

## **General Care and Maintenance**

### **Appliances**

For general cleaning of your appliances, it is recommended that an all purpose cleaner be used, followed by a coat of high gloss polishing agent to protect them from fingerprints and stains. (Do not use polishing agents inside of your microwave oven or on the burner bibs of your stove.)

### **Cabinets**

Wood cabinetry can easily maintain the “new” look by following a few simple care techniques. About every six months, apply a light coat of liquid or paste wax that does not contain cleaners or silicone. Rubbing gently with the grain, work the wax into one small area at a time, so the wax does not have a chance to set. This protects the cabinet from excess moisture and humidity, which can cause warping of the doors.

For everyday care, wipe cabinet surfaces with a clean soft cloth, adding mild oil based soap and water only if absolutely necessary. Never use abrasives, strong detergents, chemical-cleaning agents or rags and sponges used for other chores. Wipe up all spills promptly, as moisture is the worst enemy of your new cabinets. Nicks and scratches can be repaired with a matching wood tone touch-stick with a light coat of wax, or hidden by applying a light coat of matching scratch-guard finish.

### **Countertops**

Your new countertops are tough and durable, but like any material they can be damaged if abused or mistreated. Reviewing these care and cleaning instructions can assist you in understanding how easy it is to care for your new countertops.

#### **Normal Cleaning:**

Your countertops should be wiped clean with a damp cloth or sponge. Abrasive and non-abrasive cleaners are not recommended. Periodically polish the entire surface with a countertop polish found at your local grocery or hardware store.

#### **Spills and Stains:**

For troublesome stains, lightly scrub with a liquid dish detergent and rinse well with water. For troublesome spills (glue, nail polish, etc.) lightly rub the affected area with nail polish remover or mineral spirits and rinse well with water. Do not attempt to scrape or sand anything off of your countertops. Do not allow water to stand on miters or joints in countertops.

#### **Burns and Cuts:**

Your countertops are not heat resistant. Avoid using a heat element appliance near seams. Light scorch marks can sometimes be removed by rubbing with countertop polish. Never use a countertop as a cutting board!

### **Maintenance:**

At installation, your countertop was attached to your cabinets and the space between the wall and backsplash was properly caulked. You must replace this caulk periodically due to normal wear, humidity changes and lumber shrinkage. Caulk is available at your local hardware store in inexpensive and disposable applicator tubes.

### **Garbage Disposal**

For precise directions on the operation of your disposal, consult your instruction booklet. It is very important to run COLD water when using the disposal to cool the high-speed motor. Avoid putting large amounts of fibrous materials (such as cornhusks) down your disposal and never put anti-clog chemicals down your disposal.

#### **Reset Button:**

Should your disposal become overloaded with a substance it cannot grind, it will turn itself off. If this happens, move the power switch to off, remove the obstruction, wait about three minutes, push the reset button and turn the disposal back on. If it still does not start, turn it off again and check to make sure you have not tripped a circuit breaker. If the circuit breaker has not been affected, trip the breaker and use a mop handle or an allen wrench to turn the rotating plate in the disposal until it rotates freely. Restore electrical power, push the reset button again and turn the disposal back on.

### **Flooring**

#### **Resilient floor:**

Resilient floors include such types as linoleum, vinyl and rubber. It is important to exercise daily care procedures to maintain its "new" appearance. Daily care includes removing loose dirt with a broom, dust mop or vacuum. Wipe up spills immediately, but if a spill or spot dries, remove it with a damp sponge, cloth or mop. To clean resilient flooring use a good detergent diluted as recommended, given their proven success. Be sure to use the name brand, which corresponds to the type of flooring installed. It is very important that you read the care packet provided by the flooring company.

Aside from cleaning, a few preventative measures can be taken to keep from staining your new vinyl. These include:

- Proper floor protectors should be installed on all furniture and chairs.
- Avoid wearing high heel shoes to prevent puncturing and permanently denting the flooring.
- Control any direct sunlight on flooring since it will discolor it.
- Rubber backed mats or rugs have been known to discolor flooring.
- Deck Stains, asphalt driveways and lawn fertilizers WILL stain vinyl. It is best to wipe or remove your shoes before entering.
- Excessive heat may burn or discolor your vinyl. (Excessive heat is considered to be over 125 degrees F.)

Occasionally, the changing moisture content and settling of your house may cause staple pops to occur underneath the resilient flooring. These can be easily

corrected by lightly tapping a piece of dowel rod or the flat side of a wide putty knife with a hammer on the staple until the staple resets. Be careful not to dent or cut the vinyl with the dowel rod edge or putty knife.

- **Wood Flooring:** The wood flooring in your home requires a special degree of care and protection. For an excellent explanation see the “Wood Floor Care Guide”.
- **Ceramic Flooring:** For general cleaning of ceramic, see “Ceramic Floors and Walls” in the bathroom section.

**Note: Pads should be applied to the bottom of chairs to prevent the movement from scratching the tiles.**

### Range Hood

For general care and maintenance of your range hood, consult your information manual. It is suggested that normal cleaning techniques be used to prevent grease and dirt build-up. This includes cleaning the metallic filter with hot water. Also, when replacing light bulbs, make sure they fall within the required heat specifications defined in the information packet.

### Sinks

There are two general types of kitchen sink materials and both require different care procedures. The two types are as follows:

- **Porcelain Enamel:** The surface of these fixtures is smooth and glossy, like a mirror and harder than steel. However, they are not indestructible. Carelessness causes chipping, scratching and stains. Shiny new fixtures can easily be dulled or stained in a short period of time through improper or excessive use of strong abrasive cleaners. Most household cleaners are mildly abrasive and if used with plenty of water may not be harmful; however, a non-abrasive cleaner is much safer. If marks are made by pots and pans, commercial soft scrubbing agents containing bleach should be used followed by a coat of high gloss polish.
- **Stainless Steel Sinks:** Stainless steel fixtures are very durable and generally do not require scrubbing. Recommended for cleaning are non-abrasive cleaners, or even commercial glass cleaning products, followed by a thin coat of commercial stainless steel polish. ***Do not under any circumstances use steel wool pads to clean your sink.*** Also using a rubber sink mat is discouraged because they may trap organic particles underneath, which may decay and cause hard to remove stains.

To prolong the life of any of your sinks, follow these general rules:

- Don't let food wastes stand in the sink.
- Don't use sinks to hold paint cans, trash or tools when redecorating. Cover the sink when re-painting walls and ceilings.
- Do clean sink frequently to avoid time-induced staining.

### **Ground Fault Interrupters (GFCI's)**

Your home is equipped with ground fault interrupter circuit breakers on all bathroom, garage and outside receptacles. They are designed to trip with the slightest moisture contact. They are different from other circuits in that they are designed to protect people – not the electrical circuits and for this reason they are very sensitive. Therefore it is important to thoroughly check all GFCI outlets if one of the receptacles fails to work. If one shows “Test”, simply push the “Reset” button. If the “Reset” button does not stay in, do not use the outlet. This is usually an easy solution to appliance, whirlpool or outlet failure.

### **Carpeting**

For a *complete* explanation of carpet care, see the flooring care packet provided by our flooring company. It is very important that you thoroughly read this pertinent information to prolong the life of your carpet.

### **Doors**

It should be expected that from time to time some of your interior doors would cause minor problems. However, most door problems can be handled with minimum skill.

- Interior Doors: Sticking is the most common problem with doors. This is usually caused by the effect of wood expansion due to weather changes. If this is the case, first check to see if all the hinge screws are completely tight. If that does not solve the problem, check where the door is rubbing and gently sand area with a piece of sand paper wrapped around a wood block. Continue to do so for all areas that are rubbing. Sometimes due to normal settling of the structure, minor adjustment of the doorkeeper (or strike plate) may be required. Loosening two screws and sliding it up or down to re-align it with the latch bolt can accomplish this.

### **Electrical Outlets**

The electrical outlets installed in your home are all centrally linked to the circuit breakers discussed earlier. If problems do arise, check to see if all the breakers are in the “ON” position and all the GFCI’s are reset. After confirming that the source of power is functioning, check the following things before calling for electrical service.

- If the lights are inoperative, check the light bulb. Be sure to replace them with bulbs of the same wattage as originally installed because this is the size for which the fixture was made.
- If the base plugs do not work, remember that a light switch, usually near to the room entrance, controls some of them.
- It is normal for there to be a slight buzzing noise emitting from florescent tubes.
- If your telephone does not work, check to ensure it is plugged all the way into the outlet.

- Sometimes there may be a small draft coming from outlets. This can be reduced, but not necessarily eliminated, by purchasing outlet insulators. These are available from your local hardware store.

### **Fireplaces**

The type of fireplace that you have may determine how much care will be needed. Mechanical and gas burning fireplaces require much less care than a traditional drawing fireplace. If you have a mechanical or gas burning fireplace, consult your operating guidelines manual to acquire the proper care procedures. Their maintenance is usually taken care of directly through the installing company.

## Light Fixtures

The light fixtures installed in the various rooms in your home are made of several different types of materials and therefore require different care. The manufacturer's recommended cleaning of fixtures is as follows:

- **Metal:** Use mild soap and water and wash with a soft cloth only.
- **Crystal:** Use a mixture of warm water and white vinegar and dry with a lint free cloth. For special glass, refer to the specific manufacturer's instructions. The glass is usually hand blown. Blisters, air bubbles or thin lines are natural markings separating them from injection mold plastic and are not considered defective by the manufacturer. Switching and or rotating glass to balance the fixture is normal.
- **Brass:** Is a soft metal, which may need to be adjusted after installation. By holding the main body and applying gentle pressure to the crooked area, the fix will straighten. Cast brass will often make mold marks, an indicator of heavy castings.

## Shelving

Your wire shelving is very durable and can be treated that way. It is important to make sure though that they are not overloaded. They can support up to 75 pounds of weight per foot of shelving. Exceeding this amount could result in shelving failure. Do not stack all canned goods on one shelf or on the "Lazy Susan".

## Walls and Ceilings

The interior walls of your new home are constructed of gypsum wallboard with a veneer plaster finish and should last without undue maintenance for the lifetime of the building. The degree of wall and ceiling perfection definitely has its limitation.

- **Painting:** Caring for the paint on your walls is simple and used quite frequently. The paint is flat wall paint that is designed as paint for bare plaster in new home construction. Flat paint has a clay base that can be removed with excessive cleaning and cleansers. A damp cloth will remove most dirt without any problems.

## Windows and Screens

The operable windows in your home are either double hung or single hung windows. The operable sash tilts in for easy cleaning and screen removal. The tracks should be kept free of dirt or paint for proper operation. If the sash does not operate freely, silicone or another lubricant can be used on the tracks to improve operation.

- **Cleaning:** A recommended easy way to clean your windows is use a commercial glass cleaning solution with a crumpled news paper as a rag. If you need to scrape paint or a similar substance off the glass, use a sharp razor blade flat against the glass. Be very careful not to damage the glass or cut your fingers.

### Woodwork/Trim

Caring for your woodwork is similar to caring for your kitchen cabinets, but not as extensive. For general cleaning use a diluted solution of oil based soap and water. Keep in mind; water is woodwork's worst enemy.

### Bathtubs/Sinks>Showers

In order to keep the illustrious shine, these household items need to be cleaned after every use. Any mild, non-abrasive detergent can be used. It also helps very much if you wipe your bathtubs, showers and sinks after every use. This is especially true for glass shower doors and whirlpool tubs. This prevents the build-up of hard to remove soap and scum. Never walk in your shower or tub with your shoes on; they will scratch the surface. Also, the use of rubber mats is not recommended because they cause blisters as well as trap fungus and mold.

- **Whirlpool Tubs:** Aside from wiping the tub regularly, special cleaning instructions are provided for whirlpool bath systems. About twice a month, the tub should be filled with water. Add two teaspoons of low foaming dishwater detergent and four oz's. Of household bleach. Run the whirlpool for 10-15 minutes. This will keep the system clean and disinfected. **Do Not Operate The Pool Without Water!**
- **Bath Caulking:** If the caulking around your bathtub, shower or sink appears dried out or cracked. Remove the old caulking and replace it. If you do not have a caulking gun, caulking material can be bought in an applicator tube or in disposable caulk guns. It is a good idea to fill the bathtub before caulking.

### Drains

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

- When the drain stops up, first use a plunger. Be sure the rubber cap of the plunger covers the drain opening and that the water covers well above the cup edge. Working the plunger up and rhythmically 10 to 20 times in succession will build up pressure in the pipe and do more than sporadic separated plunges.
- If the plunger does not work, try using a plumber's snake. This tool can be rented or purchased at your local plumbing or hardware store. Be sure to turn the handle of the snake in the same direction when removing it as you did when you inserted it. This will keep any matter attached to the snake from coming loose before it is removed.

### Faucets

In order to maintain and ensure the "like new" appearance of your faucets, the following suggestions are provided:

- Wipe as needed with a soft damp cloth
- Use only warm water to remove dry water spots
- Do Not use cleaners which contain abrasives, alcohol or other harsh chemicals
- Occasionally apply a high quality wax polish to your faucet's finish to make routine care easier
- **Aerators:** Aerators are devices that reduce splashing by inducing air into the water coming out of the faucet. These contain screens also collect unwanted deposits and must be cleaned every three to four months. To clean the aerator, unscrew it from the mouth of the faucet, remove any deposits, rinse all of the components and replace them in original order.

### Toilets

The toilets in your new home are 1.6 gallon toilets required by state and federal code. They may be bit noisier and have smaller traps, so they may plug more often. Please do not flush down anything other than toilet paper. General cleaning should be done using one of the commercially available toilet bowl cleaners that do not contain abrasives. If the water chamber appears to leak, it may only be condensation forming on the outside of the tank and dripping to the floor. If water leaks into the bowl through the overflow pipe, try bending the rod holding the float so that the float will be closer to the tank bottom. Flush the toilet and if it still leaks, the inlet valve washer probably needs to be replaced. If water trickles in the bowl but is not coming through the overflow pipe, it is coming through the flush ball valve. The rods between the ball valve and the flushing handle may need aligning so that the ball will drop straight down after the handle has been pushed. A worn ball valve or dirt or rust on the ball seat will let water leak through to the bowl. If the ball or seat is dirty or rusty, clean it. If the ball is worn, turn off the water, unscrew it and replace with a new one.

## Garage

### Concrete Slab

It is very important to understand that is impossible to stop concrete from cracking. For this reason, cracks should be expected and are normal. It is important that salt contact with the concrete slab be prevented. Seal annually.

### Garage Doors

Garage doors are not weather proof and entrance of air, dust, rain, snow and light should be expected. Sweeping out any water or snow in the winter will keep the door from freezing shut. The moving parts of the door should be lubricated and the cables should be checked for fraying every six months. The screws connecting the hinges to the doors should also be checked and tightened as necessary. Also be sure if pre-wire option is selected, your door is equipped with rough ins for motion detectors at the base of the door.

### Circuit Breakers

Circuit breakers protect the electrical wiring and equipment in your home. They are the safety valves of your homes electrical system. Circuit breakers may be reset by first switching the breaker to **full off** and the back to **full on**.

- **Master Circuit Breakers:** Every home built by Oceanside Builders has a Master Panel Switch Box. When this breaker is tripped, all of the house's electricity is cut off.
- **Power Failure:** In case of complete power failure, first determine if your neighbors have power. If not, notify your power company. If the power failure has occurred only in your home check the Master Circuit Breaker. If one breaker trips continuously, you may be overloading the circuit.

### Preparation For Winter Freezes

#### House Bibs/Outdoor Faucets

Please disconnect all hoses from your outdoor faucets. Connected hoses cause vacuum and prevent faucets from draining properly. The facet will freeze and cause leaks back into your house. To winterize, turn off water shut-off valves, drain line and backflow preventor.

#### Extended Vacations

If you plan to leave your home un-attended, prepare for electric/gas outages. Cut the water main off at the shutoff provided. This will prevent extensive damage if freezing occurs.

## Miscellaneous

### Cooling and Heating Systems

To obtain the best performance of your heating and air conditioning systems you should comply with the following recommendations:

- Do use filters and replace them monthly
- Do keep doors and windows closed (and pull drapes or shades on window exposed to the sun) during operation of the cooling system. The less heat and moisture there is to overcome, the lower your operating expenses will be. Conversely, open drapes or shades during sunny winter weather.
- Do make sure your dryer is vented outside
- Do your heat and moisture work in the morning or evening as much as possible. Then your system can offset the effect of washing, drying, mopping etc. before the afternoon heat arrives.
- Do turn on bathroom exhaust fans (or open window slightly) during showers. Use plastic curtains instead of moisture holding fabric curtains.
- Don't be a thermostat juggler. Set it at the desired temperature and forget it. Frequent changing upsets humidity control and may increase operating costs
- Don't set your thermostat too low for cooling operation. Most people find 76-80 degrees ideal. The greater the difference between the outdoor and indoor temperature, the greater the operating costs
- Don't turn off your system just because you'll be away for the day or more. It takes a while to restore comfort, but cost relatively little to maintain it
- Don't be concerned if your cooling system operates after sundown heat stored in the roof and walls is still there
- Don't open windows after dark. Night air may feel cool, but it is moisture laden
- Don't let shrubs, vines or fences block air intake and discharge on the condenser unit outside. Don't put a lamp, TV. or radio too close to your thermostat

### Foundation and Exterior Walls

Foundations are subject to a wide variety of strains and stresses. The base of the exterior walls, being on the ground, maintain a fairly constant temperature, whereas the top portion extending out of the ground is subject to extreme temperature changes, from summer heat to winter cold. This causes concrete or masonry to expand and contract, which may create minor cracks. When completed, the earth outside your home is graded so that it slopes away from the foundation providing positive drainage of water away from your foundation and allow no pooling of water on your lot.

### Smoke Detectors

There are certain basic procedures that will ensure that your smoke detectors function properly in an emergency. Carefully review the manufacturer's literature to familiarize yourself with each unit so that you may act accordingly if the

detector is accidentally triggered and for proper cleaning instructions. Periodically test the detector to see that it is working properly. If they are not working, check the batteries, circuit breakers and GFCI outlets before calling for service.