



Home Warranty

a Wilson M. Beck Company

Homeowner Maintenance Manual

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MAINTENANCE DISCLAIMER

A little care in the beginning will ensure more satisfactory service and greater joy in home ownership. A general knowledge on the rules of maintenance and a better understanding of the many different materials that go into the construction of the home will help you more fully understand why shrinkage, expansion and contraction of some elements in the home are normal.

The information contained in this maintenance manual will help you better understand the construction of your new home, and ways in which it might be appropriately maintained. The builder or the warranty provider assumes no liability or responsibility in connection with the use or misuse of any portion or section of this manual, or any suggestions, information or advice.

Although many items discussed in this manual, may be used for older homes, it is only intended for new homeowners who have purchased home warranty coverage through Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Company of Canada, represented by their agent WBI Home Warranty Ltd..

Physical conditions may vary from home to home, and from new home community to new home community. For that reason, the information in this manual may not be usable, appropriate or accurate in all circumstances. Therefore it is not intended as the only source of information or guidance in the maintenance, repair, construction or alteration of your home and its fixtures, appliances, improvements and components.

Before conducting maintenance and repair of any portion of your home, the property or its fixtures and improvements, it is essential that you consult and follow manufacturer's guidelines and instructions and seek out and follow the advice of certified and experienced experts.

Following the suggestions in this maintenance manual may help to minimize wear and tear, damage, and or distress to your home. The builder or the warranty provider cannot guarantee that the use of this manual and suggestions, advice and information provided will prevent such wear and tear, damage and distress.

THE MAINTENANCE OF YOUR HOME

Your new home will require regular preventative maintenance by you or trained professionals, to preserve its beauty, value and Home Warranty requirements. Preventative maintenance on your home should begin when you move in. Read the following sections of this manual to become familiar with the procedures for maintenance.

It is possible that all the features and items discussed in this manual are not present in your home. Also, your home could have features and items that are not covered in this manual.

Natural building materials such as wood and concrete are subjected to constant expansion and contraction from day to day. This can result in minor warping of materials and hairline cracking of drywall, stucco, concrete, mortar, and tile grout. These effects are particularly obvious in the first year after a home has been built. You can minimize these effects by maintaining a constant temperature in your home. This allows the wood to dry at an even rate and may eliminate larger settlement cracks. Minor cracks and displacement of wood are a normal part of the aging process of your home and do not affect its structural integrity.

Maintain even and consistent watering. Reduce your watering schedule during rainy periods. Do not permit standing water to accumulate on your lot. Maintain the established drainage around your home. Make sure that your rain gutters are clear of debris, such as lawn trimmings, leaves and trash.

Before you do maintenance such as re-painting and replacing exterior items, be sure to consult with your Strata Association (if applicable) to obtain the required approvals and to ensure that the work meets the regulations and guidelines

Throughout this Maintenance Guide the term 'home' is used. While single-family homes may immediately come to mind, 'home' is also intended to mean multiplexes, townhouses and units in multi-family buildings.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

ROOF LEAKS

If at any time a roof is leaking, be sure to check for the following

1. Missing roof shingles
2. Ice damage
3. Debris on the roof
4. Plugged gutters or downspouts

Until the leak is properly repaired, you as the homeowner have an obligation to mitigate (protect) your home from further damage. Place a bucket under the leak, and contact your builder if this appears to be related to the construction of the new home. Contact your builder (if warranty related). Also, contact your property insurance company, as they have the expertise and resources to arrange for a restoration company to attend and protect your home from further damages. They are also, a first response insurer. Your warranty provider allows the builder to resolve the issues, which could be a longer timeframe than your insurance company. If the Building Envelope component of your warranty has expired (5 years) then you should contact a trained and qualified professional, along with your insurance company.

GAS

If at any time you smell gas in your home, you should leave your home and contact the gas supplier immediately. They are best to inspect and advise of any issues.

HEATING

If your furnace does not operate properly, you should check to ensure the breaker has not tripped, and refer to the furnace manual for pilot light lighting instructions. You should also check the thermostat settings, to ensure it has not been turned down. Contact your builder (if warranty related). If the Heating component of your warranty has expired (2 years) then you should contact a trained and qualified professional to rectify the issue.

PLUMBING

Burst Water Line

A water line can burst due to a number of different reasons. What is important here is to stop the water from flowing into your home in order to prevent extensive damages to home and property. If a burst water line happens between a fixture and a shut off valve, then shut off the water at the valve immediately. If no shut off valve exists, then shut the water off at the main water shut off, this is usually located where the water line enters your home(crawlspace or basement). It is also recommended to shut off your hot water tank to prevent overheating.

Frozen Water Line

When garden hoses are left attached to the hose bib in the winter, and they have not been properly drained, freezing of the water line can occur. Disconnect all exterior hoses from hose bibs before the cold weather begins. If there is a leak in the pipe, then follow the steps above in “Burst Water Line” contact your builder (if warranty related), along with your property insurance company. If the plumbing component of your warranty has expired (2 years) then your insurance company should be able to assist you.

Plugged Toilet/Sink or Sewer Line

This usually happens when debris has been flushed down a toilet. Do not continue using the toilet or sink once a blockage has occurred. First, you should use your plunger to try to alleviate the problem. The services of a qualified plumber may be required if you were unsuccessful with the plunger. For excessive damages, contact your insurance company and your builder (if within 2 years of occupancy)

Minor Plumbing Leak in the Line or Hot Water Tank

Put a container under the leak and contact your builder. If the leak occurs at the hot water tank, shut off the water supply as well as the gas valve or electrical breaker. Contact your builder (if warranty related) along with your property insurance company. If the plumbing component of your warranty has expired (2 years) then your insurance company should be able to assist you.

ELECTRICAL

Circuit Overload (Breaker Tripping)

If this happens, ensure that the breaker is not overloaded with too many appliances, or that the appliance itself is not faulty. Should short-circuit overload occur, un-plug one or more of the appliances and reset the breaker. If tripping reoccurs, consult your builder (if a warranty related item) or a qualified trained professional.

Ground fault circuit interrupters (G.F.C.I.s) protect your exterior, kitchens, bathroom plugs. This device will either be located in the actual plug itself or be a dedicated breaker in your electrical panel. If a particular plug is not working, you should check the other plugs to find which GFCI plug is controlling it.

GFCI's are sensitive and designed to trip when grounding occurs due to damp conditions, or when extension cords are excessively long and/or in poor condition, or if appliances are faulty/old. Ensure that no unsafe situations exist and that appliances and extension cords are unplugged, then reset the G.F.C.I.

Plugs & Outlets

If a plug or outlet sparks excessively, immediately turn off the breaker and contact your builder (if warranty related). If the electrical component of your warranty has expired (2 years) then you should contact a trained and qualified professional. A small spark may occur when an appliance is unplugged. This sparking can be prevented by turning off the appliance or before plugging or unplugging.

No Power To New Home

Check other homes in your area to see if there has been a power failure in your neighborhood. If this is not the case, check your main breaker panel and reset it after checking for current overload. Contact your builder (if warranty related). If the electrical component of your warranty has expired (2 years) then you should contact a trained and qualified professional.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Be prepared for possible emergencies by keeping these items in a readily accessible place

1. A small screwdriver that can be inserted into the bathroom door lock to free small children who lock themselves in
2. Fire extinguisher – every home should have at least one. Your family should know of its location and operation
3. First aid kit – keep a small first aid kit in your medicine cabinet for treatment of cuts, burns or other minor injuries
4. Keep emergency phone numbers to avoid needless delay in an emergency. Keep important phone numbers affixed to a telephone or cabinet. Quick calls to the right numbers can save life and property. Know how to call your doctor or hospital, report a fire or reach the police. It is also a good idea to include the numbers of mechanical contractors for your home's plumbing, electrical, heating and air conditioning.

Fire Prevention

The following are a few ways to reduce the risk of fire

1. Regularly discard trash – do not let old clothing, old mattresses, curtains, furniture, paper and rags accumulate
2. Keep oily rags stored in closed metal containers
3. Be sure tools, machinery, motors and appliances are serviced and clean
4. Keep the area surrounding your home free of weeds, trash, dried brush and dead grass
5. Always replace worn electric cords
6. Keep machines in a safe place and out of reach of children
7. Provide a supply of ashtrays, even if you do not smoke
8. Be careful not to overload your electrical circuits
9. Provide one or more fire extinguishers, approved by your fire dept.

Temporarily Vacating Your Home

The following is a “to do” list before vacating your home for an extended period of time

1. Roof – Prevent overflow by cleaning downspouts and gutter of leaves, birds nest or rubbish
2. Refrigerator – Disconnect, defrost and leave the door ajar

3. Water – Shut off the main water valve to prevent flooding of your home while your away.
4. Electricity – unplug unneeded appliances and electronics in your home to prevent power surge damage from lightning.
5. Telephone – If you decide to have your phone service disconnected, notify the phone company
6. Keys – Friends and neighbors can be of assistance to inspect your home daily, to ensure everything is alright. They can also access home in case of emergency
7. Heat – Maintain heat in your home during the winter months, even if your home is vacant. This will prevent condensation, mold, and warping of building materials.

LOCATING A PRODUCT MANUAL

Most of us, at one time or another have misplaced user manuals to something we've bought. However, chances are you can find that manual on the Web. Here's a few different ways you can track down pretty much any user's manual:

- **Use Google.** Simply enter in the name of your product plus the model number and the word "instructions" or "manual" or "user's manual", i.e., "SAMSUNG user's manual."
- And if these methods don't work, you might want to try searching eBay for your missing manual

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

Regular Maintenance Is the Key

Inspecting your home on a regular basis and following good maintenance practices are the best way to protect your investment in your home. Whether you tackle several tasks at one time or just a few, it is important to get into the habit of doing them. It's best to establish a routine for yourself, and you will find the work is easy to accomplish and not very time-consuming. A regular schedule of seasonal maintenance can reduce and in some cases eliminate the need for costly repairs later on. By following the information noted here, you will learn about your home, and the requirements to protect your investment. If at any time you are not comfortable performing any of the tasks listed, you should consult a qualified trade's person to assist.

Seasonal Home Maintenance

Most home maintenance activities are seasonal. Fall is the time to get your home ready for the coming winter, which can be the most grueling season for your home. During the winter months it is important to follow routine maintenance procedures by checking your home carefully for any problems that may arise and taking corrective action as soon as possible. Spring is the time to assess winter damage, start repairs and prepare for warmer months ahead. Over the summer there are a number of indoor and outdoor

maintenance tasks to look after, such as repairing walkways and steps, painting and checking your chimney and roof.

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

1. Make sure exhaust and intake air vents, both indoor and outdoor are not blocked by dust, debris and snow.
2. Check and clean range hood filters on a regular basis.
3. Test ground fault circuit interrupter(s) on electrical outlets monthly by pushing the test button, which should then cause the reset button to pop up.
4. If there are young children in the house, make sure electrical outlets are equipped with safety plugs.
5. Regularly check the house for safety hazards, such as a loose handrail, lifting or buckling flooring, and inoperative smoke detectors and so on.

FALL

1. Have furnace or heating system serviced by a qualified service company every two years for a gas furnace, and every year for an oil furnace, or as recommended by the manufacturer
2. For central air conditioning, make sure the drain pan under the cooling coil, mounted under the furnace plenum is draining and clean
3. Lubricate circulating pump on hot water heating system
4. Bleed air from hot water radiators
5. Disconnect power from furnace and examine furnace fan belt, clean fan blades of any dirt build up
6. Check chimneys for obstructions before turning on furnace
7. Vacuum electric baseboard heaters to remove any dust
8. Remove the grilles on furnace and vacuum inside the ducts
9. Turn ON furnace pilot light, set thermostat to heat and test furnace
10. Check and clean or replace furnace air filters regularly. Ventilation systems, such as a heat recovery ventilator should be regularly as per manufactures guideline.
11. Check to see that the ductwork leading to and from the heat recovery ventilator is in good shape and joints are tightly sealed
12. If the heat recovery ventilator has been shut off for the summer, clean the filters and the core, and pour water down the condensate drain
13. Check to see that bathroom exhaust fans, and range hoods are operating properly
14. Check smoke, carbon monoxide and security alarms, and replace batteries
15. Clean portable humidifier (if one is used)
16. Check sump pump and line to ensure proper operation
17. Replace window screens with storm windows
18. Ensure windows and skylights close properly
19. Repair or replace weather-stripping as necessary
20. Ensure all doors to the outside shut properly
21. Cover outside air conditioning unit and shut off power

22. Ensure that ground around your home slopes away from home to ensure that water does not drain into your basement
23. Clean leaves from eavestroughs and roof, and test downspouts
24. Disconnect Drain and store outdoor hoses. Close interior valve to hose bib and drain hose bib. Frost free hose bibs do not require drainage, but the hose must still be disconnected.
25. Have well water tested for quality
26. If you have a septic tank, measure the sludge and scum to determine if the tank needs to be emptied before the spring

WINTER

1. Check and clean or replace furnace air filters regularly during the heating season. Ventilation system, such as heat recovery ventilator filters should be checked regularly.
2. After consulting your hot water tank owners' manual, carefully test the temperature and pressure relief valve to ensure it is not stuck. This test may release hot water that can cause burns
3. Clean humidifier two or three times per season
4. Vacuum bathroom grille fan
5. Vacuum fire and smoke detectors as dust or spider webs can prevent them from functioning
6. Vacuum radiator grilles on back of refrigerators and freezers
7. Check pressure gauges on all fire extinguishers
8. Check fire escape routes
9. Check the basement floor drain to ensure trap contains water
10. Monitor your home for excessive moisture levels – for example condensation gathering on the inside of your windows is a sign of high humidity levels in your home. Reduce moisture levels.
11. Check all faucets for signs of dripping and change washers as needed. Faucets requiring continual washers may need to be fixed
12. If you have a plumbing fixture that is not frequently used, such as a laundry tub or a spare bathroom sink, tub or shower, run some water briefly to keep some water in the trap
13. Clean drains in dishwasher, sinks, bathtubs and shower stalls
14. Test plumbing shut off valves to prevent from seizing
15. Examine windows and doors for ice accumulation or cold air leaks
16. Examine attic for frost accumulation
17. Check roof for ice dams or icicles
18. Keep snow clear of gas meters and all exhaust and intake vents and basement doors and windows.
19. Monitor outdoor vents, gas meters and chimneys for ice and snow buildup. Consult with an appropriate contractor or your gas utility for information on how to safely deal with any ice problems you may have
20. Check electrical cords, plugs and outlets for all indoor and outdoor seasonal lights to ensure fire safety; if worn, or if plugs or cords feel warm to the touch, replace immediately

SPRING

1. After consulting your hot water tank owners' manual, carefully test the temperature and pressure relief valve to ensure it is not stuck. This test may release hot water that can cause burns
2. Check, clean and replace furnace air filters regularly during the heating season. The filters of ventilation systems, such as heat recovery ventilators, should be checked regularly.
3. Have fireplace, wood stove, and chimney cleaned and serviced as required
4. Shut down drain and clean furnace humidifier, and close the furnace humidifier damper on units with central air conditioning
5. Switch on power to air conditioning and check system. Have it serviced every two to three years
6. Clean or replace air-conditioning filter, if applicable
7. Check dehumidifier and drain – clean if necessary
8. Turn OFF gas furnace and fireplace pilot lights, where possible
9. Check smoke, carbon monoxide and security alarms and replace batteries
10. Clean windows, screens and hardware, and replace storm windows with screens. Check screens first and repair or replace if needed
11. Open valve to outside hose connection after all danger of frost has passed
12. Examine the foundation walls for cracks, leaks or signs of moisture, and repair as required
13. Ensure sump pump is operating properly before the spring thaw sets in. Ensure discharge pipe is connected and allows water to drain away from the foundation
14. Re-level any exterior steps or decks that moved as a result of the frost or settling
15. Check for and seal off any holes in exterior cladding that could be an entry point for small pests such as bats or squirrels
16. Check eavestroughs and downspouts for loose joints and secure. Clear any obstructions and ensure water flows away from your home
17. Clear all drainage ditches and culverts of debris

SUMMER

1. Monitor basement humidity and avoid relative humidity levels above 60 percent. Use a dehumidifier to maintain at 50-55%
2. Clean or replace air conditioning filter and clean or replace ventilation system filters if necessary
3. Check basement pipes for condensation or dripping. If necessary, take corrective action by reducing the humidity and/or insulate cold water pipes
4. Check the basement floor drain to ensure the trap contains water – refill with water if necessary
5. If you have a plumbing fixture that is not frequently used such as a laundry tub or a spare bathroom sink, tub or shower, run some water briefly to keep some water in the trap
6. Deep clean carpet and rugs
7. Vacuum bathroom fan grilles

8. Disconnect the duct connected to your clothes dryer and vacuum lint from the duct, the areas surrounding your dryer and dryers vent hood outside
9. Check security of all guardrails and handrails
10. Check smooth functioning of all windows and lubricate as required
11. Sand and touch up paint on windows and doors
12. Lubricate door hinges and tighten screws as needed
13. Check for and replace damaged caulking and weather stripping
14. Lubricate garage door hardware, and ensure it is working as intended
15. Lubricate automatic garage door opener motor, chain and other moving parts, ensure that auto reverse mechanism is adjusted
16. Inspect electrical service lines that enter your home
17. Check exterior wood siding for damage and replace if needed
18. Remove any plants that contact and penetrate the siding or brick
19. From the ground check the general condition of the roof, noting the condition of the shingles for possible repair or replacement
20. Examine roof flashings for any signs of cracking or leakage
21. Check the chimney cap and caulking between cap and chimney
22. Repair driveway and walkways as needed
23. Repair any damaged steps

EXTERIOR



FOUNDATION

Proper care of your foundation is very important in preserving the integrity of your structure. This requires that an even and relatively constant level of moisture be maintained in the soil supporting the foundation. Defects in foundations occur when the supporting soil is too wet or too dry or when one area around the foundation is overly wet while other areas remain dry. Improper foundation maintenance can result in severe movement in just a few days. This is true regardless of the type or age of the foundation.

Non-uniform moisture can be caused by any of the following:

- 1.Improper drainage
- 2.Allowing the soil to become dry
- 3.Excess watering near the foundation
- 4.Plumbing leaks
- 5.An improper watering program
- 6.Neglect
- 7.Runoff water not properly diverted away from the foundation
- 8.Trees and large bushes growing too close to the foundation

FOUNDATION DRAINAGE SYSTEM

Maintain the grading and planting beds around the foundation to slope away from the structure. The soil around a house will tend to settle with time and additional topsoil will be needed. Use a clayey soil each time you replace the soil around the foundation. **DO NOT USE SAND.** Sand is porous. Rain water flows through the sand into soils supporting, and adjacent to the foundation, where it can cause problems.

For foundation, it is best to keep at least two to four inches of concrete showing below the brick or siding. Soil above the brick line will allow water, wood ants and termites to penetrate into the house, which can deteriorate wall and floor systems. Avoiding ponding or standing water in the area of the foundation. The yard should have drainage channels (often called swales) to route rainwater away from the structure. Gutters should be maintained and free of debris. All runoff water should be diverted well away (2-3 feet) from the foundation. Water from flowerbeds should be carefully diverted away from the foundation.

Watering

If the soil around the exterior of the home becomes excessively dry, it will shrink or crack, many times leaving a gap between the soil and the foundation. These cracks admit air which caused more evaporation and more cracking. When heavy rains come, the crack will allow excessive amounts of water to be introduced directly to load bearing soils beneath their foundation. When the soils become supersaturated, they lose their bearing capacity and rapid settlement can result. (In most instances of foundation failure, damage will occur slowly over a period of years).

The goal for proper foundation maintenance should be to maintain a consistent high level of moisture in the soil to eliminate the swelling and contracting cycles that our soils continually go through. This can be somewhat accomplished through a proper watering program. Whether you have an underground sprinkler system, an above ground manual sprinkler system, or a black porous hose, you should monitor the system daily to ascertain the moisture content of the soil. In periods of hot, dry weather conditions, daily watering will probably be necessary; in cooler weather once or twice a week. The key is not to allow cracking to occur within four or five feet of your foundation.

Trees, Shrubs & Foliage

Large trees and shrubs that have been planted too close to the foundation have the potential of causing significant foundation damage, because their roots grow toward moist soil (underneath your house) and will extend out as far as the tree will grow.

The solution is to plan ahead.

- 1) Plant trees and bushes that will become large at an adequate distance from the house.
- 2) For houses that have existing large trees or bushes near a home, a root barrier can be installed that will sever existing roots and prevent new ones from growing under the foundation.
- 3) Diligent attention to moisture content, water movement and placement of foliage around your house will help delay, or even prevent future foundation problems to your home.

GRADE AROUND BUILDINGS

For proper water drainage, your yard must slope away from your foundation, but since a gradual slope is difficult to determine just by looking at it, you can use a transit to check the grade around your home's foundation. A transit is a precision measuring lens that works on much the same principal as a telescope and it rests upon a sturdy tripod, designed, for use in conjunction with a leveling stick. You may rent a transit from a construction rental store, or you may purchase one from a hardware store. You can as well, have a trained professional perform this task.

Properly grade the soil by filling in low spots and leveling off high spots adjacent to the foundation so that the surface of the soil slopes gradually away from the building. A recommended slope is 1 inch per foot for a distance of 3 to 4 feet from the foundation. Control roof water runoff and help prevent soil erosion by using a gutter and downspout system. This is especially important if a building has no eaves which overhang the walls or if the eaves are less than 1 foot wide.

Water standing or running alongside a foundation after rains may cause differential settlement of a foundation. If soil grading is such that water runs alongside a foundation during rains, the water will run under the edge of the foundation and carry away soil supporting the foundation. The effect is much more pronounced if the soil was very dry

prior to the beginning of the rain. In addition, if water is allowed to stand alongside a foundation, it will flow below the foundation and dissolve the clay supporting the foundation, carrying it into the cracks that develop in the yard outside the foundation area during extended dry periods. This problem is more severe if the soil in the general area has been very dry, but is less severe if the soil has been maintained moist.

BUILDING ENVELOPE

A building envelope is the separation between the interior and exterior environments of a building. It is the outer shell or elements including the foundation, walls including windows and doors, and roof.

Maintenance: Crucial Key to Proper Performance

Proactive maintenance should encompass the following components: annual maintenance budget, regular building condition assessments, annual proactive maintenance, and seasonal visual changes. Integrating maintenance into funding into the yearly budget is essential for those committed to a property over the long term, and a regular review of the buildings condition is a way to assess the remaining life expectancies of the materials. This is the only way for tasks such as sealant and weather-stripping replacement, window glazing, painting, coatings, and more to be integrated into the household or operating budget.

SIDING & TRIM WORK

Wood must be painted or stained; vinyl requires no paint. However, it's not exactly true to say that vinyl is maintenance-free. To maintain its fresh appearance, vinyl siding should be washed once a year. Any wooden window sashes and trim will still require routine painting, and ladders leaning against the house can scuff or crack the vinyl siding. To avoid hidden decay, you will want to frequently recaulk joints between the siding and adjacent trim. Roof leaks, faulty gutters, or other sources of moisture should be repaired without delay.

Maintaining Wood House Siding – Wood Rot

Your wood siding is there to protect your home from the elements, but what can you do to protect your siding? For one thing, make sure you treat the wood with oil or stain, and do so regularly. Some types of wood (cedar, redwood, cypress) withstand weathering better than others and will last longer, which is why they are the more popular choices for wood siding, but they still need some help. Repainting or restaining every couple of years will help minimize the damage from Mother Nature's seasonal assaults.

The generally recommended maintenance schedule for wood siding is to repaint at least every five years, and treat or stain every three years. Some types of wood may require a little extra TLC, especially if you live in a wet climate.

Wood that is exposed to moisture for too long a period (that could be an exceptionally long rain storm or an extended rainy season) can absorb the water and expand, possibly bowing outward. If this happens, or if the wood rots, or if woodpeckers or other

pests (especially termites) create holes or weaken the wood, the shingles or boards will have to be replaced.

Cleaning Wood Siding

There are a few different ways to clean your wood siding. You can hire a professional to steam clean or pressure wash your siding or you can rent your own power washer. If you rent your own machine, you do need to be careful. Too much pressure can ruin the wood and it will strip the paint, requiring you to repaint afterward.

If the thought of repainting after cleaning doesn't fill you with excitement, you might want to opt for a soft-bristled brush and a homemade solution of water mixed with mild dish or laundry detergent. If there's mildew, simply mix 3 parts water to 1 part vinegar. You'd be amazed by the powers of white vinegar! Some paint stores sell a mildewcide but vinegar is cheaper and more eco-friendly. As with any cleaner, test a small section for color fading first. Remember to wash from the bottom of the siding to the top, but rinse from the top down. This prevents the dirty water from streaking or staining the newly cleaned sections.

Some simple steps to follow when washing your wood siding:

1. Make sure your windows are closed! You don't want to spray water into your living room
2. Angle the spray away from doors and windows
3. Cut the power to any outside lights that may get wet
4. If you have shrubbery or flowers below, and you're using bleach or other cleaners, protect them with plastic
5. Remove anything that might get in the way of cleaning the siding, or get in your way (safety first!)
6. Work from the bottom up when washing, and the top down when rinsing
7. Don't take a break after washing or before rinsing! You don't want your cleaning solution to dry while on the siding

WINDOWS

Most windows operate reliably for years but, with time, certain types of windows can become balky in the way they operate. Wood frames rot from prolonged exposure to dampness and are delectable to termites. Simple exposure to sun creates cracks over time. Even blowing dust wears away finishes.

Double-hung windows—the type that have a bottom section you can raise and a top section you can lower—are the biggest offenders. When they go bad, they're almost impossible to open. Repainting wooden frames every three to five years, depending on your prevailing weather conditions, will preserve them—just don't let paint lap over any moving parts. Also, yearly maintenance, such as filling cracks with putty and caulking the edges, will go a long way toward protecting them.

To restore spots that are not badly damaged, take a screwdriver and clean out any rotted wood. Fill cracks or holes with wood or epoxy putty, building up layers if need be. Soak with wood preservative, allow to dry, and then sand smooth, prime, and paint.

Even vinyl and aluminum windows need a little basic care. You can scrub both types with a natural bristle brush and detergent solution. If you have anodized aluminum frames, you can restore their luster by polishing them with fine steel wool and then coating them with paste wax. Remember: contact a window repair or replacement contractor if the job is too much to handle yourself.

Every house uses glass in some form or the other. Your house too might have doors, windows, partitions, balustrades, shower screens or pool fences made of glass or containing glass to a great extent. The advantage of using glass is that it not only looks good but also requires very little maintenance.

Although glass does not require attention on a daily basis, you should ensure that it is cleaned on a regular basis. Generally speaking, proper inspection and maintenance should cover all components that make up windows, including: glass/glazing, frame material and finishes, operating hardware such as handles, cranks, hinges, latches and locks, weather-stripping, screens and sealant joints, and gaskets, and surrounding interior finishes for any signs of water leakage or damage.

Inspection and maintenance of windows should be coordinated by your maintenance manager or an experienced inspector or contractor because of the technical nature of what needs to be inspected and maintained, and also to ensure that important safety concerns are addressed.

DOORS

Door and Storm Door Maintenance

Periodic, and sometimes seasonal, adjustment of doors is normal. It is also important to keep storm doors clear of ice and snow. They can be damaged if forced. Check door weather-stripping and thresholds. Doors should fit snugly and you should not be able to see light or feel drafts around the edges. Door thresholds can be adjusted with a screwdriver. Turn the adjustment screws slightly, one at a time, to achieve proper fit. If you are uncertain how, or unable to adjust the door threshold, contact your builder.

Garage Doors

Wash your door regularly. Thoroughly rinse the surface with a garden hose. Avoid abrasive cleaners and strong detergents. Never use an electric pressure washer. Waxing your garage door once a year with car wax will protect its luster and revive the shine it may have lost due to acid rain and UV rays. For best results, never apply wax in direct sunlight. If the door is facing south or south-west, avoid dark colors since they absorb more heat. Whether the garage door is made of steel, aluminum, or wood, southern exposure to the sun tends to damage the paint much faster. This is especially true for applied paint.

Tracks, Hinges, Rollers and Springs

Lubricate rollers and hinges with a little motor oil (e.g.: 10W30). Do not use any petroleum-based lubricant because, aside from lubricating, it has the property of degreasing. Use motor oil for the tracks, especially in their curved sections. Springs basically require the same treatment. Apply motor oil to them and wipe off excess oil with a cloth. This simple trick will help prolong their useful life.

Electric Garage Door Opener

Maintenance of your electric operator should be done once a month. Work the door manually. It must be well balanced. If the door is not balanced, contact a qualified garage door installer.

Check if your garage door opens and closes completely. If necessary, adjust limits and/or force. Most garage doors openers come with two knobs for these adjustments. Consult your owner's manual.

Check the safety reversing sensor. The door must reverse on contact if an object or a person is under it. Also, check if your photo sensors are correctly plugged in and aligned. The door should reverse if any object passes through the beam.

Do not permit children to play with the opener. Keep the remote control out of children's reach.

Garage door rollers, hinges, door openers, and their mechanisms *may* require lubrication

CAULKING

Most building materials are subject to varying degrees of shrinkage and settlement, as well as normal expansion and contraction, caused by changes in climate and humidity.

Frequent inspection and maintenance of the caulking on the exterior of your home and in the tubs, sinks and showers inside your home will protect the finishes surrounding these typically wet areas.

The following is a suggested checklist of some of the areas of your home that require caulking and subsequent maintenance:

Caulking Maintenance Checklist:

Interior: bathtubs vanities tile
 showers trim
 sinks drywall
 countertops

Exterior: windows siding/brick
 doors & sidelights flashings/copper roofs
 wood trim porches/columns

__wood bay & box windows __vents, pipes, electrical fixture boxes
__garage doors.

Time and weather will dry and shrink caulking so that it no longer provides a good seal. Normal expansion, contraction and settlement will cause caulking to separate. As part of your routine maintenance, check the caulking in the above areas periodically and make timely repairs as needed. Caulking compounds and dispenser guns are available at local hardware stores. Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully to be certain that you select an appropriate caulk for the intended purpose. As a homeowner, you should choose caulking wisely and apply it properly and consistently. Wise use of caulk will protect your home from damaging elements and maintain its beauty for years to come.

PAINTS, COATINGS & EXTERIOR CLADDING

Your home's exterior paint is not just something to make it look good. It is also an instrument that helps prevent exterior and interior damage. Nothing will deteriorate your home worse or faster than moisture, and a well-painted exterior will help to keep the moisture out of your home. You need to check the exterior thoroughly, looking for cracked, bubbled, peeled and/or blistered paint. Use a quality exterior paint .

Inspect any and all exterior surfaces. Touch up any areas that might need fresh paint before they become any worse. Bricks and concrete blocks should be inspected for cracked mortar or loose joints.

Lawn sprinkler heads should not spray the walls of your house.

We outline the maintenance tasks common to all types of cladding.

While these tasks are common to all cladding, many tasks relate to specific types of cladding. If you use the wrong finishes or maintenance methods, the finish or cladding may not last as long as it should.

Keep a file of the materials you use when building or maintaining your home. This will help you to make good decisions about maintenance. It will also help future owners of the house. It's particularly important where materials have guarantees of 10 or 15 years or more. Information on the materials used should also be on the building consent permit issued when the house was built.

Cracked/Flaking Paint

This is the first sign that the paint is failing. It can also be a sign of rot or moisture. It could be due to incorrect preparation when the paint was first applied. Paint manufacturers have very detailed information on their products to help you choose, prepare and apply the correct product.

Sand or scrape off existing paint, and prime bare cladding before re-painting. For concrete, repaint with a suitable paint (such as acrylic or cementitious). If in doubt, check with the manufacturer of your particular cladding.

If moisture is the problem, address the cause of the moisture (see combating dampness). Replace any rotten timbers or cladding.

Dirt/Salt Buildup on Cladding

This can shorten the life of the cladding material.

Wash down the walls, windows and frames regularly. This is particularly important for houses near the sea or in geothermal areas (and check for cracks or damage to the cladding at the same time).

Concentrate on areas that do not get rain washed, such as under eaves and at the top of garage door. Use a soft brush and low pressure hose. Do not use a high pressure water blaster. Some claddings can cope with low pressure water blasting (under 300 psi). Check with the manufacturer.

For sea spray, moss and lichen, you might have to use specific cleaning products – check with the manufacturer of your cladding and your local hardware store about the suitability of the product for your cladding.

Some cladding systems specify how frequently they need to be washed to validate the warranty.

Paint Chalking

This is due to natural weathering.

All paint chalks. Minor chalking will not affect performance but chalking eventually causes the coating to thin. You will need to remove the chalking to prepare the surface for repainting.

The base of timber and metal cladding can rot or be damaged if it comes into contact with the ground or with paving.

If left, moisture will get into the cladding and framing, leading to more serious damage. Address the cause of the damp. Remove soil and plants from around the base of the walls. You may need to install intercept drains to capture surface run-off. Ensure that paths, driveways or landscaping do not direct water towards or under the house.

Dry out and repaint according to the type of cladding.

Mould, Lichen and Moss Growth

This can be due to damp environmental conditions, a leak, overflowing gutters or trapped water.

Address the cause of the dampness if you can. Identify and repair leaks and clear the gutters out.

Clean the mould with a 1:4 bleach solution and soft brush. Hose off residue with plenty of water and avoid using ladders around wet areas as much as possible. Bleach can damage plants, so you may want to protect surrounding vegetation with plastic sheeting.

Moss and black slime can build up, especially over winter. Water blast or scrub with a solution of household bleach and water. See the bottle for dilution instructions. Let the solution dry, then hose off.

Holes in the Cladding

Holes will let water in, as well as mice, rats, birds or bees. Seal the holes but be careful not to seal holes that are required for ventilation or cladding drainage.

Corroded Nails/Fixings

This can be due to moisture and salt corroding the fixings. It can also be caused by copper from treated timber or acidic cedar.

For rusted nails in painted timber, remove the corrosion by sanding before punching the nails in, filling in the hole with putty, and repainting.

For other claddings, sand off the corrosion and prime with zinc rich primer, metal primer and two finish coats.

Stainless steel is more expensive but will last longer in marine environments. Use stainless steel wherever the fixing is used with treated but unpainted timber and there is moisture present.

Corroded Flashing

Replace badly corroded items. For other galvanized items, sand and prime with a zinc rich primer. Apply a galvanized iron primer and two topcoats.

Address the cause of the corrosion (if possible). Regularly wash down the walls.

Water Dripping from Overflows

This can damage the building, direct dripping and draining water away from building. Remove any surface mould and check that the water hasn't got into the cladding.

Stained Wall Surface

This could be due to a number of different causes and the treatment will vary accordingly.

Sealant Degrading at Joints

This is due to the effects of sunlight. You can remove the existing sealant and replace with exterior grade paintable sealant. However, this is a complex task as you need to take care not to damage the back of flashings or building wraps. These all need to be intact to maintain the integrity of the cladding. Follow manufacturer's instructions for this.

GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS

Regardless of how well you maintain your home's rain gutters and downspouts, problems will always arise at times. The good news is that most all gutter issues can be easily fixed and don't require professional skills. Here is a look at the 5 most common gutter and downspout problems along with tips to fix them. Please consult a trained professional in this area if you are not comfortable or are unfamiliar with these tasks

Leaky Rain Gutters

This is perhaps the most common guttering problem that homeowners face each year. What happens is that rain water sits in the gutter channel and seeps through a joint between two sections.

If you do find the cause to be from sagging guttering or standing water you can adjust your gutter and add a couple of extra gutter hangers to fix the problem. To repair the leak you will need to dry out the two sections and clean the area with a brush or towel. Next, get a good tube of silicone caulk and caulk the seams on both the inside and outside of the gutter.

If the cause of the leaking is from a hole in your gutter, then you can use a simple patch to repair it. First, apply some roofing cement to the area where the hole is located. Next, take a sheet metal patch and place over the hole. Then, put roofing cement over the top of the patch.

Sagging Gutters

Over the course of time it is easy for some gutters to begin to sag. Check for sagging by inspecting for standing rain water or water marks inside the channel.

If you notice a problem you will need to take a 3-foot level and check your slope angle. Generally, you should have a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch slope for every 10 feet of guttering.

If you need to make adjustments you can simply add or adjust your gutter hangers.

Loose Downspouts

Another common maintenance issue is with downspouts that break loose or get disconnected from the gutter itself.

This is an easy fix that takes very little time. You need a drill and a couple of sheet metal screws. Push the downspout back together and drill a couple of small holes in the two pieces. Next, screw the sheet metal screws through the pieces.

One important point to remember though: do not use long screws or they will cause debris inside the downspout to clog it up over time.

Overflowing Rain Gutters

This problem is caused by a clogged gutter or downspout in most cases. To fix the problem, you simply need to clean out the area where the clogging is occurring.

In some cases this could be caused by having too small of gutters to handle the rain water. In this case you would need to install rain gutters that are larger.

Pooling Water near Downspouts

To prevent water from pooling around your home and downspout, be sure to make it runs off well into your yard or driveway. You can use a downspout extension or other flexible tubing to get the job accomplished.

These simple tips should help fix any problems that arise with your rain gutters over the years.

DECKS AND BALCONIES

Balcony and Deck Maintenance Check List

Use this check list as a quick reference for areas of your deck or balcony that may require regular inspection and maintenance. If you are in doubt as to the safety of your balcony and/or deck, you should seek the services of a qualified practitioner.

Stairs, handrails and balustrades

- Check for signs of rot, corrosion, looseness or instability.
- Stairs, handrails and balustrades should be securely fastened at all points. Particular attention should be paid to balustrades that are fixed to the balcony's top surface and not fixed directly to the main supporting structure.
- Look for signs of sagging or loss of tightness

Timber balconies and decks

- Check the timber for signs of decay, rot or insect attack, for example; Is the timber spongy when probed with a sharp object?
- Look for any signs of bending, warping, sagging and splitting.
- Check to see if the timber needs a reapplication of stains, oils or paints.
- Check all connections for signs of deterioration such as at beam to post connections and for any loose or rusting fixings.
- Check for loose decking boards or flooring.

Concrete balconies

- Look for signs of deflection (leaning).
- The presence of spalling, where chunks of concrete are flaking off or cracking.
- Examine the underside of the balcony for rust stains or exposed steel reinforcing.

ROOFS

A roof's exposure to the elements is greater than any other part of the building. A roof's need to perform optimally does not end with its construction. Scheduled annual inspections coupled with preventative roof maintenance is required in order to ensure that a roof system is providing adequate protection from the elements while protecting ones assets.

The best time to check your roof is when the weather is at its calmest. For most places throughout Canada, the beginning of the fall and the beginning of the spring are the calmest times when there isn't heavy ice or snow or heavy rainfall. It is strongly advised that a qualified trained person in the roofing business perform any task involving going up on top of your roof.

Getting into the habit of roof maintenance is simple. Mark it on your calendar every year so you won't forget!

ICE DAMNING

Ice damming happens when snow on your roof begins to melt and freezes before it has a chance to run off. Warm attic air heats the roof's surface and causes the snow to melt. As the water runs down your roof, it freezes near the roof's edge and an ice dam starts to form. This process repeats itself a few times and eventually creates a dam made of ice that prevents water from draining away. Inevitably, this water backs up under the shingles and into your home.

Here's what you can do to prevent ice dams or minimize the damage it causes.

Preventing an Ice Dam

- Insure that your attic is adequately insulated
- From inside the home, seal any perforations in the ceiling
- Ensure your soffit vents are not blocked by dust, debris or snow.
- Keep roof vents free of snow so cold air can circulate in your attic
- If you suspect your home is susceptible to ice damming, consult an expert who can use diagnostic tools to identify problem areas providing opportunity to prevent damage from occurring

If an Ice Dam Occurs

- Consult an expert – UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE should you climb out on your roof to inspect or attempt to remove the ice dam yourself.
- Remove any damaged contents and move any undamaged contents out of harm's way.
- Contact a local restoration contractor to inspect and take immediate and necessary preventative action.

Preventing ice damming is not that hard as it may seem. Follow the simple tips above and you'll be ice dam-free this season.

ROOF DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

Ensure gutters and downpipes are kept clear of debris, so that water can flow freely through the gutter system. If downpipes do not drain into an underground drainage system and instead drain onto the ground around the home, ensure that the water is draining away at least 3 feet away from the home. Maintain at least a 2% downward slope away from the home to keep water away from the foundation.

EXTERIOR HOSE BIBS

There are two types of exterior hose bibs; frost free and non-frost free. For frost free hose bibs, you only need to disconnect the garden hoses before the weather drops below freezing. Failure to disconnect the garden hose allows water to stay inside the frost free tap and freeze, thereby damaging the hose bib and causing a water leak into the home.

For non-frost free hose bibs, you must remove the garden hose as per above. In addition you must close the shut off valve located inside the home and drain any excess water from the hose bib.

Before the first frost you will want to follow these simple steps to ensure that your hose bibs do not freeze and consequently leak. Please keep in mind that hose bib leaks due to improper winterization are not covered by your warranty.

GARDEN SPRINKLERS

Winterizing your sprinkler system – Garden sprinklers are subject to freezing in all areas of Canada, and must be drained of water before the first frost in the fall. This needs to be done by having the water blown out of the underground lines. It is best to consult a professional sprinkler company to perform this task.

Spring startup - Your sprinkler systems may need some in the spring before regular usage. This not only includes your regular sprinkler systems but also any drip sprinkler systems you own. During the winter when your systems are not being used they could have been invaded by small critters. They have a habit of using the sprinklers, emitters, tubes, and sprinkler pipes as their new homes. They manage to find a way in but sometimes find it hard to find their way out once spring arrives. In order to flush out your drip irrigation sprinkler system, the drip tubes must be opened up at the ends and water flushed through it. On your regular sprinklers remove the emitters or nozzles from all the sprinkler heads and turn on the water for cleaning out.

After flushing these tubes with water, replace all the emitters and turn on the sprinklers. You want to check for clogged nozzles or emitters and replace with new ones. You can also try cleaning each clogged nozzle but if you leave any scratches it may alter the spray pattern and create dry spots. This is now the time to replace any nozzles that are missing or malfunctioning. A calcium buildup can be another problem to plague your sprinkler system parts but the problem can be solved with any calcium removal product that you use in the house.

The sprinkler systems along with their valves need to be checked for any leaks. Sometimes the flexible seals will dry out during the winter and provoke the valve to leak as soon as you turn the water back on. If your water bill all of sudden shoots upward it could mean you have a sprinkler or an underground pipe that is leaking.

If you have automatic sprinkler systems you also want to check the timer for the run time on each station. There are plants that need more water than others. It is always a good idea to change the timer with the seasons; this way your plants will receive the proper amount of water for each season. Most plants require less water in cooler weather because the evaporation rate is much slower. If rain is expected please turn off your automatic systems to save water.

If your timer or controller came with a back-up battery, you will want to replace it every spring. Most of the solid state timers use alkaline batteries and will not work correctly with any other kind. If you are in doubt always use alkaline batteries. Some of the high-end controllers come with a built in battery charger and others have a non-volatile program memory and will not need batteries.

Make sure the sprinkler heads are only watering your landscape and not any part of your home, siding or foundation, as this will only lead to to a water ingress issue

within your home, or your driveway, along with possibly damaging the foundation of your home. Be sure your sprinkler heads are adjusted properly and watering as much of the landscape as needed. The sprinkler heads need to pop up above the top of the grass; you may have to raise these heads periodically during the year. Regular maintenance of your sprinklers will not only save money on your water bill and sprinkler systems costs but also conserves one of our most precious resources, water. If you follow these simple guidelines you will have a better performing sprinkler system.

GARAGE DOORS

Have overhead garage doors serviced and maintained on a regular basis by an overhead door company. The overhead door and opener will require regular lubrication and adjusting by a qualified professional

Grates in front of garage doors

The purpose is to catch water before it enters your garage and home. Often other debris can find its way there, such as leaves and stones. Regular cleaning is required to ensure the water flows freely ensuring no blockage.

Make garage door maintenance an annual project

INTERIOR



APPLIANCES

Information about each appliance can be found in the literature that is supplied by the manufacturers. Please read and review the manufacturer's instructions and recommendations for the installation, usage and care before you use your appliances. Your appliances are covered by warranties from the manufacturers. Contact the manufacturer or distributor for service or questions about the use of appliances

Stove Hood Fan

Clean or replace grease filters on a regular basis

Dryers

Clean the lint trap on a regular basis. Clean the dryer ducts and the exterior exhaust vent on a regular basis.

Washers

Periodically inspect the water and drainage hoses for cracks or leaks and replace as needed.

HEATING, VENTILATION & AIR CONDITIONING

Maintain a constant temperature and humidity in your home. This will minimize the contraction and expansion of the materials in your home, as well as reducing the cost of heating and cooling.

During extremely hot and sunny days, heat and sunlight radiating through windows can be more than the capability of your air conditioning system. Keep drapes and blinds closed to reduce radiant heat.

Electric Baseboard Heaters

Electric baseboard heating requires cleaning of this appliance surface on a regular basis, along with dusting of the element. Caution should be exercised when dusting.

Hot Water Heated Baseboards

Vacuum around baseboard heating pipes. The purpose of removing dust from the fins is that this layer of dust acts as insulation which reduces the efficiency of heat transfer from the hot water pipe to your room. Poor efficiency means your heating system has to work harder, which costs you more for energy and reduces the system's service life.

Radiant Hot Water Heating Systems

Clean the area around the boiler. Remove flammable items, such as paper or fabric, and sweep or vacuum regularly. Check the water pressure. Most systems will include a pressure gauge to assist you in determining the pressure inside the circulation loop. Use the manufacturer's instructions to find out the ideal pressure for your system. If the pressure drops, there is a leak somewhere in the system which must be repaired.

Gas Furnaces

The heat outlets and cold air returns must be kept free of any furniture or floor coverings which could block the free flow of air. In addition, the filters must be cleaned or replaced at least twice per year to allow the unobstructed flow of air through the furnace. The quality of the replacement filter used dramatically affects the air quality within the home.

Electric Furnaces

If your furnace does not turn on, or if certain rooms are not getting warm, you should check the breaker panel. If the furnace has turned the breaker off, there may be a problem with the furnace. Turning an electric furnace back on should only be done by a qualified professional.

Check all the electrical components of your electric furnace once every six months to ensure your furnace is working to maximum efficiency. Check your filters regularly to remove dirt and debris that may cause your furnace to overheat. Clean dirty filters regularly if your furnace is not providing the heat it should. Clean the blower assembly of the electric furnace regularly to prevent clogging, as well as all the vents in your house.

Heat Pumps & Air-Conditioning Pumps

An important air conditioner maintenance task involves replacing or cleaning filters. In time the indoor evaporator coil will still collect dirt, which will reduce air flow and block the coil and normal airflow. To avoid it, you should check your evaporator coil every year, and clean it. Outdoor condenser coils can also become very dirty if the outdoor environment is dusty or if there is foliage nearby. You should check the condenser coil to see if there is dirt on its fins.

Heat & Air-Conditioning Ducts

Air duct maintenance revolves around two aspects: reducing the volume of foreign particles (rodent droppings, insects, insect droppings, pollen) which makes its way into your air vents, heating and cooling system, and preventing moisture from getting into the air ducts.

Tips to reduce the volume of dust and debris in your heating and cooling system:

1. Utilize the highest efficiency air filter you can afford as recommended by the manufacturer of your HVAC system
2. Replace your air filter regularly. How frequently is dependent on where you live, whether you have a pet, if anybody smokes in the home and how often your system is used
3. Be certain every filter is in place (a lot of heating and cooling systems use multiple filters) and they fit properly to prevent air from getting around the filters
4. Anytime you have your heating and cooling system serviced, have the technician clean the coils and drain pans
5. Do not operate your HVAC system and block the return and supply vent throughout any significant home renovations that generate a large amount of dust

6. Dust and vacuum your house regularly. If at all possible use a high efficiency (HEPA) vacuum along with the highest efficiency filter within your budget

HRV (Heat Recovery Ventilation) Equipment

A heat recovery ventilator (HRV) can help make mechanical ventilation more cost effective by reclaiming energy from exhaust airflows. With routine preventative maintenance, you can avoid unnecessary problems, ensure the effectiveness of your HRV, and prolong its life. The summary below indicates some general HRV maintenance requirements. Items 1 through 6 are maintenance procedures a homeowner should undertake between annual service visits by a professional.

1. Clean or replace air filters
2. Clear the exterior intake and exhaust vents of obstructions
3. Clean the heat-exchange core
4. Clean the condensate drain and pan
5. Service the fans
6. Clean the grilles and inspect the ductwork
7. Arrange for an annual servicing

PLUMBING

Hot Water Tanks, Boilers, Tank-less Water Heaters

Please follow your manufacturer's maintenance guidelines

Shower, Sink & Floor Drains

To prevent unnecessary repairs of the bathtub and sink drains, maintenance is crucial. The following applications for shower, sink and floor drains, are to be reviewed, and if required consult a plumbing professional to attend and maintain on your behalf.

Guards

Always use a drain guard. Drain guards are small devices, usually made of metal mesh or plastic, which fit over the top of the drain. They catch items that might get caught in the drain or cause clogs, such as hair. They are usually relatively inexpensive and can be purchased at most department and hardware stores. The best part about drain guards is that they are easily cleaned and reused, and they are completely non-toxic, requiring no chemicals.

Treatment

Don't treat your bathtub and sink drains as though they have a disposal. For instance, when you are in the shower, if you notice that you have shed some hair, do not rinse the hair down the drain and assume that it is gone forever---the more hair that is put down the drain, the more likely a clog is to form. Instead, use the only liquids rule and don't put anything that isn't liquid or water soluble down the drain if you can help it.

Awareness

Be aware of how your drains are performing. Water should flow easily from the sink or bathtub basin when the drain is in use. You should not hear or see “blurps” that occur from trapped air bubbles popping and sending a bit of water back up the drain pipe. If you notice that your water flow has slowed, or if you do hear and see the telltale blockage sign of air bubbles popping, you’ll need to treat the drain right away to prevent the clog from getting any worse.

ELECTRICAL

GFI Testing (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters)

All GFIs, whether local or central, have two testing-related buttons on them. One button is appropriately labeled TEST, and one is labeled RESET. Turn on an appliance or light fixture connected to the GFI. Press the TEST button, and the appliance should immediately turn off. If it does not, either the GFI is wired incorrectly, there is a problem with other wiring in the same circuit, or the GFI has malfunctioned and should be replaced. Pressing the RESET button will restore power to the appliance or circuit.

Conversely, if you have a GFI that has tripped and will not reset, you may have a wiring short in the circuit, a defective appliance on the circuit, or the GFI itself has become defective.

The easiest way to troubleshoot a GFI is to obtain a GFI tester, available at most hardware stores. It plugs into the GFI outlet, and will supply you with a “snapshot” of your connections, indicating wiring problems and/or the condition of the GFI. Another way to troubleshoot is to simply purchase a new GFI and install it.

Electrical Panel

“Cleanliness is the best policy” when it comes to maintaining electrical equipment in a concrete products facility. Focusing on a few simple practices will extend the life of electrical panels and graphic display units that are connected to your equipment.

Best Practices:

1. Keep panel doors and box covers closed. Dust and moisture are two of the biggest enemies of electrical devices
2. Remove debris from electrical components. Heat build-up can occur when electrical devices are covered with dust or concrete.
3. On a monthly basis, check electrical connections and keep them tight. A loose wire either in a panel or on the machine will cause electrical arcing. Arcing can cause intermittent machine operation and eventually a breakdown

4. Keep electrical wiring diagrams, logic documents and operating manuals clean, neat and easily accessible. Plant personnel will need these items to effectively troubleshoot the equipment
5. Ensure tags and labels are readable and securely attached to electrical devices. This will help identify items when servicing the equipment

FLOORING

General Flooring

Regular maintenance is dependent solely on the homeowner. Techniques may vary depending on the floor you have, but it all goes down to removal of dust and grime and preventing them from accumulating on the surface, for these can dull and damage the flooring surface.

Short of using chemicals and other substances, you must first consider the least complicated method of cleaning and then if that does not work, go up to the next level of cleaning materials. The bigger, more high-powered cleaners are better left with the pros, but it pays to know about them as well.

Mop/Rag

This is your first line of defense against spills, dirt and dust that may have been tracked onto your floor. Dust mops and rags can also be used to maintain the shine of your chosen flooring, just be careful in choosing which mops to use as some fibers may scratch the surface. Microfiber works well on smooth surfaces, particularly granite and other stone floors.

Vacuum Cleaners

Vacuums are particularly great for collecting dust on carpets, as well as picking up random debris on a variety of other flooring types. There are different kinds of vacuum cleaners in the market, and their appearance and features are not merely for appearance; they also serve a purpose and are more efficient in cleaning one type of flooring over another. For example, upright vacuum cleaners are very effective in cleaning large carpeted areas and plush area rugs, while canister vacuums are great for homes with largely uncarpeted areas, as well as for hard-to-reach places in homes such as shelves. You may also want to look into the filtration system of the vacuum cleaner you wish to purchase. Those suffering from allergies will benefit greatly from a vacuum equipped with a HEPA filtration system, which offers a completely sealed filtering system.

Steam Cleaners

Considered the big guns of the floor cleaning industry, these cleaners really dig deep to take the dirt out of your floor. Steam cleaners come in two types: those designed for heavy-duty cleaning of rugs and carpets (deep-cleaning steam machines), and those designed for cleaning hard surfaces (hard-surface floor steamers). The deep cleaning steam machines are best for getting soil that may have accumulated over time in high-traffic areas such as hallways and stairs. They are also used to clean spills and pet

accidents on carpets. Hard-surface floor steamers can also be used to clean carpeted floors but are more optimized for use on hard surfaces such as hardwood, laminates, and linoleum. These steamers are the technologically advanced cousins of the mop method, and are neater because these machines not only remove dirt from your floor, but also remove the dirty water, giving you only clean floors to enjoy.

Laminate Floors

Laminate floors, like other furnishings in your home, require proper care to keep them looking their best. When you follow some easy cleaning and maintenance instructions, you'll find taking care of your laminate floor a snap!

Regular Maintenance

The surface layer of laminate flooring is hard and compact, so dirt and dust do not stick to it easily. Remove standing water immediately and never flood the floor with water, dry damp cloth only. The following simple steps are usually all it takes to keep your floor clean. For general cleaning, use a dust mop, vacuum with the hard-floor attachment of your vacuum cleaner or wipe occasionally with a damp cotton or cloth mop. For heavier cleaning, use a laminate floor cleaner (available a hardware and household supply stores) or a

mixture of household vinegar and water (1-cup vinegar to 1-gallon warm water) or household ammonia and water (1/2 cup ammonia to 1-gallon warm water). If an accident occurs and a stain remains, you can remove the worst stains with acetone or denatured alcohol on a soft cloth without bleaching or damaging the floor. In a pinch, nail polish remover containing acetone is a handy substitute. Do not use soap or detergent-based cleaners, wax-based products or any type of polish on laminate floors, as they leave a dull, filmy residue. There is never a need to wax or refinish your laminate floor.

Protect the Floor

While laminate is remarkably durable, there is no such thing as an indestructible flooring material. There are a few simple protective measures that are important to keep your floor looking new. To protect your laminate floor from surface scratches, place walk-off area rugs or mats inside any exterior doorway to collect small bits of gravel they may track in on shoes. Use felt floor protectors (available at laminate retailers) on the legs of chairs, sofas, TV stands, tables and other easily movable furniture. Replace plastic casters on chairs with rubber wheels and lift rather than slide heavy objects across the floor. Minor damage to a laminate plank or tile can be easily repaired with laminate finishing putty. If the damaged area is larger than ¼ of an inch, replacing the plank may be recommended.

Spot Removal

Laminate stain resistance means peace of mind for you and easy clean up. When the inevitable happens, use the following guide for stain and spot removal: for chocolate, grease, juice, cordials and wine – use lukewarm water and a non-abrasive cleaner (such as, ammonia and water) or laminate cleaning product available where laminate flooring is sold. For tar, markers, crayon, lipstick, oil, shoe polish, ink, nail polish and

cigarette burns – use acetone/nail polish remover or denatured alcohol. Note : Do not use acetone on laminate wall base or quarter round. For candle wax and chewing gum – let harden and scrape carefully with a blunt plastic scraper. It is easiest to remove glue haze as soon as possible using a warm damp cloth. After the floor sets for at least 12 hours, any residual haze or traces of glue missed by the initial cleaning can be removed by using a laminate cleaner (available at laminate retail stores) or an ammonia and water mixture with a damp cloth or mop (1/2 cup ammonia to 1 gallon of water).

Hardwood Finished Floors

Hardwood floors are one of the easiest flooring types to keep clean. Remove standing water immediately and never flood the floor with water, dry damp cloth only. Unlike carpeting, hardwood floors require minimum maintenance and can last for many years. Clean hardwood floors that run throughout a house can make the house look both beautiful and spacious. Maintenance methods to clean hardwood floors should not differ among types, but some finishes may require extra care when removing stains.

Before mopping, make sure that you have removed all surface dust from the floor. This can be done with a soft broom or lightweight vacuum cleaner. Then, simply mop, rinse and repeat. It is important to remove grit and dirt from hardwood floors. Dirt and grit are the biggest enemies when it comes to scratching or scouring the floor finish.

PAINT & OTHER COATING FINISHES

Cleaning Walls & Doors

Some painted surfaces may be cleaned with a mild solution of detergent and water. If you are not sure of the wash ability of the paint, try washing in an inconspicuous place.

Glazed brick or tile should be washed with soap and water. Use a non-abrasive household cleaner to remove stains.

Wood paneling should be cleaned with a wood cleaning product and then treated with paneling wax or with linseed oil.

CABINETS & TRIM WORK

Cabinets

In the absence of proper maintenance, Kitchen & Bathroom cabinets often tend to lose their luster and appeal in a short span of time. In other words, maintenance of these cabinets is equally important as designing one for your home. Once the professionals have set up your kitchen cabinet, their task is over and maintaining it for years to come lies only in your hands. Though it may appear like a big task to maintain your kitchen cabinet, it won't be as difficult as it may seem if you really care to do so.

There are many factors that may destroy your cabinets slowly and steadily. None can stop dust, moisture and crawling creatures from entering and penetrating into your cabinets, but some precautions can surely be taken to maintain the cabinets. Make sure to close the drawers and doors properly after use for a proper maintenance. Remember that cabinetmakers make these cabinets for a long-term use, but this purpose can be fulfilled only if you maintain and protect your cabinet properly. Make sure to clean the spill on the spot. Avoid placing too hot utensils directly on the kitchen cabinet surfaces, along with avoiding placing too heavy appliances on the cabinets.

Trim Work 101

Moldings, also called “trim work,” are both functional and decorative in your home. Although they give a room distinctive style and detailing, they also serve a purpose. Trim work hides the joints between walls and floors, ceilings, doors, and windows that have been left exposed by rough carpentry and building techniques. Many different patterns and styles of trim work are made from a variety of softwoods and hardwoods, so the most important thing is finding trim work that is going to best match the overall design aspect of your home. If you’re feeling creative, these woods can be used in combination as built-up-moldings to create intricate patterns in your trim work design. Proper cleaning of the trim work, is essential for the general up-keep of your home

FIREPLACES

Fireplace maintenance is very important not only for safety, but to keep your fireplace in its best working order to provide heat for your home. If there is a problem with the flue then smoke may not be able to make its way up the chimney and the smoke may enter your home creating dust, fire and possible noxious fumes. It is important to look at the manufacturers guidelines for the best service package and safety recommendations.

Employing a chimney sweep, using cleaning logs and using carbon monoxide detectors in your home is always beneficial. For a woodstove it is important that the ashes are cleaned out frequently (and disposed in a non combustible container like a metal garbage can) and for a gas fireplace it is imperative to keep it from flammable dust.

Gas & Propane Fireplaces

Gas and propane fireplace maintenance should be done by a trained professional from your gas or utility company. Here is a list of the items they will check and test for proper operation. It is advised you have your gas or propane fireplace inspected and cleaned annually.

1. Check fan operation
2. Clean pilot and burners
3. Check gas pilot safety system
4. Check thermostat

CONDENSATION CONTROL

Condensation, which is moisture in the air, often forms in bathrooms, laundry rooms, and kitchens. It also forms on walls and windows in poorly ventilated homes under certain conditions. It can also form in between the panes of double-paned windows. One of the easiest ways to control most condensation problems is through ventilation systems. Your home may have an adequate ventilation system in place that is no longer doing its job efficiently due to a clog. For example, dryer vents can become clogged with lint which can lead to problems exhausting moist air out of the home when drying your clothes, unclogging the vent can solve this problem. Make sure to use the exhaust fans to remove moist air from these areas after showering or cooking.

Every new home is equipped with a principle exhaust fan. There are two types of exhaust fan systems typically used. The first is a Heat Recovery System called an HRV. This is a whole house ventilation system that is generally automatic and runs on timers. The second is a bathroom exhaust fan that is connected to a timer or wired directly to be permanently on. If you have either timed system, you should ensure that the system is set to run a minimum of 4 hours, twice per day or more as humidity levels rise in the home

MOLD AND MILDEW

Avoiding Mold Spores

Maintain a low humidity level in the house. Avoid using humidifiers unless absolutely necessary. They can lead to mold growth and spread airborne mold spores. Use air conditioning. Consider one with a HEPA filter to help reduce airborne spores. Make sure your clothes dryer is vented outside. Let shoes air dry before storing. This helps prevent mold growth in closets. Give away old books, recycle newspapers, and donate unused clothing or bedding. Keep firewood outside –the bark can harbor mold.

In the Basement

Use a dehumidifier in the basement if it is damp. Empty and clean the dehumidifier regularly. Raising the temperature can also help lower humidity. Inspect the basement regularly, and discard any moldy items. Inspect your foundation and rain gutters to be sure drainage is moving away from the house.

COMMON PROPERTY FOR STRATA & OTHER MULTI-FAMILY HOMES

Many items previously discussed can also apply to strata titled units and common property. Please read this manual thoroughly.

DEVELOPING A MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Unfortunately structural deterioration begins the day that construction ceases. One of Strata's primary goals is to protect the property investment of the owners, to ensure "pride in ownership" and reduce future repair costs as much as possible. This is best served with regular and long-term maintenance.

Regular Maintenance

These include items that are completed once or more annually and are funded through the annual budget. Specific activities can include:

- Dryer vent cleaning (servicing if required)
- Gutter cleaning, both in and outside. (servicing if required)
- Roof inspections and repair to extend the life of the roof (servicing if required)
- Snow removal
- Fire safety systems (servicing if required)
- Elevator (servicing if required)
- Janitorial
- Parkade cleaning
- Irrigation system – seasonal maintenance
- Window washing
- HVAC
- Caulking & Painting touch ups

Long Term Maintenance

These include items that are completed less than annually and are financed through the Contingency Reserve Fund. Specific activities can include:

- Painting (interior or exterior)
- Building Envelope repairs
- Caulking the exterior of building
- Elevator refurbishment

- Re-roofing
- Storm and sanitary sewer line cleaning
- Cleaning building exterior
- Boiler or hot water tank replacement
- Carpet replacement
- Roadways
- Membrane over underground parking areas

Maintenance Responsibilities

- The Strata Corporation has a duty to repair and maintain all common and limited common property.
- The Owner is responsible to repair and maintain his or her Strata Lot (personal suite or unit)

Exceptions to the above

The Strata Property Act Section 72 (2) permits a Strata Corporation to, by Bylaw, make the Owners responsible for:

- Limited common property that the Owner has a right to use
- Exterior windows
- Exterior doors

ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE

Regular safety and servicing may only be performed by qualified, trained & licensed elevator repair personnel. This maintenance should be performed on a regular basis.

AMENITIES

Maintenance payments go towards the upkeep of the basics, including lobby, parking lot and exterior. Other amenities, including recreation rooms, pools, saunas, Jacuzzis, gyms, media rooms, party rooms, rooftop common areas, barbecues and more are also covered by this fee. In general, the more amenities a building has, the higher the fees will be. Property managers, concierges, security guards and cleaning staff must also be paid through the annual budget, and provision must be made for special jobs such as window and garage cleaning. A regular cleaning schedule is required, in addition to monitoring and repairing any area as required.

Although maintenance fees may seem like an unnecessary expenditure and make buying a home independently seem more attractive, many do not take into account the realities of paying to keep up a home. Cleaning equipment, landscaping, lawnmowers

and snow blowers are expensive – and there's certainly something to be said for not having to do the job yourself! Plus, when you live in a condo, you can be assured that providing the building is well managed, every detail will be taken care of and the integrity of your investment will be respected and maintained year after year.

POOLS

A routine maintenance schedule must be actively pursued in order to help achieve and maintain water chemistry. Once your pool is clean & clear, it becomes much easier to maintain. It is always easier to maintain a pool and prevent problems than it is to rectify problems. With far less time and effort, as well as money, you can maintain your pool and keep it inviting all season long. Due to varying bather loads from pool-to-pool and varying climates from region-to-region. You must recognize your personal pool needs and you must budget your time in order to follow a routine maintenance schedule that works best for your pool.

- Test water - but do not add chemicals until the maintenance schedule for that day is complete.
- Use your net(s) - remove all leaves and other large debris from the pool.
- Use your brush - remove dirt, or perhaps algae, stains, or scale from the pool walls and floor.
- Clean all baskets - for the skimmer(s) and the pump.
- Vacuum - remove any settled and remaining dirt, leaves or other debris from the pool.
- Clean the filter - if it is a sand filter or a DE filter, then backwash. If it is a cartridge filter, then rinse the individual pleated filter elements with a garden hose and a pressurized nozzle.
- Add the necessary chemical(s) - from the test(s) taken earlier that day.
- Shock regularly

You will have to create your own maintenance schedule. With your bather load and with your climate, routine maintenance is very individualized.

CHIMNEYS

A proper inspection of your chimney by a qualified chimney professional should include a thorough examination of the external structure to look for signs of deterioration or weakness. Exterior staining due to flue gasses seeping through the chimney structure, broken or spalled bricks, and deterioration of mortar joints are all signs that your chimney may need repair. A proper evaluation should also include a visual inspection of the flue inside the chimney.

Ideally, that internal inspection should be done with a video inspection device. Such devices allow chimney professionals to detect even small cracks in the chimney liner that may not be seen by the naked eye. All connections from the burning appliance to the chimney should also be thoroughly inspected. If the inspections described above

indicate the possibility of a chimney deficiency, then a more thorough inspection of the chimney and the structural members surrounding it may be required. However, regular annual inspections by a qualified chimney professional should go a long way towards heading off serious chimney problems and the need for expensive repairs.

It is important to note, for an inspection to yield the best results, the flues to be inspected will need to be cleaned first. Otherwise, soot, creosote, or other residue might mask physical problems with the flue or flue liner.

WALKWAYS & DRIVEWAYS

Whether you have a cement driveway or walkway, or a blacktop driveway or walkway, you want your investment to last for a long period of time. Therefore, in order to protect your ways, you're going to need to provide it with some periodic inspection and maintenance.

First off, you may not realize this, but if you have any trees or bushes growing too close to your driveway or walkway, the roots can, and will, grow right up through the cement or asphalt. This will not only crack the materials, but it will also cause it to break off and crumble. In order to avoid this problem, you should either relocate the trees or bushes - if they are not too large to move- or just remove them completely.

You should also "edge" the sides of any driveway or walkway that is connected to your lawn. "Edging" means that you remove the sod within two to three inches of the cement or blacktop. This will allow rain, melted snow, et cetera, to drain off of the surface better. It will also help to keep weeds, grass, et cetera, from growing up underneath your driveway or walkway. Plus, any weed killer, and other chemicals that are put on your lawn won't get on your driveway or walkway.

Next, you will also need to periodically seal and waterproof your driveway or walkway by using a good - quality product. This will help to protect it from freezing temperatures, corrosive chemicals, and other damaging materials. Be sure to read the manufacturer's directions on the container in order to obtain the best results. If you use a good - quality product, then you should only have to seal your driveway or walkway every two to three years. Otherwise, if you use a low - quality product, you may have to seal and waterproof every year.

The fourth maintenance item you will need to do is to simply keep the cement or blacktop clean. You can achieve this task easily by using an electric or gas - powered leaf blower. It will remove leaves, grass clippings, tree limbs, and other debris that can collect on your driveway and walkway. Then, you should finish the cleaning job by using a low - powered pressure washer to spray wash the area. Especially on your driveway, clean up any gasoline, grease, oil, and other such spills up as soon as possible before the chemicals can damage the cement or blacktop.

If you have a cement driveway or walkway, and it has just been poured, it's important that you don't put salt on them, especially during the first winter. Salt on cement often causes scaling and crumbling which can lead to cracks and worse damage. Using a good ice melter will liquefy snow and ice without harming your cement.

And, if you have your driveway plowed during the winter, make sure the operator lifts his blade up so he doesn't scrape, crack, and otherwise damage it. If you clear your driveway and walkway yourself, make sure that you use the same care in plowing it.

The fifth thing you need to do is to keep the rain and melting snow from running out of your gutters and downspouts on to your driveway. Inspect your water drainage system periodically to make sure the water is flowing freely through it. If water gets underneath your driveway or walkway during the freezing winter months, they can actually "float" and rise up. This can crack and otherwise damage these areas.

Finally, the sixth maintenance item is to keep heavy trucks, equipment, et cetera, off of your driveway. Concrete or blacktop is durable, but your driveway is not meant to accommodate heavy vehicles.

GARAGES

Periodic housekeeping and preventive maintenance programs provide inexpensive ways for parking structures to maintain long-term viability

The best time for an inspection is after the structure has been washed down and freed of salt and sand. Rainy seasons, make it obvious where leaks occurred. Although most owners rely on professionals to conduct the inspection, a basic tour can be done by the owner without difficulty. A visual inspection of key elements, making notes where leaks or rust spots are seen, is the basic requirement.

Maintain parking floor surfaces

If the parking surface has a sealant or membrane coating, this will require periodic maintenance and re-coating. Contact a qualified professional

Cracks in Parkade concrete

The reality with concrete is that it cracks. Minor cracks are acceptable and normal but should be maintained by a qualified professional using appropriate water proofing and filling materials.

Repair any damaged ceiling insulation

Insulation that is damaged or removed should be replaced by a qualified professional.

Repair any plumbing leaks

Using qualified professionals, have leaks repaired in a timely fashion to avoid damages or staining of floors/walls.

Maintain any exhaust fans

Have exhaust fans cleaned and serviced on a regular basis by a qualified professional.

Parkade Heating

If your Parkade has a heating system, it will require regular cleaning and maintenance by a qualified professional.

Garage Doors

Have overhead garage doors serviced and maintained on a regular basis by an overhead door company. The overhead door and opener will require regular lubrication and adjusting by a qualified professional. Make garage door maintenance a continual project

Grates in front of garage doors

The purpose is to catch water before it enters the Parkade. Often other debris can find its way there, such as leaves and stones. Regular cleaning is required to ensure the water flows freely ensuring no blockage.

PARKADE ROOF MEMBRANE PROTECTION

Larger multi-family buildings may have an underground Parkade where the roof of the Parkade acts as a courtyard, walkway, patio or garden area for the occupants of the building. Care must be taken not to damage the Parkade roof membrane that lies below these particular areas.

Any visible signs of water ingress through a Parkade roof should be repaired as soon as possible by a qualified professional

FIRE PREVENTION SYSTEMS**Fire, Safety and Emergency systems**

Larger multifamily buildings have fire, safety, and emergency systems installed. There are provincial and municipal regulations governing the maintenance and servicing of these systems. It is the building owners responsibility to plan and coordinate these requirements with the help of a professional fire & safety company that supplies such services. All work should be performed by trained and licensed professionals only.