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.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

Cracks

Even though an engineer designed the foundation and we constructed it according to engineering requirements, surface cracks can still develop in the wall. Surface cracks are not detrimental to the structural integrity of your home. If a crack develops in a foundation wall that allows water to come through, follow the procedures for submitting a warranty claim. Shrinkage or backfill cracks are not unusual in foundation walls. Atherton Homes will seal cracks that exceed 1/8 inch in width.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

The foundation of your home has been designed and installed according to the recommendations of an engineer. The walls of the foundation are poured concrete with steel reinforcing rods.

Cosmetic Imperfections

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

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.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

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 Atherton homes 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 crossed 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.

Painting

Repaint the garage door when you repaint your home, or more often if needed to maintain a satisfactory appearance.

Safety

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

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

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Sag

The garage door may sag slightly due to its weight and span. This will stabilize after the panels have dried.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

The garage door should operate smoothly and with reasonable ease. The door can become misaligned and require adjustment, which Atherton Homes will provide 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.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

The gas company is responsible for the leaks up to the meter. Atherton Homes will correct leaks from the meter into the home.

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.

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The sooty deposits are extremely difficult to remove; on some surfaces (light-colored carpet, for instance), they are impossible to clean completely away.

The popularity of scented candles has increased many-fold in recent years. If this is an activity that is part of your lifestyle, we caution you about the potential damage to your home. When this condition results from homeowners burning candles or other lifestyle choices, the resulting damage is excluded from our limited warranty coverage.

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 drainage certification and then the local building authorities as well as Atherton Homes 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.

See also Exhibit G, Provisions and Checklist within your contract.

Drainage

Typically, the grade around your home should slope 1 foot in the first 100 feet, tapering to a 1 percent slope. 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.

The necessary grades and swales have been established by the Builder to insure proper drainage away from the home. Standing or ponding water shall not remain for extended periods in the

immediate area of the house a rain (generally no more than 24 hours), except that in swales that drain other areas, a longer period can be anticipate the possibility of standing water (for up to 48 hours) after an unusually heavy rainfall. No grading determination shall be made while there is frost on the ground, or while the ground is saturated.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

Exterior Finish Materials

Maintain soil levels 4 inches below siding, stucco, brick, or other exterior finish materials. Contact with the soil can cause deterioration of the exterior finish material and encourages pest infestation.

Roof Water

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

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. 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.

Subsurface Drains

Occasionally Atherton Homes installs a subsurface drain to ensure that surface water drains from a yard adequately. Keep this area and especially the drain cover clear of debris so that the drain can function as intended.

See also Landscaping.

Atherton Homes Limited 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 limited warranty is void.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

Not only will landscaping, grading or other exterior changes undertaken by owner, landscaper, gardener, or others working on owner's property which results in these types of changes seriously affect owner's warranty coverage, but also such grading changes may result in water seepage into owner's home, or those of owner's neighbors for which owner will be solely responsible.

Any construction outside the home, including, but no limited to, flower boxes, concrete flatwork (pool, decks, patios, planters, sidewalks, etc.) may sufficiently change or alter the carefully prepared drainage of the owner's lot in a manner which may not only injure or cause damage to owner's home, or that of owner's neighbors, but will also invalidate homeowner's warranty.

We urge that the owner review and discuss with owner's gardener, landscaper or others working on owner's property, the necessity of maintaining the proper drainage. If the owner has any questions, they should be discussed with a licensed professional landscaper, or with the local building department.

Backfill Settlement

Backfill 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, Atherton Homes will fill the areas one time and subsequently will provide you with fill dirt to maintain positive drainage.

Erosion

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

New Sod

New sod installation and the extra watering that accompanies it can cause temporary drainage problems, as can unusually severe weather conditions.

See also Sod under Landscaping.

Recommendations

Atherton Homes 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, Atherton Homes will inspect drainage problems reported in writing during the warranty period, compare grades to those originally established, and advise you on corrective actions you might take.

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Swales

Atherton Homes 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. Atherton Homes advises against making such changes. After heavy rain or snow, water may stand in swales up to 48 hours.

Under Concrete

Atherton Homes 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.

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 overflow, and clog the downspouts.

Extensions or Splash blocks

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 joints using a commercial gutter caulking compound available at hardware stores.

Paint

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

Paint

Gutters and downspouts are painted to match your home. You should repaint them when you repaint your home.

Atherton Homes Limited 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 warranty 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 lubrication.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty

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

Atherton Homes will repair hardware items that do not function as intended during your one-year warranty period.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

Hardwood Floors

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

In daily care of hardwood floors, preventive maintenance is the primary goal.

Cleaning

Sweep on a daily basis or as needed. Never wet-mop a hardwood floor. Excessive water causes wood to expand and can possibly damage the floor. When polyurethane finishes become soiled, damp-mop with a mixture of 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.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

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.

Recoat / Refinish

If your floors have a polyurethane finish, you may want to have an extra coat of polyurethane applied by a qualified contractor within six months to one year. The exact timing will depend on your particular lifestyle. If another finish was used, refer to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Separation

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

See also Warping.

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 hardening 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.

Splinters

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

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.

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Traffic

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.

Wax

Waxing and the use of products like oil soap are neither necessary nor recommended. Once you wax a polyurethane finish floor, recoating is difficult because the new finish will not bond to the wax. The preferred maintenance is preventive cleaning and recoating annually or as needed to maintain the desired luster.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty

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.

Separation

Shrinkage will result in separations between the members of hardwood floors. If these exceed 1/8 inch, Atherton Homes will fill them one time. Atherton Homes is not responsible for removing excess filler that appears on the surface if the boards expand due to subsequent changes in humidity and expel the filler.

Heating System: Gas 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.

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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.

Blower Panel (Fan Cover)

You need to position the blower panel cover correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. This panel compresses a button that tells the blower it is safe to operate. Similar to the way a clothes dryer door operates, this panel pushes in a button that lets the fan motor know it is safe to come on. If that button is not pushed in, the furnace will not operate.

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 through 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.

Duct Cleaning

Exercise caution before spending money on professional ductwork cleaning services. A study by the EPA found no proof that ductwork cleaning improves indoor air quality, nor was evidence

found that it prevents health problems. For more information contact the EPA and request document EPA-402-K-97-002. Or you can view this information on their website: www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/.

Ductwork Noise

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

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Filter

A clean filter will help to keep your home clean and reduce dusting chores. Remember to change or clean the filter monthly during the heating season (year-round if you also have air conditioning). A clogged filter can slow airflow and cause cold spots in your home. Although it takes less than one minute to change the filter, this is one of the most frequently overlooked details of normal furnace care.

Buy filters in large quantities for the sake of convenience. You will find the size and type printed along the edge of the filter that is in your furnace.

If you have a permanent, washable, removable filter, you need to clean this monthly. Use water only to clean the filter, tap to dry or air dry, and leave unit off for a brief period. Do not use soaps or detergents on the filter

Furnished Home

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

Gas Odor

If you smell gas, call the gas company immediately.

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.

Pilot

On models with manually lit pilots, lighting the furnace pilot involves several steps. First, remove the cover panel to expose the pilot. Then rotate the on-off pilot knob to pilot. When the knob is in this position, you can depress the red button.

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While depressing the red button, hold a match at the pilot. Once the pilot lights, continue to hold the red button down for 30 to 90 seconds. When you release the red button, the pilot should stay lit. If it does not, wait several minutes to allow any gas to dissipate from the furnace area and repeat the entire process. If the pilot stays lit, rotate the on-off pilot knob to the on position. Reinstall the cover panel. You can find these instructions on a sticker on the furnace and in the manufacturer's literature.

Registers

Heat registers 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, temperature can normally vary from floor to floor as much as 10 degrees or more on extremely cold days. The furnace blower will typically cycle on and off more frequently and for shorter periods during severe cold spells.

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.

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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.
- Blower panel cover is installed correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. This panel compressed a button that tells the blower it is safe to operate. Similar to the way a clothes dryer door operates, this panel pushes in a button that lets the fan motor know it is safe to come on. If that button is not pushed in, the furnace will not operate.
- Breaker on the main electrical panel is on.
- Switch on the side of furnace is on
- Fuse in furnace is good (See manufacturer’s literature for size and location.)
- 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.

Atherton Homes Limited 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.

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Ductwork

Although the heat system is not a sealed system, the ductwork should remain attached and securely fastened. If it becomes unattached, Atherton Homes 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, Atherton Homes 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.

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 insulation 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.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Atherton Homes will install insulation to meet or exceed the building codes applicable at the time of construction and outlined as part of your purchase agreement. The insulation specifications for all models and elevations are as follow:

- **R-13** All exterior wall (combined with the stucco application, exterior wall systems have the equivalent of an R-19 Rating)
- **R-19** Floor above garage (two story homes)
- **R-38** All roof areas (R-30 in plan 5)

See also Exhibit G, Provisions and checklist within your contract.

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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 you this information. Local nurseries and landscape professionals can also assist you.

In planning your landscaping, think of proportion, texture, color, mature size, maintenance needs, soft and hard surfaces, lighting, fencing, edging, and water requirements. A beautiful yard requires considerable planning and regular attention. Most homeowners take years to achieve the yard they want. Planning to install items in stages can spread the cost and work over several seasons.

Whatever the source of your design, plan to install the basic components of your landscaping as soon after closing as weather permits. In addition to meeting your homeowner association requirements to landscape in a timely manner, well-designed landscaping prevents erosion and protects the foundation of your home.

Additions

Before installing patio additions or other permanent improvements, consider soil conditions in the design and engineering of your addition.

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 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.

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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. Do not permit them to tie into existing drainage pipes without approval from Atherton Homes.

See also Property Lines.

Requirements

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

Seeded Lawns

If lawn seeding is part of your home purchase, consider this just the first step in establishing your yard. Remember that the forces of nature are far stronger than grass seed. You will need to overseed at some point, perhaps more than once. Heavy storms can cause washouts and erosion that you will need to correct. It generally takes at least three growing seasons to establish a good lawn, longer if weather conditions are difficult or if you do not have the time to devote to lawn care.

Before over-seeding, remember to fill any slight depressions with a light layer of topsoil. Minimize traffic of all kinds on newly seeded areas and avoid weed killer for at least 120 days. Keep the seed moist, not wet.

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Sod

Newly placed sod requires extra water for several weeks. Water in the cool part of the day (ideally just before sunrise) at regular intervals for the first three weeks. Be aware that new sod and extra watering it requires can sometimes create drainage concerns (in your yard or your neighbor's) that will disappear when the yard is established and requires normal watering.

It is recommended to continue watering on the cycles that have been preset by the landscaper until the sod has taken root. You can determine if sod has taken root by pulling up on one corner of the sod – if it lifts, it has not yet rooted. If it does not lift, you should reduce your watering time. Also, please note the city guidelines and requirements for watering.

The type of sod used by Atherton Homes is Delta Blue Grass 90/10 with a Fescu mix.

Soil Mix

Provide good soil mixes with sufficient organic material. Use mulch at least 3 inches deep to hold soil moisture and to help prevent weeds and soil compaction.

In areas with high clay content, prepare the soil before installing your grass. First cover the soil with 2 inches of sand and 1 inch of manure that is treated and odorless. Rototill this into the soil to a depth of 6 inches (rototill parallel to the swales). Whether you use seed or sod, this preparation helps your lawn to retain moisture and require less water. Installing a lawn over hard soil permits water to run off with little or no penetration and your lawn will derive minimal benefit from watering or rain.

Apply appropriate fertilizer and weed and pest control as needed for optimal growth. Investigate organic compounds for additional protection of the environment.

Sprinkler System

If Atherton Homes included a sprinkler system with your home, we will demonstrate the system during your orientation, and make final adjustments shortly after you move in if required. The installer will note and correct any deficiencies in the system at the same time. Whether we install your sprinklers or you install it yourself, keep these points in mind.

You are responsible for routine cleaning and adjusting of sprinkler heads as well as shutting the system down in the fall. Failure to drain the system before freezing temperatures occur can result in broken lines, which will be your responsibility to repair.

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Conduct weekly operational checks to ensure proper performance of the system. Direct sprinkler heads away from the home. Trickler – or bubbler – type irrigation systems are not recommended for use adjacent to your home.

Automatic timers permit you to water at optimum times whether you are home, away, awake, or asleep. The amount of water provided to each zone can be accurately and consistently controlled and easily adjusted with a timed system. Check the system after a power outage and keep a battery in place if your system offers that as a backup. *(See attached instructions on next page)*

Stones

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

Trees

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 trees may react to conditions it is unaccustomed to. Caring for existing trees, including pruning dead branches or removing these trees altogether is your responsibility.

Remember to water trees during the summer or during warm dry periods in the winter.

Mulch around trees and avoid tilling or planting flowerbeds around trees. This is especially important while trees are recovering from the construction process.

Utility Lines

A slight depression may develop in the front lawn along the line of the utility trench. To correct this, roll back the sod, spread topsoil underneath to level the areas, and then relay the sod.

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 Easement.

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Standard Plants

Standard plants provided by the Builder for standard lots are: 8 one-gallon plants, 6 five-gallon plants and 2 fifteen-gallon trees. The standard plants provided by the Builder for corner lots are: 23 one-gallon plants, 6 five-gallon plants, 4 fifteen-gallon trees.

Waiting to Landscape

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

Weeds

Weeds will appear in your new lawn whether seed or sod is used. Left unlandscaped, 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.

Xeriscape®

Atherton Homes recommends careful consideration of landscape design and selection of planting materials to minimize the demands of your yard on water supplies. Detailed information about Xeriscape® is available from reputable nurseries. This has the triple benefit of helping the environment, saving on water bills, and reducing the amount of moisture that can reach your foundation.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty

We will confirm the healthy condition of all plant materials during the orientation. Maintaining landscaping is your responsibility. Loss or damage of any landscape items installed by the Builder, including, but not limited to sod, shrubs, trees, flowers, bark, sprinkler lines, heads and systems, are not covered by the limited warranty after owner takes possession of the home.

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 caused 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.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will remove any mildew noted during the orientation. Atherton Homes Warranty excludes mildew.

Mirrors

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

To clean your mirrors, use any reliable liquid glass cleaner or polish 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.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm that all mirrors are in acceptable condition during the orientation. Atherton Homes 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), satin and semi gloss painted surface must be washed gently using mild soap and as little water as possible. Avoid abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, or scrub brushes. Flat paint is not washable and can actually be washed off along with the texture. Often better results come from touching up rather than washing the paint.

Colors

Your selection sheets are your record of the paint and stain color names, numbers, and brands in your home.

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. It is also recommended that you wash the siding with a water sprayer to remove any dust or particles that may have accumulated. 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 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 an area that has semi gloss or satin finish, such as but not limited to the kitchen, bathroom or laundry room, prepare the wall surfaces first by cleaning with a mild soap and water mixture or a reliable cleaning product. Do not try to wash flat paint surfaces. This can remove the paint and the texture from the wall entirely.

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We provide samples of the 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 suggest that you wait until after the first heating season to repair drywall cracks or other separations due to shrinkage.

See also Drywall.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your orientation we will confirm that all painted or stained surfaces are in acceptable condition. Atherton Homes will touch up paint as indicated on the orientation list. You are responsible for all subsequent touch ups, 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 and gutters is your responsibility.

Fading

Expect fading of exterior paint or stain caused by the effects of sun and weather. Atherton Homes limited 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. Atherton Homes 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, and 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. Please check the locations for phone jacks, cable and electrical outlets if you have chosen any options that may change the wall space in that room. Initiating phone service, additions to phone service, and moving phone outlets for decorating purposes or convenience are your responsibility.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Atherton Homes will correct outlets positioned so that a wall phone cannot be installed, for instance, if a kitchen phone outlet is positioned too close to a cabinet or countertop backsplash and prevents a wall phone from being connected.

Atherton Homes 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.

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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.

See also Dripping Faucet.

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 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 disposal 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. This recommendation also applies to the grease; supplied with a steady flow of cold water, the grease congeals and is cut up by the blades. If you use hot water, the grease remains liquid, then cools and solidifies in the sewer lines. 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.

Clean a plunger drain stopper – usually found in bathroom sinks – by loosening the nut under the sink at the back, pulling out the rod attached to the plunger, and lifting the stopper. Clean and return the mechanism to its original position.

Dripping Faucet

You can repair a dripping faucet by shutting off the water at the valve directly under the sink, then removing the faucet stem, changing the washer, and reinstalling the faucet stem. The showerhead is repaired the same way. Replace the washer with another of the same type and

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size. You can minimize the frequency of this by remembering not to turn faucets off with excessive force. (Please note that some manufacturers do not use rubber washers.)

Extended Absence

If you plan to be away for an extended period, you should drain your water supply lines. To do this, shut off the main supply line and open the faucets to relieve pressure in the lines. You may also wish to shut off the water heater. Do this by turning off the cold water supply valve on top and the gas control at the bottom. Drain the tank by running a hose from the spigot on the bottom to the basement floor drain. If you leave the tank full, keep the pilot on and set the temperature to its lowest or “vacation” setting. Check manufacturer’s directions for additional hints and instructions.

See also Extended Absence checklist.

Fiberglass Fixtures

For normal cleaning use a nonabrasive bathroom cleanser and sponge or nylon-cleaning pad. Avoid steel wool, scrapers, or 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 cleansers 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 a heart disease or high blood pressure; discuss the use of the

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tub with your doctor. Tie or pin long hair to keep it 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.

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

Laundry Tub

If you have a laundry room tub, the faucet does not have an aerator. This is to allow the laundry tub faucet to accept a hose connection.

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 you faucets (normally every three to four months) will allow proper flow of water. The water department controls the overall water pressure.

Main Shut Off

The water supply to your home can be shut off entirely in two locations. The first is in the street and the second is at the meter. We will point both of these out during your orientation.\

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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 cleaners 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 (sill cocks) 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 Atherton Homes does not warrant sill cocks 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 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.

See also tank care.

Shut offs

Your main water shut off is located near your meter. 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.

Sprinklers

You should routinely inspect sprinkler heads and provide seasonal service to maintain proper functioning.

See also Landscaping / Sprinkler.

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. We do not recommend using any drop in tablets that contain chlorine or other eroding type products. Those products can damage the interior mechanisms and void your warranty.

Water Filter or Softener

If you install either a water filter or a water softener, carefully read the manufacture's literature and warranty for you specific model.

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
- Main shut off at the street 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 at the meter 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 Atherton Homes 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 Atherton Homes or the plumber listed on your Emergency Phone Number 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.

Atherton Homes Limited 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. We have Roto Rooter flush all lines prior to your move in.

Clogged Drain

Atherton Homes 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

Atherton Homes 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

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

Freezing Pipes

Provided the home is heated at a normal level, pipes should not freeze. Set heat at 55 degrees F if you are away during winter months. Keep garage doors closed to protect plumbing lines that run through this area.

Leaks

Atherton Homes will repair leaks in the plumbing system. If a plumbing leak caused by a warranted item results in drywall or floor covering damage, Atherton Homes will repair or replace items that were part of the home as originally purchased. We do not make adjustments 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. Atherton Homes 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

Atherton Homes 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. To construct the home Atherton Homes established the property boundaries and corners.

During construction, some of the monuments that mark the lot corners may be affected or covered up by grading, excavation, installation of utility lines and other typical construction activities. 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.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

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 cleaners 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 references.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

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 application 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 floors joints to seal seams at those locations. Avoid getting large amounts of water on the floor from bath and shower.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm that resilient floor covering is in acceptable condition during your orientation. Atherton Homes limited 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. Atherton Homes is not responsible for discontinued selections.

Adhesion

Resilient floor covering should adhere. Atherton Homes will repair lifting or bubbling and nail pops that appear on the surface.

Ridges

Atherton Homes has sanded and filled the joints of the 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 one end tight to the floor. If the opposite end of the straight edge is 1/8 inch or more from the floor, Atherton Homes will repair this condition.

Seams

Seams will occur and are sealed at the time of installation. Atherton Homes will correct gaps in excess of 1/16 inch where resilient flooring pieces meet or 1/8 inch where resilient flooring meets another material. Atherton Homes will correct curling at seams 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.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

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 to be in line 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
 - 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.
- 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 Atherton Homes during the first available business hours.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Atherton Homes 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.

See also the roof manufacturer's limited warranty.

Inclement Weather

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

Rough Carpentry

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Some floor and stair squeaks are unavoidable. Although Atherton Homes does not warranty against floor squeaks, a reasonable effort will be made to correct them.

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 Atherton Homes will take no action for this occurrence.

Floor Level

Floors will be level to within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch within any 32-inch distance as measured perpendicular to any ridge or indentation. Atherton Homes will correct floor slope that exceeds $\frac{1}{240}$ of the room width or length (i.e. 10'0" wide room shall not be out of level by more than $\frac{1}{2}$ ").

Plumb Walls

Atherton Homes will correct walls that are out of plumb more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in an 8-foot distance or walls that are bowed more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in any 32-inch measurement.

Shower Doors or Tub Enclosures

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Shower doors and tub enclosures 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 build up 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 corner 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.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your orientation we will confirm the good condition of all shower doors and tub enclosures. Atherton Homes warrants that shower doors and tub enclosures will function according to manufacturer specification.

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.

Wood and Wood Products

Wood or wood-product siding will require routine refinishing. The timing will vary with climatic conditions. Maintain caulking to minimize moisture entry into the siding. Note that some paint colors will require more maintenance than others and some wood siding, such as cedar, is subject to more cracking and will require more maintenance attention.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

Cement Based Products

Cement based siding will require repainting and caulking just as wood products do.

See also Paint and Wood Trim.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Atherton Homes 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.

Atherton Homes will caulk and apply touch-up paint to cracks that exceed 1/8 inch. We provide this repair one time only near the first year. Paint or stain touch-up will not match.

We will correct any separation at joints or where siding meets another material if the separation allows water to enter the home. Atherton Homes will correct delaminating siding.

Smoke Detectors

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.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Although Atherton Homes does not warrant against stair vibration and squeaks, a reasonable effort will be made to correct them.

Stucco

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Stucco is a brittle cement product that is subject to expansion and contraction. Minor hairline cracks will develop in the outer layer of stucco. This is normal and does not reduce the function of the stucco in any way.

Drainage

To ensure proper drainage, keep dirt and concrete flatwork a minimum of 6 inches below the stucco screed (mesh underneath final coat of stucco). Do not pour concrete or masonry over the stucco screed or right up to the foundation.

Efflorescence

The white, powdery substance that sometimes accumulates on stucco 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.

Sprinklers

Since stucco is not a water barrier, avoid spraying water from irrigation or watering system on stucco surfaces to avoid possible leaks. Check the spraying or accumulating on stucco surfaces.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

One time during the warranty period, Atherton Homes will repair stucco cracks that exceeds 1/8" in width. The repair will not exactly match the surrounding area. (See Stucco Disclosure).

Termites

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Regular Inspection

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.
- Maintain a safe zone of at least two feet in width around the perimeter of your home. Avoid planting grass or shrubs, installing any sprinkler device, or digging of any kind in this area. If you disturb this area, have it re-treated to restore protection.
- 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.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Atherton Homes Warranty excludes treatment for any insect (such as ants) or animal (such as mice) infestations. This is considered a homeowner maintenance item.

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 gas, 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. Driven rain or snow sometimes enters the attic through these vents. Do not cover them to prevent this. Instead, cover the insulation on the front of the vent. When you do this, precipitation that blows in safely evaporates and ventilation can still occur.

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.
- Ditto the bath fans when bathrooms are in use.
- Air your house by opening windows for a time when weather permits.
- Keep interior doors open when possible.

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

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Atherton Homes Warranty guidelines for active components (for example, exhaust fans) are discussed under the appropriate headings (such as electrical system, heating system, and so on).

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.

Drain Tank

Review and follow manufacturer's timetable and instructions for draining several gallons of water from the bottom of the water heater. This reduces the build-up of chemical deposits from the water, prolonging the life of the tank and saving energy dollars.

Pilot

Never light a gas pilot when the water heater tank is empty. Always turn off the gas before shutting off the cold water supply to the tank.

To light the water heater pilot, first remove the cover panel on the tank to expose the pilot. Then rotate the on-off pilot knob to the pilot position. When the knob is in this position, the red button can be depressed.

While depressing the red button, hold a match at the pilot. Once the pilot lights continue to hold the red button down for 30 to 90 seconds. When you release the red button, the pilot should stay lit. If it does not, wait several minutes to allow the gas to dissipate from the tank and repeat the entire process. If it stays lit, rotate the on-off pilot knob to the on position.

Reinstall the cover panel and then adjust the temperature setting with the regulating knob on the front of the tank.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

Water heaters sometimes collect small quantities of dirty water and scale in the main gas lines, which may put out the pilot light.

While away from home for an extended period of time, set the temperature to its lowest point and leave the pilot lit.

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

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Refer to the manufacturer’s limited warranty for information regarding coverage of the water heater.

See also Plumbing.

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.

Acrylic Block

Clean during moderate temperatures with only a mild soap and warm water using a sponge or soft cloth and dry with a towel. Avoid abrasive cleaners, commercial glass cleaner, razors, brushes, or scrubbing devices of any kind. Minor scratches can often be minimized by rubbing a mild automotive polish on it.

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.

Screen Storage and Maintenance

Many homeowners remove and store screens for the winter to allow more light into the home. To make re-installation more convenient, label each screen as you remove it. Use caution: screens perforate easily and the frames bend if they are not handled with care. Prior to re-installing the screen, clean them with a hose and gentle spray of water.

Sills

Window sills in your home are made of wood, wood product, man-made marble, or marble. The most common maintenance activity is dusting. Twice a year, check caulking and touch-up as needed. Wax is not necessary but can be used to make sills gleam. Protect wood and wood product sills from moisture. If you arrange plants on a sill, include a plastic tray under the pot.

Sliding Glass Doors

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

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

Keep sliding door tracks clean for smooth operation and to prevent damage to the doorframe. 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.

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.

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.

Atherton Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm that all windows, screens, and sliding glass doors are in acceptable condition during the orientation. Atherton Homes 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, Atherton Homes will provide adjustments.

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; Atherton Homes will replace the window if this occurs during the warranty period.
See also Window Manufacturer's Limited Warranty.

Infiltration

Some air and dust infiltrate around windows, especially before the installation of landscaping in the general area. Atherton Homes Warranty excludes this occurrence.

Scratches

Atherton Homes 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. Atherton Homes will replace windows that have scratches readily visible from a distance of 4 feet. Atherton Homes does not replace windows that have scratches visible only under certain lighting conditions.

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 or the floor joints below. Again, you can correct this condition by removing the old nails and re-nailing. 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.

Atherton Homes Limited 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. Atherton Homes will correct readily noticeable construction damage such as chips and gouges listed during the orientation.

Atherton Homes Homeowner Manual

Exterior

Atherton Homes will caulk and apply touch-up paint to cracks in exterior trim components that exceed 3/16 inch. We provide this repair one time only near the end of the first year. Paint or stain touch-up will not match. We will correct any separation at joints that allow water to enter the home.

Raised Grain

Because of the effects of weather on natural wood, you should expect raised grain to develop. This is normal and not a defect in the wood or paint. Warranty coverage excludes this condition.