



PROMULGATED BY THE TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF BUILDERS (TAB)

## Homeowner Maintenance Guidelines

***The following list is designed to address some of the more common home maintenance guidelines and does not encompass the entirety of items that a homeowner must maintain for the proper use, maintenance and enjoyment of a home. Following or ignoring these guidelines does not create any liability on the part of a builder/contractor for any home defects or standards of performance. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations for maintenance schedules.***

### **The following items should be completed upon occupancy:**

- Attach floor protectors under furniture legs to protect floor finishes.
- Complete the HVAC, appliances and other manufacturer warranty registrations. Most manufacturer's warranties require registration within 60 days of the installation to receive the warranty.
- Read the manufacturers' instruction manuals for all HVAC, appliances and other manufactured products before first use.
- Test all systems while present for proper operation and to ensure no leaks, smells or other operational errors. Run your washer for the first time without clothes to clear the line of any debris and check for leaks.
- Run a few gallons of water through water line before connecting any ice makers.
- Purchase a general-purpose fire extinguisher for each floor of your home and one extinguisher specifically for the kitchen.
- Locate the main water line shut-off valve and all individual plumbing fixture valves.
- Locate the natural gas shut-off valve by the gas meter. **This should be done by your utility provider.**

### **The following items should be completed every month:**

- Replace air filters as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Vacuum air supply and air return registers to remove dust and lint.
- Run both hot and cold water in any bathrooms that are not frequently used by running the sink, showers, and bathtubs for a few minutes and flushing the toilets.
- Repair any grout cracks in wet areas around your bathtubs, showers, or any tiled areas. Repair any caulk cracks in wet areas with 100% silicone caulk.
- Clean garbage disposal blades.
- Clean out yard drains and catch basins to remove any leaves or debris. Ensure that drainage swales are clear, and downspouts are secure.
- Check moisture at the foundation. Do not let the yard around your foundation go more than 30 days without moisture.

### **The following items should be completed every six months:**

- Lubricate door hinges as necessary.
- Clean and lubricate window tracks as needed.
- Clean out faucet aerators, spray nozzles, and sink drains.
- Check pipes and drains for water leakage. Check underneath sinks and around plumbing fixtures.
- Pour one cup of bleach down sink drains to break up potential drain clogs.
- Ensure that fire extinguishers are fully charged.
- Test smoke detectors and change batteries as needed.

- Check blown insulation in the attic and move any insulation covering the recessed can lights. Move insulation as needed to cover any voids on the attic floor. This should be done by a professional if you are not confident using attic access.
- Check attic walkways for proper support and warn trades servicing equipment.
- Using a funnel, pour half a gallon of bleach down the HVAC drain line in the attic.
- Clean or replace the vent hood fan filter as necessary.
- Lubricate moving parts of the garage door with a sprayed silicone lubricant or as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Visually inspect roof from the ground for broken or missing shingles and gaps in flashing. Call a professional to make repairs as needed.
- Clean out gutters and downspouts as needed.
- Prune shrubs and trees as needed and fertilize grass before summer/high temperature season and plants.
- Walk the perimeter of your foundation, checking for mounded dirt piles, which may indicate the presence of destructive or hazardous insects, such as termites.
- Have preventative pest control services performed.
- Repair cracks or separations in interior and exterior caulking as needed. Check around sinks, bathtubs, toilets, faucets, counter tops, back splashes, tile walls, tile floors, windowsills, and doors. Use silicone caulk in wet areas.

**The following items should be completed once a year:**

- Replace frayed or split electrical extension and appliance cords as necessary.
- Tighten and adjust cabinet drawers and hinges as necessary. Apply a light coat of furniture polish or lemon oil to the stained wood cabinets to protect the finish.
- Repair cracks or separations in interior and exterior caulking as needed. Check around sinks, bathtubs, toilets, faucets, counter tops, back splashes, tile walls, tile floors, windowsills, and doors. Use silicone caulk in areas that can potentially become wet.
- Repair or replace weather stripping around windows and exterior doors as necessary.
- Check silicone sealant on the security system sensors and refresh as necessary.
- Check water supply lines and valves to sinks, toilets, refrigerator, and washer, and tighten if loose.
- Check inside attic for signs of roof leaks and call a professional if leaks are found.
- Drain water heater per manufacturer's instructions and drain the water heater until hot water is no longer running. Allow several hours for the water heater to refill and heat up before running the hot water again.
- Remove any lint inside the clothes dryer hose.
- Touch up exterior paint and refinish exterior doors as necessary.
- Clean siding by spraying with a mixture of ten parts water and one-part bleach to remove mildew. Be sure to wear rubber gloves and eye protection.
- Wash driveway, patio, and walkways as necessary.
- Keep grade 4" below masonry/brick ledge. Clear debris from brick weep holes.
- Visually inspect fireplace vent and other exterior vents for nests or excess soot/build-up.
- Hire a professional roofer to inspect the roof annually and after any major storms.

**The following items should be completed seasonally:**

- To keep the airflow balanced, adjust the air register grills or switch the ceiling fan rotation as necessary.
- Prepare for hurricane season in May by following the instructions found on the National Red Cross website: [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).
- Add water around the foundation during droughts.
- When the heat is turned on after a long period of non-use, you may notice a burnt smell; this is generally normal and should dissipate after a few hours.
- Turn your fireplace on regularly to test.

## HOW HUMIDITY/MOISTURE AFFECTS WOOD

- When the weather turns cold and the furnace runs nonstop, the air inside your home becomes much drier. That dry heat pulls moisture out of natural materials like wood. Wood is a living material. It expands when there is humidity in the air and contracts when the air is dry. In the winter, as the indoor humidity drops, trim boards, door casings, crown molding, baseboards, and even cabinets can shrink slightly. When that happens, you may notice small gaps at seams, corners, or joints. You might also see caulking pull away a bit where two materials meet. This is not a defect in workmanship. It is simply the normal reaction of wood and joint materials to seasonal moisture changes. During warmer months, when humidity levels rise again, much of that movement settles back down. This cycle of expansion and contraction is expected in every wood framed home. Even the best built custom homes experience it. It is considered an industry standard seasonal occurrence, especially during the first year as the home adjusts to its environment. Keeping indoor humidity between about 35 percent and 45 percent during the winter can help minimize shrinkage, but some movement is always normal. These small changes are cosmetic and do not affect the structural integrity of your home.