



# Homeowner Maintenance Manual



[westcotthomes.com](http://westcotthomes.com)

# Table of Contents

---

- 1) New Home Maintenance
- 2) Recommended Maintenance Schedule
- 3) Contractor Maintenance Recording Log
- 4) Appliance Service Records and Contacts

# 1) New Home Maintenance

## Appliances

---

All your new appliances have been installed and tested for operation in your home. The manufacturer's appliance warranties take effect on the date of closing. The appliance manufacturer's warrant their products directly to you according to the terms and conditions of the warranties they provide with the appliances. These documents are in your home when you take possession.



## Air Conditioning

---

Air conditioning may not be a standard feature in all new homes. If your home has air conditioning, or you have one installed after closing date, please refer to the manufacturer's operating and maintenance instructions.

## Attic Access

---

Attic space is not designed or intended for storage. Access to the attic is for the inspection and maintenance of insulation, vents, chimneys, or other mechanical equipment that may be installed in the attic. If you or any service people perform maintenance or inspections in the attic, use great caution and avoid stepping off wood members onto the drywall under the insulation. Stepping off the

trusses or wood members can result in personal injury or damage to the ceiling below. Your limited warranty does not cover such injury or damage.

## Cabinets

---

If you have wood or wood veneer cabinets, it is normal and acceptable that there will be differences in grain and color between the cabinet components due to natural variations in wood and the way it takes stain. Since wood is a product of nature these variances in wood must only be matched to within a reasonable limit, as perfect matches in grain or color of the wood are impossible.

### CLEANING

Products such as lemon oil or polishes that include scratch cover are usually recommended for wood cabinet care by the manufacturer. Follow the cabinet manufacturer's directions, or the cleaning product directions. Avoid washing cabinets with water or ammonia cleaners.

Cabinets with synthetic finishes such as melamine can usually be cleaned with mild soapy water and dried immediately afterward. If in doubt, consult the manufacturer's recommendations for care and cleaning.

### HINGES

If cabinet doors become misaligned, most new cabinet hardware can be adjusted by homeowners with ordinary household tools. If hinges catch or drawer glides bind or stick, check to ensure nothing is inhibiting movement, or the cabinets or hardware have not been damaged in some way. If nothing is impeding movement, a small amount of silicone lubricant will help.

### MOISTURE

Damage to cabinet finishes and door warping can result from using appliances that generate large amounts of heat or moisture (such as counter-top ovens, crockpots or water kettles) too near the cabinet. When using such appliances, be aware and place them in a location that is not directly under a cabinet or near furniture which can be damaged.

## Carpet

---

Homeowners should be provided a record of the brand, style and color of floor coverings in your new home. Please keep this information for future reference and refer to the manufacturer's recommendations for information on the care of your floor coverings.

### CLEANING

Your carpeting will have a manufacturer's warranty depending on the style and quality you purchased and whether it was factory treated with a stain resistant material. Have your carpet professionally cleaned regularly, typically after 18 months in your home and then once a year after that depending on local conditions.

### CRUSHING

Stairways are more susceptible to wear and crushing. This is considered "normal wear and tear" and is not warrantable.

### STAINS

Some carpets are stain-resistant, but this does not mean the carpet is stain-proof. Always refer to the manufacturer's recommendation for cleaning or consult a professional cleaner who will understand the various color and chemical constituents of your carpet.

## Caulking

---

Over time caulking may dry out and shrink so that it no longer provides a good seal between baseboards and walls, or between millwork counter or vanity tops and walls. In wet areas silicone caulking may shrink, de-bond, or show signs of mildew. As part of your routine maintenance check caulking monthly and repair or replace as necessary.

### LATEX CAULK

Latex caulking is non-toxic, cleans up easily and is used in areas that require painting. Latex caulk is a homeowner maintenance item and part of normal maintenance, renovations and painting.

### SILICONE CAULK

Silicone caulking is used where water is present, for example, where the tub meets tile or at shower stall doors, or where a sink meets a countertop (especially under-mount sinks). Silicone caulking is not paintable and contains acetic acid which gives off an odor while curing. Read the instructions on the product container.



## Ceramic Tile

---

### CLEANING

Ceramic tile is low maintenance. Vacuum or sweep floor tile for normal cleaning. Tile can also be cleaned with a wet mop and warm water. Depending on the finish of the tile surface it is recommended homeowners avoid adding detergent to the water. The ceramic tile installed on walls, countertops, or backsplashes in your home may be cleaned with nonabrasive soap, detergent, or tile cleaner. Some high gloss or unfinished tile may be damaged by abrasive cleaners.

### GROUT DISCOLORATION

Clean grout that becomes yellowed or stained with a fiber brush, cleanser and water. Products for cleaning grout are available at most home hardware stores.

## SEALING GROUT

Sealing grout is a homeowner decision and responsibility. The industry standard does not require builders to seal grout. Once grout has been sealed, it will require regular re-application of sealant. Ongoing maintenance of the seal is necessary and your new home warranty does not cover grout that has been sealed.

## SEPARATIONS

Slight separations between tiles and the grout will occur and is normal. Grouting is intended to finish the tile surface, but does not hold the tile in place or affect the performance of the tile. Gaps or cracks in the grouting can be filled using permitted grout available at building supply stores.

## Condensation

---

When warm, moist air encounters cooler surfaces, the moisture condenses. In your home, condensation is a layer of moisture on the inside of glass windows and doors. This condensation is usually caused by high humidity within the home combined with low outside temperatures and inadequate ventilation. Your lifestyle and the number of people in the home can influence this condition.

## NEW CONSTRUCTION

New homes have a higher moisture content than homes which are one or two years old. Many of the materials used in your home contain water - including the wood, paints, water-based adhesives, caulking and more. Over time the moisture will be released as components dry and adjust to the local climate.

## DE-HUMIDISTAT

In some climates, newly built homes are equipped with a de-humidistat. These are electrical devices which operate laundry room fan(s) in your home on a timed schedule. These are installed according to building code and should run for a period of 8 hours per day.

## VENTILATION

Ensure that bathroom fans operate while showering or bathing and are left on until all excess moisture in the bathroom has dissipated.

## Countertops

---

Use a cutting board to protect your counters when you cut or chop. Protect the counter from heat and from extremely hot pans. If you cannot put your hand on it, do not put it on the counter. Do not use countertops to pound objects on or use them to sit on.



## CAULKING

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

## SEPARATION FROM WALL

Countertops will separate from walls, backsplashes and around sinks. This is a normal occurrence due to the normal shrinkage of materials. Maintaining the caulking is part of the homeowners' maintenance responsibilities.

## CLEANING

Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for cleaning.

## LAMINATES

Laminated (millwork) countertops will have seams at any mitered intersections and it is normal that these will be visible. You should avoid letting water stand on any countertop seam.

## Expansion and Contraction

---

Changes in temperature and humidity cause all building materials to expand and contract. Different materials expand or contract at different rates and this movement can result in separation between materials. When this happens the bond of the caulking may break and small gaps or cracks may appear. Minor cracking or small gaps are the result of normal settling and are the homeowner's responsibility.

## Doors and Locks

---

Doors inside new homes are wood products and are subject to shrinkage and warpage if the humidity level of your home is not maintained at an acceptable level, or if the finish (paint or stain) is damaged and left un-repaired. Normal fluctuations in humidity levels from the use of showers, cooking and dishwashers, may result in interior doors occasionally requiring minor adjustments.

### FAILURE TO LATCH

If a door will not latch because of minor settlement of the structure, the latch plate can be adjusted as necessary. Before adjusting the latch plate check that the hinge screws are tight.

### HINGES

If hinges on swing doors in your home squeak, apply a silicone spray lubricant to correct this.

### LOCKS

Lubricate door locks with silicone spray or another non-staining, waterproof lubricant. Avoid using oil, as it may solidify and become "gummy".

### SHRINKAGE

Use putty, filler or latex caulk to fill any minor cracks or separations that typically occur at mitered joints in door trim. Sand and paint with the matching paint included in your new home paint touch-up kit. The need for paint touch-ups to walls and woodwork due to normal wear and tear is a homeowners' maintenance responsibility.

### STICKING

The most common cause of a sticking door is the natural expansion of the door or framing lumber caused by changes in humidity. If doors stick, check and tighten the hinge screws that hold the door jamb or door frame.

### WARPING

Doors may warp slightly; this is normal. If the warping is not excessive, keeping the door closed as much as possible may return it to its original shape. Avoid having items leaning against open doors that are tight against the door stop.

### WEATHER STRIPPING

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

### PANEL SHRINKAGE

Panel inserts of wood doors shrink and expand in response to changes in temperature and humidity. Touching up the paint or stain on unfinished exposed areas is your home maintenance responsibility.

## Drywall

---

Slight cracking, nail pops, or seam joints may appear in walls and ceilings. These are caused by the shrinkage of the wood and normal deflection of studs, trusses or rafters to which the drywall is attached.

### REPAIRS

Your builder will provide a "one-time repair" of drywall cracks or nail pops caused by building settlement. Normally homeowners are requested to wait until they have occupied the home for at least 11 months prior to requesting repairs be performed by the builder to allow sufficient time for the building to settle and acclimatize to local humidity conditions.

### ONE TIME REPAIRS FOR 1ST YEAR WARRANTY

One time during the materials and workmanship warranty, as a courtesy, your builder will repair drywall shrinkage cracks and nail pops and may touch-up the repaired area using the same paint color that was on the surface when the home was

delivered. Touch-ups may be visible depending on the paint type, age and conditions in the home. It is not the responsibility of your builder to repaint the entire wall or the entire room to correct touch-up mismatch. Homeowners are entirely responsible for custom paint colors or wallpaper that has been applied subsequent to closing.

## Electrical System

---

During your orientation of your new home you will have been shown the main electrical breaker panel that includes a main shut-off that controls all the electrical power to the home. Each breaker is marked to help you identify which breaker is connected to each major appliances, outlets or other service. If a power failure occurs in any single part of your home, always check the breakers in the main panel box first.

### BREAKERS

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

### BREAKERS TRIPPING

Breakers usually trip because of overloads caused by plugging too many appliances into the circuit, a worn cord or defective appliance, or operating an appliance with too high a voltage or wattage requirement for the circuit. The sudden starting of an electric motor can also trip a breaker. If a breaker trips repeatedly check for any of the above causes.



### GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTERS (GFCI)

GFCI receptacles have a built-in element that senses small fluctuations in power. A GFCI is just another type of circuit breaker, only more sensitive.



Each GFCI circuit has a TEST and RESET button. Once each month, press the TEST button. This will trip the circuit. To restore service, press the RESET button. If a GFCI breaker trips during normal use, it may indicate a faulty appliance and you will need to investigate the problem. One GFCI breaker can control up to two outlets.

## DESIGNED LOAD

Your builder or his electrical contractor will repair any electrical wiring that fails to carry its designed load to meet specifications. Overloading circuits beyond the design load limits is not covered by your warranty.

## POWER SURGE

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

## Hardwood Floors (Laminates)

---

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



## CLEANING

Sweep on a daily basis or as needed. Never wet-mop a hardwood or laminate floor unless the manufacturer approves doing so. Excessive water can enter the gaps between boards at joints and can cause the wood to expand and can damage the floor. Refer to manufacturer's cleaning recommendations.

## HUMIDITY

Wood floors may respond noticeably to changes in humidity in your home. During winter months, the individual planks or sections can expand and contract as water content changes. Laminate floors

are typically "floating floor" assemblies and are not attached to the sub-floor so some movement may be noticed.

## SEPARATION

Expect some shrinkage which will be noticed at the joints of the wood plank or board sections near heat vents or any heat-producing appliances, or during seasonal weather changes.

## WARPING

Warping will occur if the floor becomes repeatedly wet or is thoroughly soaked. Laminate floors may absorb the water and buckle and be destroyed.

## Paint and Stain

---

Avoid abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, or scrub brushes on any paint surface since these will cause damage. If cleaning with soap and water is not successful a commercial cleaner may be required followed by touch-up of the paint.

## STAIN

The same stain or closely matching products can be obtained for minor interior woodwork stain touch-ups.

## WALL CRACKS

It is suggested that you wait until after the first 11 months from the date of close to request that your builder repair drywall cracks or other separations due to shrinkage. The reason for this is that normal settlement and the adjustment of moisture contents of the building materials take time to reach normal and stable humidity levels.

After your "one-time repair" of drywall cracks, homeowners are responsible for all subsequent touch-up, except any painting your builder performs as part of another warranty repair.

## WOOD CRACKING

With normal aging wood trim at window sills and door sills may develop minor cracks, or raised grain. Most of this will typically occur during the first year. Raised grain will permit moisture to get under the paint and can result in peeling or warping of the boards when they are near areas of sun exposure, moisture and temperature variations. This is not a defect in materials or workmanship and is not

covered by your warranty. Paint finish maintenance of wood trim is a homeowner responsibility.

## Plumbing

---

Your plumbing system has many components, most require little maintenance such as piping inside walls and drainage systems. Making sure you use fixtures properly, only flushing appropriate waste down toilets, checking faucet and hose screens and draining your hot water tank as part of routine home maintenance will ensure long life of all plumbing components.

### MAIN SHUT OFF

The water supply to your home can be shut off entirely in two locations. The first is at the street and the second is located in the garage area. Your builder will show you where and how to turn off the main water supply in your home during your orientation.

### SHUT OFFS

Each toilet has a shut-off valve on the water line and each sink has both a hot and cold water shut-off under the sink. Other appliances installed in your home will have water shut-offs in the supply line (refrigerator ice-makers, etc.)

### CLEANING

Always follow manufacturer's directions for cleaning fixtures.

## Resilient Flooring (Vinyl, Linoleum)

---

Resilient flooring requires minimal maintenance. Follow the manufacturer's specific recommendations for care and cleaning according to the products installed in your home. Avoid moving or dragging heavy items on resilient flooring, or dents, wrinkles, or tearing may result.

### LIMIT WATER

Excessive amounts of water on resilient floors can penetrate the sealed seams and get under the

edges by the baseboards or trim which may cause the glue to de-bond and the flooring to lift and curl. Water damage is not covered by your warranty.

## Stairs

---

There is no method known for framing wood stairs that can prevent all vibration and squeaks. Owing to the flexible nature of wood, there will be some movement as they are walked on and where the stairs meet the walls there will be a connection that will flex.

## Water Heater: Electric

---

Always refer to the manufacturer's literature and warranty for your specific model of water heater. As with other appliance warranties, the homeowner must contact the manufacturer directly.

## Windows and Screens

---

Clean the glass as needed with vinegar and water, a commercial glass cleaner, or the product recommended by the window manufacturer. Always consult the manufacturer's literature and maintenance recommendations if there are special window glazing treatments. Avoid abrasive cleaners and any commercial glass cleaners.

### VINYL WINDOW FRAMES

Clean vinyl window frames during moderate temperatures using a mild solution of soap and warm water. Wash using a sponge or soft cloth and dry with a towel. Avoid abrasive cleaners, commercial glass cleaner, razors, stiff brushes or scrubbing devices of any kind. From the outside of the home, inspect and ensure the drain (weep) holes are free of dirt or debris for proper drainage.

## 2) Recommended Maintenance Schedule

### RECOMMENDED MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

MAINTENANCE ITEM	PURPOSE	FREQUENCY	DIFFICULTY	DATE PERFORMED
AIR CONDITIONER	Start twice during winter months; keeps mechanical parts from sticking. Service professionally.	2Y Y4	 	
BATHROOM CAULK	Seal joints that are subject to being wetted; prevent leaks, dry rot, mold and mildew.	2Y		
CERAMIC TILE GROUT	Seal grout with silicone based sealer; cracked grout should be caulked with a caulk specifically made for filling grout.	Y		
CHIMNEY CLEANING	Remove build up of tar and creosote from the flue; prevents flue fires.	Y2		
DECKS	By inspecting deck surfaces for cracks in coating, loose boards and surface sealers, minor maintenance and repairs extend deck life.	Y		
DOORS	Vacuuming tracks and lubricating hinges and latches keeps parts smooth.	M/Y		
DRAINAGE	Keep drain from backing up and flooding during the rainy season. Make sure debris is removed and positive drainage away from buildings.	Y		
DRYWALL (CRACKS AND NAIL POPS)	Set nails, caulk and paint. Improves finished interior wall surfaces.	Y		
ELECTRICAL (GFI TEST)	Safety of electrical surfaces. Test GFI circuits (kitchen, bath, garage and outdoor) monthly.	M		
EXHAUST FANS	Vacuuming accumulated dust from bathroom and laundry fans for proper air flow.	2Y		
FENCE (INSPECTION AND REPAIR)	Retains privacy and security. Prolongs life of fence. Wrought iron schedule is 4Y.	Y		
FURNANCE FILTER CHANGE	Helps remove dust and pollen from interior air; improves furnace efficiency; less energy consumption.	2Y		
GARAGE DOOR SYSTEMS	Lubrication promotes smoother, less noisy operation; extends systems life. Tighten keepers to avoid sag on one piece doors.	2Y		
GARBAGE DISPOSAL	Fill with ice and operate. Cleans and sharpens.	Y		
GROUNDS	Inspect for pavement breaks; heaving sidewalks and tree roots, dry rot at decks and blockage of drainage system. Avoids more expensive repair costs.	Y		
GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS	Prevent overflow onto walls; prevent eave leaks; extends gutter life.	2Y		
INSECT CONTROL	Detected and treated early will prevent structural damage; controls annoying pests. If found, treat monthly.	Y	 	
IRRIGATION SPRINKLERS	Direct water spray properly. Eliminate excess watering, staining of exterior walls and dry rot of structures.	2Y		
KITCHEN EXHAUST HOOD	Wash kitchen hood grease filters in the dishwasher.	Y		
ROOF INSPECTION / MAINTENANCE	Detect and correct conditions that can lead to leaks and premature roof replacement.	Y	 	
SINKS	Inspect under sinks in kitchen, bath and laundry for leaks. Early detection avoids greater damage. Clean sink traps to avoid backups and plugged drains. Use only cleaners recommended by manufacturer. Clean faucet aerators to maintain water flow.	4Y		
SMOKE DETECTOR	Replace batteries for safety and keep clean.	Y		
TRIM SIDING AND STUCCO	Caulking and painting keeps system water tight; improves appearance, extends major maintenance periods; reduces chance of mold and mildew. Paint all exterior wood trim, siding and stucco.	Y		
WATER HEATER (PARTIAL DRAIN)	Extends water heater life; provides more efficient operation; uses less energy.	Y		
WINDOWS (TRACKS AND WEEP HOLES)	Keep windows sliding freely. Avoid water standing in tracks and potential leaks.	2Y		

#### KEY FREQUENCY:

Weekly = W	Twice a year = 2Y	Every three years = Y3
Monthly = M	Four times a year = Y4	Every four years = Y4
Yearly = Y	Every two years = 2Y	Every six years = Y6

#### DIFFICULTY

	Easy, no special skill required.		Good idea to get instruction on this item.
	Some skill required.		This task should only be performed by a qualified professional.



## 4) Appliance Service Records and Emergency Contacts

APPLIANCE SERVICE RECORDS				
APPLIANCE	MANUFACTURER	MODEL #	PHONE #	SERVICED
Range				
Range Hood				
Cooktop				
Oven				
Microwave				
Dishwasher				
Garbage Disposal				
Refrigerator				
Washer				
Dryer				
Water Heater				
Garage Door Opener				

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS		
CONTACT	EMERGENCY	NON-EMERGENCY
Police		
Fire		
Ambulance		
Gas Company		
Plumber	United Plumbing - Office (360) 794-5557 and dial 1 for operator	
Electrician	Plateau Electric LLC (360) 825-1090 or Kelly (253) 261-3930	
Security/Alarm		
Telephone		
Internet		