

**BENNETT MILLER HOMES**

**HOME CARE GUIDE**

**for**

**NEW HOMEOWNERS**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Air Conditioning</b> .....	1
<b>Alarm System</b> .....	3
<b>Appliances</b> .....	3
<b>Asphalt</b> .....	3
<b>Brass Fixtures</b> .....	3
<b>Cabinets</b> .....	4
<b>Carpet</b> .....	5
<b>Caulking</b> .....	8
<b>Ceramic Tile</b> .....	9
<b>Concrete Flatwork</b> .....	10
<b>Condensation</b> .....	12
<b>Countertops</b> .....	13
<b>Doors and Locks</b> .....	14
<b>Drywall</b> .....	16
<b>Easements</b> .....	17
<b>Electrical System</b> .....	18
<b>Expansion and Contraction</b> .....	21
<b>Fencing</b> .....	21
<b>Foundation</b> .....	22
<b>Garage Overhead Door</b> .....	23
<b>Ghosting</b> .....	24
<b>Grading and Drainage</b> .....	25
<b>Gutters and Downspouts</b> .....	27
<b>Hardware</b> .....	27
<b>Hardwood Floors</b> .....	28

<b>Heating System: Electric Forced Air .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Insulation .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Laminate Flooring .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Landscaping .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Mildew .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Mirrors .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Paint and Stain .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Pests and Wildlife .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Phone Jacks .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Plumbing .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Property Boundaries .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Railings .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Resilient (vinyl) Flooring .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Roof .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Rough Carpentry .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Siding .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Smoke Detectors .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Stairs .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Termites .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Ventilation .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Water Heater: Electric .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Windows and Screens .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Wood Trim .....</b>	<b>56</b>

## **A-Z Guide for New Home Care and Product Expectation**

- From Air Conditioning to Wood Trim: an alphabetical list of items in your home, including maintenance hints, warranty criteria and troubleshooting tips (not all items are included in each home)
- Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines
- Residential Construction Performance Guidelines: NAHB standards of quality, builder responsibility and homeowner responsibility

### **Air Conditioning**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Air conditioning can greatly enhance the comfort of your home, but if it is used improperly or inefficiently, wasted energy and frustration will result. These hints and suggestions are provided to help you maximize your air conditioning system.

Your air conditioning system is a whole-house system. The air conditioning unit is the mechanism that produces cooler air. The air conditioning system involves everything inside your home including, for example, drapes, blinds, and windows.

Your home air conditioning is a closed system, which means that the interior air is continually recycled and cooled until the desired air temperature is reached. Warm outside air disrupts the system and makes cooling impossible. Therefore, you should keep all windows closed. The heat from the sun shining through windows with open drapes is intense enough to overcome the cooling effect of the air conditioning unit. For best results, close the drapes on these windows.

Time is very important in your expectations of an air conditioning system. Unlike a light bulb, which reacts instantly when you turn on a switch, the air conditioning unit only begins a process when you set the thermostat.

For example, if you come home at 6:00 p.m. when the temperature has reached 90 degrees F and set your thermostat to 75 degrees, the air conditioning unit will begin cooling, but will take much longer to reach the desired temperature. During the whole day, the sun has been heating not only the air in the house, but the walls, the carpet, and the furniture. At 6:00 p.m. the air conditioning unit starts cooling the air, but the walls, carpet, and furniture release heat and nullify this cooling. By the time the air conditioning unit has cooled the walls, carpet, and furniture, you may well have lost patience.

If evening cooling is your primary goal, set the thermostat at a moderate temperature in the morning while the house is cooler, allowing the system to maintain the cooler temperature. The temperature setting may then be lowered slightly when you arrive home, with better results. Once the system is operating, setting the thermostat at 60 degrees will not cool the home any faster and can result in the unit freezing up and not performing at all. Extended use under these conditions can damage the unit.

## Adjust Vents

Maximize air flow to occupied parts of your home by adjusting the vents. Likewise, when the seasons change, readjust them for comfortable heating.

## Compressor Level

Maintain the air conditioning compressor in a level position to prevent inefficient operation and damage to the equipment.

See also Grading and Drainage.

## Manufacturer's Instructions

The manufacturer's manual specifies maintenance for the condenser. Review and follow these points carefully. Since the air conditioning system is combined with the heating system, follow the maintenance instructions for your furnace as part of maintaining your air conditioning system.

## Temperature Variations

Temperatures may vary from room to room by several degrees Fahrenheit. This is due to such variables as floor plan, orientation of the home on the lot, type and use of window coverings, and traffic through the home.

## Troubleshooting Tips: No Air Conditioning

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

Thermostat is set to "cool" and the temperature is set below the room temperature. Blower panel cover is installed correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. Similar to the way a clothes dryer door operates, this panel pushes in a button that lets the fan motor know it is safe to come on. If that button is not pushed in, the furnace will not operate. Air conditioner and furnace breakers on the main electrical panel are on. (Remember if a breaker trips you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.) 220 switch on the outside wall near the air conditioner is on. Switch on the side of the furnace is on. Fuse in furnace is good. (See manufacturer literature for size and location.) Filter is clean to allow air flow. Vents in individual rooms are open. Air returns are unobstructed. Air conditioner has not frozen from overuse. Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.

## Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

The air conditioning system should maintain a temperature of 78 degrees or a differential of 15 degrees from the outside temperature, measured in the center of each room at a height of 5 feet above the floor. Lower temperature settings are often possible, but neither the manufacturer nor Bennett Miller Homes guarantee this.

## Compressor

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

#### Coolant

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

#### Non-emergency

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

### **Alarm System**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

If your home selections included pre-wire for an alarm system, you will arrange for the final connection and activation after you move-in. The alarm company will demonstrate the system, instruct you in its use, and provide identification codes for your family. We recommend that you test the system each month.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

### **Appliances**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Please see page 8.5 and your Appliance Service information sheet.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

We confirm that all appliance surfaces are in acceptable condition during your orientation. We assign all appliance warranties to you, effective on the date of closing. The appliance manufacturers warrant their products directly to you according to the terms and conditions of these written warranties.

### **Asphalt**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Asphalt is a flexible and specialized surface. Like any other surface in your home, it requires protection from things that can damage it. Over time, the effects of weather and earth movement will cause minor settling and cracking of asphalt. These are normal reactions to the elements and do not constitute improperly installed asphalt

or defective material. Avoid using your driveway for one week after it is installed. Keep people, bicycles, lawn mowers, and other traffic off of it.

#### Chemical Spills

Asphalt is a petroleum product. Gasoline, oil, turpentine, and other solvents or petroleum products can dissolve or damage the surface. Wash such spills with soap and water immediately, and then rinse them thoroughly with plain water.

#### Hot Weather

Avoid any concentrated or prolonged loads on your asphalt, particularly in hot weather. High-heeled shoes, motorcycle or bicycle kickstands, trailers, or even cars left in the same spot for long periods can create depressions or punctures in asphalt.

#### Nonresidential Traffic

Prohibit commercial or other extremely heavy vehicles such as moving vans or other large delivery trucks from pulling onto your driveway. We design and install asphalt drives for conventional residential vehicle use only: family cars, vans, light trucks, bicycles, and so on. Sealcoating

Exposure to sunlight and other weather conditions will fade your driveway, allowing the surface gravel material to be more visible. This is a normal condition and not a material or structural problem. You do not need to treat the surface of your asphalt driveway. However, if you choose to treat it, wait a minimum of 12 months and use a dilute asphalt emulsion, rather than the more common coal tar sealant. Hairline cracks will usually be filled by the sealing process. Larger cracks can be filled or patched with a sand and sealer mixture prior to resealing.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty

We perform any asphalt repairs by overlay patching. Bennett Miller Homes is not responsible for the inevitable differences in color between the patch and the original surface. Sealcoating can eliminate this cosmetic condition and is your responsibility.

#### Alligator Cracking

If cracking that resembles the skin of an alligator develops under normal residential use, Bennett Miller Homes will repair it. If improper use, such as heavy truck traffic, has caused the condition, repairs will be your responsibility.

#### Settling

Settling next to your garage floor of up to 1.5 inches across the width of the driveway is normal. Settling or depressions elsewhere in the driveway of up to one inch in any 8-foot radius are considered normal. We will repair settling that exceeds these measurements.

#### Thermal Cracking

Your driveway will exhibit thermal cracking, usually during the first 12 months. These cracks help your driveway adapt to heating and freezing cycles. Cracks should be

evaluated in the hottest monthsóJuly or August. We will repair cracks that exceed &Mac189; inch in width.

## **Brass Fixtures**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The manufacturer treats brass fixtures with a clear protective coating, electrostatically applied, to provide beauty and durability. This coating is not impervious to wear and tear. Atmospheric conditions, sunlight, caustic agents such as paints, and scratches from sharp objects can cause the protective coating to crack or peel, exposing the brass and resulting in spotting and discoloration.

### Cleaning

Initial care of these products requires only periodic cleaning with a mild, nonabrasive soap and buffing with a soft cloth.

### Corrosion

Unless you have ordered solid brass fixtures, the brass on your fixtures is a coating on top of a base metal. Water having a high mineral content is corrosive to any brass - coated or solid.

### Polish

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

### Tarnish

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

### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During the orientation we will confirm that brass fixtures are in acceptable condition. Bennett Miller Homes does not warrant against corrosion damage to the external surfaces or internal workings of plumbing fixtures. This limitation includes solid brass or brass-coated fixtures.

## **Brick**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Brick is one of the most durable and lowest maintenance finishes for a home's exterior. A record of your brick color is included in your selection sheets.

### Efflorescence

The white, powdery substance that sometimes accumulates on brick surfaces is called efflorescence. This is a natural phenomenon and cannot be prevented. In some cases, you can remove it by scrubbing with a stiff brush and vinegar. Consult your home center or hardware store for commercial products to remove efflorescence.

#### Tuck-Pointing

After several years, face brick may require tuck-pointing (repairing the mortar between the bricks). Otherwise, no regular maintenance is required.

#### Weep Holes

You may notice small holes in the mortar along the lower row of bricks. These holes allow moisture that has accumulated behind the brick to escape. Do not fill these weep holes or permit landscaping materials to cover them.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

We check the brick-work during the orientation to confirm correct installation of designated materials.

#### Cracks

One time during the warranty period, we repair masonry cracks that exceed 3/16 inch.

### **Cabinets**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Wood or wood veneer cabinets will contain differences in grain and color between and within the cabinet components due to natural variations in wood and the way it takes stain.

#### Cleaning

Products such as lemon oil or polishes that include scratch cover are suggested for wood cabinet care. Follow container directions. Use such products a maximum of once every 3 to 6 months to avoid excessive build-up. Avoid paraffin-based spray waxes and washing cabinets with water, as both will damage the luster of the finish.

#### Hinges

If hinges catch or drawer glides become sluggish, a small amount of silicone lubricant will improve their performance.

#### Moisture

Damage to cabinet surfaces and warping can result from operating appliances that generate large amounts of moisture (such as a crockpot) too near the cabinet. When operating such appliances, place them in a location that is not directly under a cabinet.

## Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During the orientation, we will confirm that all cabinet parts are installed and that their surfaces are in acceptable condition.

### Alignment

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

### Operation

Cabinets should operate properly under normal use.

### Separations

We will correct gaps between cabinets and the ceiling or cabinets and the walls by caulking or other means if the gap exceeds 1/4 inch (locations behind appliances are excluded from this repair).

### Warping

If doors or drawer fronts warp in excess of 1/4 inch within 24 inches, we will correct this by adjustment or replacement. The manufacturer guidelines change from time to time and may supersede what is considered acceptable. We will base our decision on the most current manufacturer guideline at the time of inspection.

### Wood Grain

Readily noticeable variations in wood grain and color are normal in all wood or wood veneer selections. Replacements are not made due to such variations.

## **Carpet**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Your selection sheets provide a record of the brand, style, and color of floor coverings in your home. Please retain this information for future reference. Refer to the various manufacturer recommendations for additional information on the care of your floor coverings.

### Burns

Take care of any kind of burn immediately. First snip off the darkened fibers. Then use a soapless cleaner and sponge with water. If the burn is extensive, talk with a professional about replacing the damaged area.

### Cleaning

You can add years to the life of your carpet with regular care. Carpet wears out because of foot traffic and dirt particles that get trampled deep into the pile beyond the suction of the vacuum. The dirt particles wear down the fibers like sandpaper and dull the carpet. The most important thing you can do to protect your carpet is to

vacuum it frequently.

Vacuum twice each week lightly and once a week thoroughly. Heavy traffic areas may require more frequent cleaning. A light vacuuming is three passes; a thorough job may need seven passes. A vacuum cleaner with a beater-bar agitates the pile and is more effective in bringing dirt to the surface for easy removal.

Vacuuming high-traffic areas daily helps keep them clean and maintains the upright position of the nap. Wipe spills and clean stains immediately. For best results, blot or dab any spill or stain; avoid rubbing. Test stain removers on an out-of-the-way area of the carpet, such as in a closet, to check for any undesirable effects.

Have your carpet professionally cleaned regularly, usually after 18 months in your home and then once a year after that. Extended carpet warranties will not be honored by the manufacturer without proof of proper care such as cleaning receipts.

**Crushing**

Furniture and traffic may crush a carpet's pile fibers. Frequent vacuuming in high-traffic areas and glides or cups under heavy pieces of furniture can help prevent this. Rotating your furniture to change the traffic pattern in a room promotes more even wear. Some carpets resist matting and crushing because of their level of fiber, but this does not imply or guarantee that no matting or crushing will occur. Heavy traffic areas such as halls and stairways are more susceptible to wear and crushing. This is considered normal wear.

**Fading**

Science has yet to develop a color that will not fade with time. All carpets will slowly lose some color due to natural and artificial forces in the environment. You can delay this process by frequently removing soil with vacuuming, regularly changing air filters in heating and air conditioning systems, keeping humidity and room temperature from getting too high, and reducing sunlight exposure with window coverings.

**Filtration**

If interior doors are kept closed while the air conditioning is operating, air circulation from the closed room flows through the small space at the bottom of the door. This forces the air over the carpet fibers, which in turn act as a filter, catching particulate pollution. Over time, a noticeable stain develops at the threshold.

See also Ghosting.

**Fuzzing**

In loop carpets, fibers may break. Simply clip the excess fibers. If it continues, call a professional.

**Pilling**

Pilling or small balls of fiber can appear on your carpet, depending on the type of carpet fiber and the type of traffic. If this occurs, clip off the pills. If they cover a large area, seek professional advice.

## Rippling

With wall-to-wall carpeting, high humidity may cause rippling. If the carpet remains rippled after the humidity has left, have a professional restretch the carpeting using a power stretcher, not a knee-kicker. Seams

Carpet usually comes in 12-foot widths, making seams necessary in most rooms. Visible seams are not a defect unless they have been improperly made or unless the material has a defect, making the seam appear more pronounced than normal. The more dense and uniform the carpet texture, the more visible the seams will be.

Carpet styles with low, tight naps result in the most visible seams. Seams are never more visible than when the carpet is first installed. Usually with time, use, and vacuuming the seams become less visible. You can see examples in the model homes of how carpet seams diminish after they have been vacuumed repeatedly and have experienced traffic.

## Shading

Shading is an inherent quality of fine-cut pile carpets. Household traffic causes pile fibers to assume different angles; as a result, the carpet appears darker or lighter in these areas. A good vacuuming, which makes the pile all go in the same direction, provides a temporary remedy.

## Shedding

New carpeting, especially pile, sheds bits of fiber for a period of time. Eventually these loose fibers are removed by vacuuming. Shedding usually occurs more with wool carpeting than with nylon or other synthetics.

## Snags

Sharp-edged objects can grab or snag the carpet fiber. When this occurs, cut off the snag. If the snag is especially large, call a professional.

## Sprouting

Occasionally you may find small tufts of fiber sprouting above carpet surface. Simply use scissors to cut off the sprout. Do not attempt to pull it, because other fibers will come out in the process.

## Stains

No carpet is stain-proof. Although your carpet manufacturer designates your carpet as stain-resistant, some substances may still cause permanent staining. These include hair dyes, shoe polish, paints, and India ink. Some substances destroy or change the color of carpets, including bleaches, acne medications, drain cleaners, plant food, insecticides, and food or beverages with strongly colored natural dyes as found in some brands of mustard and herbal tea. Refer to your care and maintenance brochures for recommended cleaning procedures for your particular fiber. Pretest any spot-removal solution in an inconspicuous area before using it in a large area. Apply several drops of the solution, hold a white tissue on the area, and

count to ten. Examine both tissue and carpet for dye transfer and check for carpet damage.

#### Static

Cooler temperatures outside often contribute to static electricity inside. To avoid the problem, look for carpets made with anti-static. You can also install a humidifier to help control static build-up.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your orientation, we will confirm that your carpet is in acceptable condition. We will correct stains or spots noted at this time by cleaning, patching, or replacement. Bennett Miller Homes is not responsible for dye lot variations if replacements are made.

#### Edges

Edges of carpet along moldings and edges of stairs should be held firmly in place. In some areas, metal or other edging material may be used where carpet meets another floor covering.

#### Seams

Carpet seams will be visible. Bennett Miller Homes will repair any gaps or fraying.

### **Caulking**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Time and weather will shrink and dry caulking so that it no longer provides a good seal. As routine maintenance, check the caulking and make needed repairs. Caulking compounds and dispenser guns are available at hardware stores. Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully to be certain that you select an appropriate caulk for the intended purpose.

#### Colored Caulk

Colored caulking is available where larger selections are provided. As with any colored material, dye lots can vary.

#### Latex Caulk

Latex caulking is appropriate for an area that requires painting, such as along the stair stringer or where wood trim meets the wall. Silicone Caulk

Caulking that contains silicone will not accept paint; it works best where water is present, for example, where tub meets tile or a sink meets a countertop.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

## One-Time Repair

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

See also Countertops, Expansion and Contraction, Stairs, and Wood Trim.

## **Ceramic Tile**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Your selection sheets include the brand and color of your ceramic tile, if any.

#### Cleaning

Ceramic tile is one of the easiest floor coverings to maintain. Simply vacuum when needed. Occasionally, a wet mopping with warm water may be appropriate. Avoid adding detergent to the water. If you feel a cleaning agent is required, use a mild solution of warm water and dishwasher crystals (they will not result in a heavy, difficult-to-remove lather on the grout). Rinse thoroughly.

The ceramic tile installed on walls or countertops in your home may be washed with any nonabrasive soap, detergent, or tile cleaner. Abrasive cleaners will dull the finish.

#### Grout Discoloration

Clean grout that becomes yellowed or stained with a fiber brush, cleanser, and water. Grout cleansers and whiteners are available at most hardware stores.

#### Sealing Grout

Sealing grout is your decision and responsibility. Once grout has been sealed, ongoing maintenance of that seal is necessary and limited warranty coverage on grout that has been sealed is void. Separations

Expect slight separations to occur in the grout between tiles. This grout is for decorative purposes only; it does not hold the tile in place. Cracks in the grout can be filled using premixed grout purchased from flooring or hardware stores. Follow package directions.

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

### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During the orientation we confirm that tile and grout areas are in acceptable condition. We will repair or replace cracked, badly chipped, or loose tiles noted at that time. Bennett Miller Homes is not responsible for variations in color or discontinued patterns. New grout may vary in color from the original.

## One-Time Repair

Cracks appearing in grouting of ceramic tiles at joints or junctions with other materials are commonly due to shrinkage. Bennett Miller Homes will repair grouting, if necessary, one time during the first year. We are not responsible for color variations in grout or discontinued colored grout. Any grouting or caulking that is needed after that time is your responsibility.

## Concrete Flatwork

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

By maintaining good drainage, you protect your home's foundation and the concrete flatwork: the porch, patio, garage floor, and sidewalks.

Concrete slabs are floating - they are not attached to the home's foundation walls. These are not a major structural (load-bearing) element of the home and are only covered during the one year material and workmanship warranty.

Bennett Miller Homes incorporates the appropriate details in the construction of the foundation because we know the floor will move in response to the soils. Movement of the any concrete slab results in cracking. You can minimize this movement by following landscaping recommendations, the objective of which is to prevent moisture from reaching soils around and under the home. The important point is that a certain amount of cracking is to be expected and should not be cause for alarm

### Cleaning

Avoid washing exterior concrete slabs with cold water from an outside faucet when temperatures are high and the sun has been shining on the concrete. The abrupt change in temperature can damage the surface bond of the concrete. We recommend sweeping for keeping exterior concrete clean. If washing is necessary, do this when temperatures are moderate. Repeated cleaning of the garage floor by hosing can increase soil movement by allowing water to penetrate any existing cracks. We recommend sweeping to clean the garage floor.

### Cracks

A concrete slab 10 feet across shrinks approximately 5/8 inch as it cures. Some of this shrinkage shows up as cracks. Cracking of concrete flatwork also results from temperature changes that cause expansion and contraction.

During the summer, moisture finds its way under the concrete along the edges or through cracks in the surface. In winter, this moisture forms frost that can lift the concrete, increasing the cracking. Maintaining drainage away from all concrete slabs will minimize cracking from this cause.

As cracks occur, seal them with a waterproof concrete caulk (available at hardware or home improvement stores) to prevent moisture from penetrating to the soil beneath.

### Expansion Joints

We install expansion joints to help control expansion. However, as the concrete shrinks during the curing process, moisture can penetrate under the concrete and lift the expansion joint. When this occurs, fill the resulting gap with a gray silicone sealant, which you can purchase at most hardware stores.

#### Heavy Vehicles

Prohibit commercial or other extremely heavy vehicles such as moving vans and other large delivery trucks from pulling onto your driveway. We design and install concrete drives for conventional residential vehicle use only: family cars, vans, light trucks, bicycles, and so on.

#### Ice, Snow, and Chemicals

Driving or parking on snow creates ice on the drive, which magnifies the effects of snow on the concrete surface. Remove ice and snow from concrete slabs as promptly as possible after snow storms. Protect concrete from abuse by chemical agents such as pet urine, fertilizers, radiator overflow, repeated hosing, or de-icing agents, such as road salt that can drip from vehicles. All of these items can cause spalling (chipping of the surface) of concrete.

#### Post-Tension Slabs

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

#### Sealer

A concrete sealer, available at paint stores, will help you keep an unpainted concrete floor clean. Do not use soap on unpainted concrete. Instead, use plain water and washing soda or, if necessary, a scouring powder.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Concrete slabs are floating - they are not attached to the home's foundation walls. The limited warranty coverage is for one year unless the requirements of your loan state otherwise.

#### Color

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

#### Cracks

If concrete cracks reach 1/4 of an inch in width or vertical displacement, Bennett Miller Homes will patch or repair them one time during the warranty year. Subsequently, concrete slab maintenance is your responsibility. If you prefer to have the slab replaced, we will obtain a price for you and assist in scheduling the work upon receipt of your payment. However, we advise against this expense since the new slab will crack as well.

## Finished Floors

Bennett Miller Homes will correct cracks, settling, or heaving that rupture finish floor materials that we installed as part of the home as you originally purchased it.

## Level Floors

Concrete floors in the habitable areas of the home will be level to within 1/4 inch within any 32-inch measurement with the exception of an area specifically designed to slope toward a floor drain.

## Separation

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

## Settling or Heaving

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

## Spalling (Surface Chips)

Causes of spalling include repeated hosing of concrete for cleaning, animal urine, radiator overflow, fertilizer, uncleared snow and ice, ice-melting agents, and road salts from vehicles. Repair of spalling is a home maintenance task. Municipal snow plows are generally the greatest source for salt in your driveway as they spray the snow missed with salt from the road onto your drive. This condition is not covered by warranty as outlined in your limited warranty statement signed at closing.

## Standing Water

Water may stand on exterior concrete slabs for several hours after precipitation or from roof run-off. Bennett Miller Homes will correct conditions that cause water to remain longer than 24 hours unless it is from roof run-off of melting snow or ice.

## **Condensation**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

When warm, moist air comes into contact with cooler surfaces, the moisture condenses. Outside we see this as dew; inside you may see it as a layer of moisture on glass windows and doors. This condensation comes from high humidity within the home combined with low outside temperatures and inadequate ventilation. Family lifestyle significantly influences two out of three of these conditions.

### New Construction

Some experts have estimated that a typical new home contains 50 gallons of water. Water is part of lumber, concrete, drywall texture, paint, caulk, and other materials used in building. Wet weather during construction adds more. This moisture

evaporates into the air as you live in your home - adding to the moisture generated by normal living activities. Over time, this source of moisture will diminish.

#### Normal Activities

As you live in your home, your daily lifestyle contributes to the moisture in the air also. Cooking, laundry, baths and showers, aquariums, plants, and so on all add water to the air in your home. Likewise, your daily routine can mitigate the amount of moisture in your home and reduce condensation on interior surfaces.

#### Temperature

Avoid setting your thermostat at extreme temperatures. Heating your home will cause the materials to dry out faster, generating more moisture into the air; drying the materials out too fast also increases shrinkage cracks and separations.

#### Ventilation

Develop the habit of using exhaust fans in bathrooms and over the stove. When weather conditions permit, open windows so fresh air can circulate through your home. Keep the dryer exhaust hose clean and securely connected.

See also Ventilation.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Condensation results from weather conditions and a family's lifestyle. Bennett Miller Homes has no control over these factors. The limited warranty coverage excludes condensation.

### **Countertops**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Use a cutting board to protect your counters when you cut or chop. Protect the counter from heat and from extremely hot pans. If you cannot put your hand on it, do not put it on the counter. Do not use countertops as ironing boards and do not set lighted cigarettes on the edge of the counter.

#### Caulking

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

#### Cleaning

Avoid abrasive cleaners that will damage the luster of the surface.

#### Mats

Rubber drain mats can trap moisture beneath them, causing the laminated plastic to warp and blister. Dry the surface as needed.

#### Wax

Wax is not necessary, but it can be used to make counters gleam.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your orientation we confirm that all countertops are in acceptable condition. We repair noticeable surface damage such as chips, cracks, and scratches noted on the orientation list. Repair of surface damage noted subsequent to this is one of your home maintenance responsibilities.

#### Laminates

Laminated countertops will have one or more discernible seams. Bennett Miller Homes will repair gaps or differential at the seams that exceed 1/16 inch.

#### Manufactured Marble

Edges should be smooth and even. Where backsplash joints occur at corners, the top edges should be even within 1/16 inch.

#### Separation from Wall

Separation of countertops from walls, backsplash, and around sinks results from normal shrinkage of materials. Gaps can be as much as 1/8 inch in areas. Bennett Miller Homes will recaulk these areas one time during the materials and workmanship warranty. Subsequently caulking will be your home maintenance responsibility.

### **Doors and Locks**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The doors installed in your home are metal or wood products. Natural fluctuations caused by humidity and the use of forced air furnaces, showers, and dishwashers, interior doors may occasionally require minor adjustments.

#### Bifold Doors

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

#### Exterior Finish

Reseal painted exterior doors whenever the finish begins cracking or crazing.

#### Failure to Latch

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

plate accordingly.

### Hinges

You can remedy a squeaky door hinge by removing the hinge pin and applying a silicone lubricant to it. Avoid using oil, as it can gum up or attract dirt. Graphite works well as a lubricant but can create a gray smudge on the door or floor covering beneath the hinge if too much is applied.

### Keys

Keep a duplicate privacy lock key where children cannot reach it in the event a youngster locks him- or herself in a room. The top edge of the door casing is often used as a place to keep the key. A small screwdriver or similarly shaped device can open some types of privacy locks.

### Locks

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

### Shrinkage

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

### Slamming

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

### Sticking

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

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

### Warping

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

### Weather Stripping

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

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

#### Adjustments

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

#### Panel Shrinkage

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

#### Warping

Bennett Miller Homes will repair doors that warp in excess of 1/4 inch.

### **Drywall**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Slight cracking, nail pops, or seams may become visible in walls and ceilings. These are caused by the shrinkage of the wood and normal deflection of rafters to which the drywall is attached.

#### Ceilings

The ceilings in your home are easy to maintain: periodically remove dust or cobwebs as part of your normal cleaning and repaint as needed.

#### Repairs

With the exception of the one-time repair service provided by Bennett Miller Homes, care of drywall is your maintenance responsibility. Most drywall repairs can be easily made. This work is best done when you redecorate the room.

Repair hairline cracks with a coat of paint. You can repair slightly larger cracks with spackle or caulk. To correct a nail pop, reset the nail with a hammer and punch. Cover it with spackle, which is available at paint and hardware stores. Apply two or three thin coats. When dry, sand the surface with fine-grain sandpaper, and then paint. You can fill indentations caused by sharp objects in the same manner.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

## One Time Repairs

One time during the materials and workmanship warranty, Bennett Miller Homes will repair drywall shrinkage cracks and nail pops and will touch up the repaired area using the same paint color that was on the surface when the home was delivered. Touch-ups will be visible. Repainting the entire wall or the entire room to correct this is your choice and responsibility. You are also responsible for custom paint colors or wallpaper that has been applied subsequent to closing. Due to the effects of time on paint and wallpaper, as well as possible dye lot variations, touch-ups are unlikely to match the surrounding area.

## Lighting Conditions

Bennett Miller Homes does not repair drywall flaws that are only visible under particular lighting conditions.

## Related Warranty Repairs

If a drywall repair is needed as a result of poor workmanship (such as blisters in tape) or other warranty-based repair (such as a plumbing leak), Bennett Miller Homes completes the repair by touching up the repaired area with the same paint that was on the surface when the home was delivered. If more than one-third of the wall is involved, we will repaint the wall corner to corner. You are responsible for custom paint colors or wallpaper that has been applied subsequent to closing. The effects of time on paint and wallpaper, as well as possible dye lot variations, mean touch-up may not match the surrounding area.

## **Easements**

### Homeowner Use and Care Guidelines

Easements are areas where such things as utility supply lines can pass through your property. They permit service to your lot and adjacent lots, now and in the future. Your lot will also include drainage easements, meaning the runoff from adjacent lots passes across your property. Likewise, water from your property may run across a neighboring lot. Easements are recorded and are permanent.

Trees, shrubs, gardens, play equipment, storage sheds, fences or other items which you install in or across these easements may be disturbed if service entities - such as the gas, electric, or phone companies - need access to lines for repairs or to connect service to nearby homesites.

Utility companies, the United States Postal Service, and others have the right to install equipment in easements. These might include streetlights, mailboxes, or junction boxes to name a few. Neither Bennett Miller Homes nor you as the homeowner have the authority to prevent, interfere with, or alter these installations. Plans for the location of such items are subject to change by the various entities involved. Because they have no obligation to keep Bennett Miller Homes informed of such changes, we are unable to predict specific sites that will include such equipment.

See also Property Boundaries.

## **Electrical System**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Know the location of the breaker panel; it includes a main shut-off that controls all the electrical power to the home. Individual breakers control the separate circuits. Each breaker is marked to help you identify which breaker is connected to which major appliances, outlets, or other service. Should a failure occur in any part of your home, always check the breakers in the main panel box.

#### Breakers

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

#### Breakers Tripping

Breakers trip because of overloads caused by plugging too many appliances into the circuit, a worn cord or defective appliance, or operating an appliance with too high a voltage requirement for the circuit. The starting of an electric motor can also trip a breaker.

If any circuit trips repeatedly, unplug all items connected to it and reset. If it trips when nothing is connected to it, you need an electrician. If the circuit remains on, one of the items you unplugged is defective and will require repair or replacement.

#### Buzzing

Fluorescent fixtures use transformer action to operate. This action sometimes causes a buzzing.

#### Fixture Location

We install light fixtures in the locations indicated on the plans. Moving fixtures to accommodate specific furniture arrangements or room use is your responsibility.

#### GFCI (Ground-Fault Circuit-Interrupters)

GFCI receptacles have a built-in element that senses fluctuations in power. Quite simply, the GFCI is a circuit breaker. Building codes require installation of these receptacles in bathrooms, the kitchen, outside, and the garage (areas where an individual can come into contact with water while holding an electric appliance or tool). Heavy appliances such as freezers or power tools will trip the GFCI breaker.

Caution: Never plug a refrigerator or food freezer into a GFCI-controlled outlet. The likelihood of the contents being ruined is high and the limited warranty does not cover such damage. Each GFCI circuit has a test and reset button. Once each month, press the test button. This will trip the circuit. To return service, press the reset button. If a GFCI breaker trips during normal use, it may indicate a faulty appliance and you will need to investigate the problem. One GFCI breaker can control up to three or four outlets.

## Grounded System

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

## Light Bulbs

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

## Luminous Light Panels

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

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

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

## Modifications

If you wish to make any modifications, contact the electrician listed on the Emergency Phone Numbers you receive at the orientation. Having another electrician modify your electrical system during the warranty period can void that portion of your limited warranty.

## Outlets

If an outlet is not working, check first to see if it is controlled by a wall switch or GFCI. Next, check the breaker.

If there are small children in the home, install safety plugs to cover unused outlets. This also minimizes the air infiltration that sometimes occurs with these outlets. Teach children to never touch electrical outlets, sockets, or fixtures. Underground Cables

Before digging, check the location of buried service leads by calling the local utility locating service. In most cases, wires run in a straight line from the service panel to the nearest public utility pad. Maintain positive drainage around the foundation to protect electrical service connections.

## Street Lighting

Your home may include either a street light mounted on a pole in your front yard, or a street light attached to the back of your car port. This light is your responsibility to maintain. Any incandescent or fluorescent bulb, up to 200 watts, may be used.

## Under- or Over-Cabinet Lights

The selection of optional under- or over-cabinet lighting provides either task lighting or atmosphere to your kitchen. We suggest you note the size and type of bulbs in these fixtures and keep replacements on hand.

## Troubleshooting Tips: No Electrical Service

### No Electrical Service Anywhere in the Home

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:  
service is not out in the entire area. If so, contact the utility company.  
main breaker and individual breakers are all in the on position.

### No Electrical to One or More Outlets

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:  
main breaker and individual breakers are all in the on position.  
Applicable wall switch is on  
GFCI is set (see details on GFCIs, earlier in this section)  
Item you want to use is plugged in  
Item you want to use works in other outlets  
Bulb in the lamp is good

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

## Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

## Designed Load

Bennett Miller Homes will repair any electrical wiring that fails to carry its designed load to meet specifications. If electrical outlets, switches, or fixtures do not function as intended, Bennett Miller Homes will repair or replace them.

## GFCI (Ground-Fault Circuit-Interrupters)

Bennett Miller Homes is not responsible for food spoilage that results from your plugging refrigerators or freezers into a GFCI outlet.

## Power Surge

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

## **Expansion and Contraction**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Changes in temperature and humidity cause all building materials to expand and contract. Dissimilar materials expand or contract at different rates. This movement results in separation between materials, particularly dissimilar ones. You will see the effects in small cracks in drywall and in paint, especially where moldings meet drywall, at mitered corners, and where tile grout meets tub or sink. While this can alarm an uninformed homeowner, it is normal.

Shrinkage of the wood members of your home is inevitable and occurs in every new home. Although this is most noticeable during the first year, it may continue beyond that time. In most cases, caulk and paint are all that you need to conceal this minor evidence of a natural phenomenon. Even though properly installed, caulking shrinks and cracks. Maintenance of caulking is your responsibility.

### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty

Bennett Miller Homes provides one-time repairs to many of the effects of expansion and contraction. See individual categories such as drywall and caulk for details. Subsequent maintenance is the responsibility of the homeowner.

## **Fencing**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Depending on the community in which your home is located, fencing may be included with your home, it may be an optional item, or it may be an item you consider adding after your move-in. When Bennett Miller Homes installs fencing as part of your new home, we confirm its good condition during your orientation. All types of fencing require some routine attention.

### Drainage

In planning, installing, and maintaining fencing, allow existing drainage patterns to function unimpeded. When installing a fence, use caution in distributing soil removed to set posts to avoid blocking drainage swales. Plan enough space under the bottom of a wood fence for water to pass through.

Bennett Miller Homes recommends that you engage the services of professionals to install your fence. Be certain to inform a fence installer of all design review requirements.

See also Property Boundaries.

### Variation

Height and location of Bennett Miller Homes installed fences will vary with lot size, topography, and shape.

### Wood Fences

The lumber used to construct wood fences is treated lumber. Over time it will crack, warp, and split. Unless extreme, these conditions require no action on your part. As the wood ages and shrinks, nails may come loose and require attention. Also check the posts and any gates twice a year and tighten hardware or make needed adjustments.

### Wrought Iron Fencing

Wrought iron is subject to rusting, if it is not maintained. Use touch-up paint on any scratches or chips. Inspect the fence twice a year and touch-up as needed, then plan to repaint the entire fence every one to two years to keep it looking its best.

As with wood fencing, prevent sprinklers from spraying your wrought iron fence or rails. Check monthly to confirm that water does not stand around the fence posts. Make corrections to drainage as needed to prevent this.

### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty

If fencing is part of your home purchase, we will confirm the acceptable condition of the fence during your orientation. Bennett Miller Homes will correct fence posts that become loose during the warranty period. Be aware that damage to fencing caused by severe weather should be referred to your homeowner insurance company and is specifically excluded from warranty coverage.

## **Foundation**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

We install the foundation of your home according to the recommendations of our consulting engineer. The foundation is poured concrete with post-tension steel cables. To protect your home's foundation, follow guidelines for installation and maintenance of landscaping and drainage in this manual.

### Cracks

Even though an engineer designed the foundation and we constructed it according to engineering requirements, surface cracks can still develop. Surface cracks are not detrimental to the structural integrity of your home. If a crack develops in a foundation that allows water to come through, follow the procedures for submitting a warranty claim.

### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

The foundation of your home has been designed and installed according to the recommendations of an engineer. The walls of the foundation are poured concrete with post-tension steel cables.

### Cosmetic Imperfections

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

## Cracks

Shrinkage or backfill cracks are not unusual in foundations. Bennett Miller Homes will seal cracks that exceed 1/8 inch in width.

## Leaks

Bennett Miller Homes will correct conditions that permit water to enter the building, provided you have complied with the drainage, landscaping, and maintenance guidelines.

## **Garage Overhead Door**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Since the garage door is a large, moving object, periodic maintenance is necessary.

#### Light Visible

Garage overhead doors cannot be airtight. Some light will be visible around the edges and across the top of the door. Weather conditions may result in some precipitation entering around the door as well as some dust.

#### Lock

If the lock becomes stiff, apply a silicone or graphite lubricant. Do not use oil on a lock, as it will stiffen in winter and make the lock difficult to operate.

#### Lubrication

Every 6 months, apply a lubricant such as silicone spray to all moving parts: track, rollers, hinges, pulleys, and springs. Avoid over lubricating to prevent drips on vehicles or the concrete floor. At the same time, check to see that all hardware is tight and operating as intended without binding or scraping.

#### Opener

To prevent damage to a garage door opener, be sure the door is completely unlocked and the rope-pull has been removed before using the operator. If you have an opener installed after closing on your home, we suggest that you order it from the company that provided and installed the garage door to assure uninterrupted warranty coverage. Be familiar with the steps for manual operation of the door in the event of a power failure.

If Bennett Miller Homes installed a door opener as one of your selections, during orientation we demonstrate the electric eye that provides a safety stop in the event someone crosses through the opening while the overhead door is in motion. Use care not to place tools or other stored items where they interfere with the function of the electric eye.

Expect to replace the battery in the garage opener remote controls about once a year. The battery is usually a 9 volt.

## Painting

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

## Safety

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

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

## Sag

The garage door may sag slightly due to its weight and span. This will stabilize after the panels have dried. Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

The garage door should operate smoothly and with reasonable ease. The door can become misaligned and require adjustment, which Bennett Miller Homes will provide unless the problem is caused by the installation of a garage door opener subsequent to closing on the home.

## Ghosting

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Recent feedback from homeowners (in both old and new homes) regarding black sooty stains which develop on surfaces in homes (on carpet, walls, ceilings, appliances, mirrors, and around area rug - to list a few examples) have caused much investigation and research.

The conclusion of the research and laboratory tests has been that the majority of this staining or "ghosting" results from pollution of the air in the home caused by burning scented candles. Incomplete combustion of hydrocarbons as these candles burn contributes a considerable amount of soot to the air. This sooty substance then settles or accumulates on surfaces of the home. The sooty deposits are extremely difficult to remove; on some surfaces (light-colored carpet, for instance), they are impossible to clean completely away.

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

See also Carpet/Filtration.

## **Grading and Drainage**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The final grades around your home have been inspected and approved for proper drainage of your lot. Yards drain from one to another. You and your neighbors share an overall drainage plan for the community. Use caution when installing landscaping, fencing, or additions to your home to prevent causing water problems on adjacent lots.

#### Drainage

Typically, the grade around your home tapers to a 2 percent slope. In most cases, drainage swales do not follow property boundaries. Maintain the slopes around your home to permit the water to drain away from the home as rapidly as possible. This is essential to protect your foundation. Failure to do so can result in damage and will void your warranty.

#### Exterior Finish Materials

Maintain soil levels 6 inches below siding, stucco, brick, or other exterior finish materials. Contact with the soil can cause deterioration of the exterior finish material and encourages pest infestations.

#### Roof Water

It is the homeowner responsibility to install gutters and downspouts as they see fit in order to maintain proper drainage and run-off.

#### Rototilling

Rototilling can significantly change drainage swales. You can minimize this by rototilling parallel to any swales rather than across them.

#### Settling

The area we excavated for your home's foundation was larger than the home to allow room to work. In addition, some trenching is necessary for installation of utility lines. Although we replaced and compacted the soil, it does not return to its original density. Some settling will occur, especially after prolonged or heavy rainfall or melting of large amounts of snow. Settling can continue for several years. Inspect the perimeter of your home regularly for signs of settling and fill settled areas as needed to maintain positive drainage.

#### Subsurface Drains

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

See also Landscaping.

Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

We established the final grade to ensure adequate drainage away from the home. Maintaining this drainage is your responsibility. If you alter the drainage pattern after closing, or if changes in drainage occur due to lack of maintenance or a delay in landscaping, the limited warranty is void.

#### Backfill Settlement

Backfilled or excavated areas around the foundation and at utility trenches should not interfere with the drainage away from your home. If these areas settle during the first year, Bennett Miller Homes will fill the areas one time and subsequently will provide you with fill dirt to maintain positive drainage.

#### Erosion

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

#### New Sod

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

#### Recommendations

Bennett Miller Homes documents the grades that exist at the time of delivery of your home or as soon thereafter as possible. The ground must be dry and free of frost to make these determinations. Once final grades are set, Bennett Miller Homes will inspect drainage problems reported in writing during the warranty period, compare grades to those originally established, and advise you on corrective actions you might take.

#### Soil Information

We provide soil information when the purchase agreement is written or as soon thereafter as it becomes available. Landscaping recommendations are designed based on soils and engineering reports and thus may vary slightly.

#### Swales

Bennett Miller Homes does not alter drainage patterns to suit individual landscape plans. Typically, a lot receives water from and passes water on to other lots, so changes in grade often affect adjacent or nearby lots. Bennett Miller Homes advises against making such changes. After heavy rain or snow, water may stand in swales up to 48 hours.

#### Under Concrete

Bennett Miller Homes will fill visible sunken areas under concrete during the first year.

#### Winter Grading

Due to weather conditions, especially during winter and early spring, the final grade may not have been established at the time of closing. We document the status of your grading at the time of delivery. When conditions permit, grading work will continue. Confirm that we have completed your grading before beginning landscaping.

## **Gutters and Downspouts**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Gutters and downspouts are an important maintenance item as lack of cleaning or clearing can lead to roof leaks. Check gutters periodically and remove leaves or other debris. A tall ladder will be required and safe ladder procedures must be followed to properly maintain gutters. Materials that accumulate in gutters can slow water drainage from the roof, cause overflows, and clog the downspouts. Ice that is building up in gutters can cause an ice dam leak. It is the homeowners responsibility to repair any such resulting leaks. See snow and ice below.

### Extensions or Splashblocks

Extensions should discharge outside of rock or bark beds so that water is not dammed behind the edging materials that might be used.

### Ladders

Use caution when leaning ladders against gutters, as this may cause dents.

### Snow and Ice

Clear excess snow from downspouts as soon as possible to allow the gutter to drain and to prevent damage. Severe ice or snow build-up can damage gutters, and such damage is not covered by the limited warranty.

See also Roof/Ice Dam.

### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Gutters over 3 feet long are installed with a slight slope so that roof water will flow to the downspouts.

### Overflow

Gutters may overflow during periods of excessively heavy rain. This is expected and requires no repair.

### Standing Water

Small amounts of water (up to one inch) will stand for short periods of time in gutters immediately after rain. No correction is required for these conditions.

## **Hardware**

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Doorknobs and locks should operate correctly with little attention. Over time, they may need slight adjustments due to normal shrinkage of the framing. Occasionally, you may need to tighten screws or lubrication.

## Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

Bennett Miller Homes will repair hardware items that do not function as intended.

## **Hardwood Floors**

If Bennett Miller Homes installed hardwood floors as one of your selections, you will need to take the following steps to maintain the floor.

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

#### Cleaning

Sweep on a daily basis or as needed. Never wet-mop a hardwood floor. Excessive water causes wood to expand and can possibly damage the floor. When polyurethane finishes become soiled, damp-mop with a mixture of 1 cup vinegar to one gallon of warm water. When damp-mopping, remove all excess water from the mop. Check with the hardwood company if your floor has a water-based finish.

#### Dimples

Placing heavy furniture or dropping heavy or sharp objects on hardwood floors can result in dimples.

#### Filmy Appearance

A white, filmy appearance can result from moisture, often from wet shoes or boots.

#### Furniture Legs

Install proper floor protectors on furniture placed on hardwood floors. Protectors will allow chairs to move easily over the floor without scuffing. Regularly clean the protectors to remove any grit that may have accumulated.

#### Humidity

Wood floors respond noticeably to changes in humidity in your home. Especially during winter months the individual planks or pieces expand and contract as water content changes. A humidifier helps but does not eliminate this reaction.

#### Mats and Area Rugs

Use protective mats at the exterior doors to help prevent sand and grit from getting on the floor. Gritty sand is wood flooring's worst enemy. However, be aware that rubber backing on area rugs or mats can cause yellowing and warping of the floor surface. Recoat

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

### Separation

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

See also Warping.

### Shoes

Keep high heels in good repair. Heels that have lost their protective cap (thus exposing the fastening nail) will exert over 8,000 pounds of pressure per square inch on the floor. That's enough to damage hardened concrete; it will mark your wood floor.

### Spills

Clean up food spills immediately with a dry cloth. Use a vinegar-and-warm-water solution for tough food spills.

### Splinters

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

### Sun Exposure

Exposure to direct sunlight can cause irreparable damage to hardwood floors. To preserve the beauty of your hardwood floors, install and use window coverings in these areas.

### Traffic Paths

A dulling of the finish in heavy traffic areas is likely.

### Warping

Warping will occur if the floor repeatedly becomes wet or is thoroughly soaked even once. Slight warping in the area of heat vents or heat-producing appliances is also typical. Wax

Waxing and the use of products like oil soap are neither necessary nor recommended. Once you wax a polyurethane finish floor, recoating is difficult because the new finish will not bond to the wax. The preferred maintenance is

preventive cleaning and recoating annually or as needed to maintain the desired luster.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During the orientation we will confirm that hardwood floors are in acceptable condition. We will correct any readily noticeable cosmetic defects listed during the orientation. You are responsible for routine maintenance of hardwood floors.

#### Separations

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

\* For Laminate wood flooring, see Laminate

### **Heating System: Electric Forced Air**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Good maintenance of your furnace can save energy dollars and prolong the life of the furnace. Carefully read and follow the manufacturer's literature on use and maintenance. The guidelines here include general information only.

#### Adjust Vents

Experiment with the adjustable registers in your home to establish the best heat flow for your lifestyle. Generally, you can reduce the heat in seldom-used or interior rooms. This is an individual matter and you will need to balance the system for your own family's needs.

#### Avoid Overheating

Do not overheat your new home. Overheating can cause excessive shrinkage of framing lumber and may materially damage the home. In the beginning, use as little heat as possible and increase it gradually.

#### Duct Cleaning

Exercise caution before spending money on professional ductwork cleaning services. A study by the EPA found no proof that ductwork cleaning improves indoor air quality, nor was evidence found that it prevents health problems. For more information contact the EPA and request document EPA-402-K-97-002. Or you can view this information on their Website: [www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/).

#### Ductwork Noise

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

#### Filter

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

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

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

#### Furnished Home

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

#### Odor

A new heating system may emit an odor for a few moments when you first turn it on. An established system may emit an odor after being unused for an extended time (such as after the summer months if you do not use air conditioning). This is caused by dust that has settled in the ducts or on the heating coils and should pass quickly.

#### Registers

Heat register covers are removable and adjustable. You are responsible for adjusting the dampers in these covers to regulate the heat flow within the home. Registers in the rooms farther away from the furnace will usually need to be opened wider.

#### Return Air Vents

For maximum comfort and efficient energy use, arrange furniture and draperies to allow unobstructed airflow from registers and to cold air returns.

#### Temperature

Depending on the style of home, temperatures can normally vary from floor to floor as much as 10 degrees or more on extremely cold days. The furnace blower will typically cycle on and off more frequently and for shorter periods during severe cold spells.

#### Thermostat

The furnace will come on automatically when the temperature at the thermostat registers below the setting you have selected. Once the furnace is on, setting the thermostat to a higher temperature will not heat the home faster. Thermostats are calibrated to within plus or minus 5 degrees.

## Trial Run

Have a trial run early in the fall to test the furnace. (The same applies to air conditioning in the spring.) If service is needed, it is much better to discover that before the heating season.

## Troubleshooting Tips: No Heat

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

Thermostat is set to "heat" and the temperature is set above the room temperature.  
Breaker on the main electrical panel is on. (Remember, if a breaker trips you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.)  
Filter is clean to allow airflow.  
Vents in individual rooms are open.  
Air returns are unobstructed.

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

## Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will install heating systems according to local building codes, as well as to engineering designs of the particular model home.

Adequacy of the system is determined by its ability to establish a temperature of 70 degrees F, as measured in the center of the room, 5 feet above the floor. In extremely cold temperatures (10 degrees below or colder), the system should be able to maintain a temperature differential of 80 degrees from the outside temperature.

## Duct Placement

The exact placement of heat ducts may vary from those positions shown in similar floor plans.

## Ductwork

Although the heat system is not a sealed system, the ductwork should remain attached and securely fastened. If it becomes unattached, Bennett Miller Homes will repair as needed.

## Furnace Sounds

Expansion or contraction of metal ductwork results in ticking or popping sounds. While eliminating all these sounds is impossible, Bennett Miller Homes will correct oil canning. (Oil canning occurs when a large area of sheet metal like those found in air ducts makes a loud noise as it moves up and down in response to temperature changes.)

## Thermostat

Thermostats are calibrated to plus or minus 5 degrees.

## **Insulation**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Electrical outlets normally emit noticeable amounts of cold air when outside temperatures are low.

### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Bennett Miller Homes will install insulation to meet or exceed the building codes applicable at the time of construction and outlined as part of your purchase agreement.

## **Laminate Flooring**

If Bennett Miller Homes installed laminate floors as one of your selections, you will need to take the following steps to maintain the floor.

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The laminate flooring in your home is a great value that is built to last when cared for properly. It is important to remember not to allow water to stand on your laminate floor for any length of time. This flooring has a laminate surface, with a wood underlayment. Like a hardwood floor, you want to keep the wood dry in order to prevent warping. A damp mop is really all that is needed to keep these floors clean. You may also wish to obtain Laminate Floor Cleaner for occasional deep cleaning. Your manufacturer probably carries their own brand.

Laminate flooring is very durable, but it is not indestructible. You may have seen commercials showing a bowling ball dropping off of a counter onto a laminate floor without causing damage. This type of advertisement has led to the false sense of security. Please take care not to drop sharp or heavy objects as they can damage the floor. If such damage occurs, we will be happy to help you get in touch with a flooring expert who can patch, repair, or replace affected boards for a reasonable charge.

### Natural Variations

Patterns are developed to match real wood as closely as reasonable. This means that a woodlike grain may appear in an irregular pattern to add to the authenticity of the pattern. This is not a defect in the product.

### Seams

The seams between the planks of laminate flooring may peak and gap slightly with seasonal weather variations. This is because the flooring is real wood below the laminate and this wood will expand and contract slightly each year. This is considered a normal characteristic of laminate flooring.

### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Gaps in excess of 1/8" between planks will be repaired by floating and securing the

planks appropriately during the warranty period.

Laminate damage caused by water infiltration reported before the close of the property will be replaced with the closest possible match to the laminate selection. It is important to note that colors and patterns are discontinued regularly and an exact match for service or warranty cannot be guaranteed. Damage caused by water infiltration of any type after the close of the home is the responsibility of the homeowner. Such damage is can be avoided by securing the leak immediately and removing the water, which is a homeowner responsibility.

## **Landscaping**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Providing complete details on landscape design is beyond the scope of this manual. Many excellent books, videos, and computer software programs are available that offer your this information. Local nurseries and landscape professionals can also assist you.

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

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

### Additions

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

### Backfill

We construct the foundation of your home beginning with an excavation into the earth. When the foundation is complete, the area surrounding it is backfilled. Soil in this area is not as compact as undisturbed ground. Water can penetrate through the backfill area to your foundation. Avoid this through proper installation of landscaping and good maintenance of drainage.

Backfill areas will settle and require prompt attention to avoid damage to your home.

Keep downspout extensions in the down position to channel roof runoff away from the foundation area of your home. Routine inspection of downspouts, backfill areas, and other drainage components is an excellent maintenance habit.

See also Grading and Drainage.

### Bark or Rock Beds

Do not allow edging around decorative rock or bark beds to dam the free flow of water away from the home. You can use a nonwoven landscape fabric between the soil and rock or bark to restrict weed growth while still permitting normal evaporation of ground moisture.

### Erosion

Until your yard is established and stable, erosion will be a potential concern. Heavy rains or roof runoff can erode soil. The sooner you restore the grade to its original condition, the less damage will occur.

Erosion is of special concern in drainage swales. If swales become filled with soil runoff, they may not drain the rest of the yard, causing further problems. Correcting erosion is your responsibility. You may need to protect newly planted seed with erosion matting or reseed to establish grass in swales. It can take several years to fully establish your lawn in such challenging areas.

### Hired Contractors

You are responsible for changes to the drainage pattern made by any landscape, concrete, deck, or pool contractor. Discuss drainage with any company you hire to do an installation in your yard. Do not permit them to tie into existing drainage pipes without approval from Bennett Miller Homes.

### Natural Areas

During construction, we remove construction debris from natural areas. Removing dead wood, tree limbs, fallen trees, or other natural items is your responsibility.

### Planning

Locate plants and irrigation heads out of the way of pedestrian or bicycle traffic and car bumpers. Space groves of trees or single trees to allow for efficient mowing and growth. Group plants with similar water, sun, and space requirements together.

### Plant Selection

Plant with regard to your local climate. Favor native over exotic species. Consider ultimate size, shape, and growth of the species.

See also Property Lines.

### Requirements

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

### Seeded Lawns

If lawn seeding is part of your home purchase, consider this just the first step in establishing your yard. Remember that the forces of nature are far stronger than grass seed. You will need to re-seed at some point, perhaps more than once. Heavy

storms can cause washouts and erosion that you will need to correct. It generally takes at least three growing seasons to establish a good lawn, longer if weather conditions are difficult or if you do not have the time to devote to lawn care. Drainage will be most effective in a mature lawn with mature root structure which takes generally three growing seasons.

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

### Sod

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

### Important Care

Apply appropriate fertilizer and weed and pest controls as needed for optimal growth. Investigate organic compounds for additional protection of the environment. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to ensure the success of a new lawn with proper care and maintenance.

### Sprinkler System

If Bennett Miller Homes included a sprinkler system with your home, we will arrange to have the installer demonstrate the system and make final adjustments shortly after you move in. The installer will note and correct any deficiencies in the system at the same time. Whether we install your sprinkler or you install it yourself, keep these points in mind.

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

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

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

### Stones

The soil in your area may have stones and rocks. Removing these naturally occurring elements is a maintenance activity. If Bennett Miller Homes installs seed or sod, large rocks will be picked up and surface raking performed. You will need to provide

continued attention to this condition as you care for your yard.

## Trees

Bennett Miller Homes values trees as one of the features that make up an attractive community and add value to the homes we build. We take steps to protect and preserve existing trees in the area of your home. In spite of our efforts, existing trees located on construction sites can suffer damage from construction activities, which manifest months after the completion of construction.

Damage to existing trees can be caused by such things as compaction of soil in the root zone, changing patterns of water flow on the lot, disturbing the root system, and removing other trees to make room for the home. The newly exposed tree may react to conditions it is unaccustomed to. Caring for existing trees, including pruning dead branches or removing these trees altogether is your responsibility.

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

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

Trees and other plant materials that exist on the lot when construction begins and are not part of any landscaping installed by Bennett Miller Homes are excluded from warranty coverage.

## Utility Lines

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

Before any significant digging, check the location of buried service leads by calling the local utility locating service. In most cases, wires and pipes run in a straight line from the main service to the public supply.

See also Easements.

## Waiting to Landscape

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

## Weeds

Weeds will appear in your new lawn whether seed or sod is used. Left unlandscaped, your yard will quickly begin to show weeds. When soil is disturbed, dormant seeds come to the surface and germinate. The best control is a healthy lawn, achieved through regular care and attention.

## Xeriscape

Bennett Miller Homes recommends careful consideration of landscape design and

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

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty

Landscape materials we install are warranted for one growing season. We will confirm the healthy condition of all plant materials during the orientation. Maintaining landscaping is your responsibility.

### **Mildew**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Mildew is a fungus that spreads through the air in microscopic spores. They love moisture and feed on surfaces or dirt. On siding, they look like a layer of dirt. To determine whether you are dealing with mildew or dirt, wipe the surface with a cloth or sponge dampened with bleach. If the bleach causes the surface to lose its dark appearance, you are most likely seeing mildew.

Cleaning mildew from your home is your responsibility. Solutions that remove mildew are available from local paint or home improvement stores. Wear protective eyewear and rubber gloves for this task; the chemicals that remove mildew are unfriendly to humans.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will remove any mildew noted during the orientation. Bennett Miller Homes warranty excludes mildew.

### **Mirrors**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

To clean your mirrors, use any reliable liquid glass cleaner or polisher available at most hardware or grocery stores. Avoid acidic cleaners and splashing water under the mirror; either can cause the silvering to deteriorate. Acidic cleaners are usually those that contain ammonia or vinegar. Avoid getting glass cleaners on plumbing fixtures as some formulas can deteriorate the finish.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm that all mirrors are in acceptable condition during the orientation. Bennett Miller Homes will correct scratches, chips, or other damage to mirrors noted during the orientation.

### **Paint and Stain**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Because of changes in the formula for paint (such as the elimination of lead to make paints safer), painted surfaces must be washed gently using mild soap and as little

water as possible. Avoid abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, or scrub brushes. Flat paints show washing marks more easily than gloss paints do. Often better results come from touching up rather than washing the paint.

## Colors

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

## Exterior

Regular attention will preserve the beauty and value of your home. Check the painted and stained surfaces of your home's exterior annually. Repaint before much chipping or wearing away of the original finish occurs; this will save the cost of extensive surface preparation.

Plan on refinishing the exterior surface of your home approximately every two to three years or as often as your paint manufacturer suggests for your area and climate. Climatic conditions control the chemical structure of the paint used on the exterior. Over time, this finish will fade and dull a bit. Depending on the exposure to weather of each surface, the paint on some parts of your home may begin to show signs of deterioration sooner than others.

When you repaint the exterior of your home, begin by resetting popped nails and removing blistered or peeling portions of paint with a wire brush or putty knife. Sand, spot with primer, and then paint the entire area. Use a quality exterior paint formulated for local climate conditions.

Avoid having sprinklers spray water on the exterior walls of your home. This will cause blistering, peeling, splintering, and other damage to the home.

## Severe Weather

Hail and wind can cause a great deal of damage in a severe storm, so inspect the house after such weather. Promptly report damage caused by severe weather to your insurance company.

## Stain

For minor interior stain touch-ups, a furniture-polish-and-stain treatment is inexpensive, easy to use, and will blend in with the wood grain. Follow directions on the bottle.

## Touch-Up

When doing paint touch-ups, use a small brush, applying paint only to the damaged spot. Touch-up may not match the surrounding area exactly, even if the same paint mix is used. When it is time to repaint a room, prepare the wall surfaces first by cleaning with a mild soap and water mixture or a reliable cleaning product.

We provide samples of each paint used on your home. Store these with the lids tightly in place and in a location where they are not subjected to extreme temperatures. Save these samples for service work only.

## Wall Cracks

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

See also Drywall.

## Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During your orientation we will confirm that all painted or stained surfaces are in acceptable condition. Bennett Miller Homes will touch up paint as indicated on the orientation list. You are responsible for all subsequent touch-up, except painting we perform as part of another warranty repair.

## Cracking

As it ages, exterior wood trim will develop minor cracks and raised grain. Much of this will occur during the first year. Raised grain permits moisture to get under the paint and can result in peeling. This is not a defect in materials or workmanship. Paint maintenance of wood trim and gutters is your responsibility.

## Fading

Expect fading of exterior paint or stain caused by the effects of sun and weather. Bennett Miller Homes limited warranty excludes this occurrence.

## Touch-Up Visible

Paint touch-up is visible under certain lighting conditions.

## Wood Grain

Because of wood characteristics, color variations will result when stain is applied to wood. This is natural and requires no repair. Today's water-base paints often make wood grain visible on painted trim. Bennett Miller Homes does not provide corrections for this condition.

## **Pests and Wildlife**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Insects such as ants, spiders, wasps, and bees, and animal life such as woodpeckers, squirrels, mice, and snakes, may fail to recognize that your home belongs to you. Addressing concerns involving these pests and wildlife goes with being a homeowner. Informational resources include, among others, the state wildlife service, animal control authorities, the county extension service, pest control professionals, Internet, and public library.

## **Phone Jacks**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Your home is equipped with telephone jacks as shown on the blueprints and selection sheets. Initiating phone service, additions to phone service, and moving phone outlets for decorating purposes or convenience are your responsibility.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

Bennett Miller Homes will repair wiring that does not perform as intended from the phone service box into the home. From the service box outward, care of the wiring is the responsibility of the local telephone service company.

### **Plumbing**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Your plumbing system has many parts, most of which require little maintenance. Proper cleaning, occasional minor attention, and preventive care will assure many years of good service from this system.

#### Aerators

Even though your plumbing lines have been flushed to remove dirt and foreign matter, small amounts of minerals may enter the line. Aerators on the faucets strain much of this from your water. Minerals caught in these aerators may cause the faucets to drip because washers wear more rapidly when they come in contact with foreign matter.

See also Dripping Faucet.

#### Cleaning

Follow manufacturer's directions for cleaning fixtures. Avoid abrasive cleansers. They remove the shiny finish and leave behind a porous surface that is difficult to keep clean. Clean plumbing fixtures with a soft sponge and soapy water (a nonabrasive cleaner or a liquid detergent is usually recommended by manufacturers). Then polish the fixtures with a dry cloth to prevent water spots. Care for brass fixtures with a good-quality brass cleaner, available at most hardware stores.

#### Clogs

The main causes of toilet clogs are domestic items such as disposable diapers, excessive amounts of toilet paper, sanitary supplies, Q-tips, dental floss, and children's toys. Improper garbage disposal use also causes many plumbing clogs. Always use plenty of cold water when running the disposal. This recommendation also applies to grease; supplied with a steady flow of cold water, the grease congeals and is cut up by the blades. If you use hot water, the grease remains a liquid, then cools and solidifies in the sewer line. Allow the water to run 10 to 15 seconds after shutting off the disposal.

You can usually clear clogged traps with a plumber's helper (plunger). If you use

chemical agents, follow directions carefully to avoid personal injury or damage to the fixtures.

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

#### Dripping Faucet

You can repair a dripping faucet by shutting off the water at the valve directly under the sink, then removing the faucet stem, changing the washer, and reinstalling the faucet stem. The shower head is repaired the same way. Replace the washer with another of the same type and size. You can minimize the frequency of this repair by remembering not to turn faucets off with excessive force. (Please note that some manufacturers do not use rubber washers.)

#### Extended Absence

If you plan to be away for an extended period, you should drain your water supply lines. To do this, shut off the main supply line and open the faucets to relieve pressure in the lines. You may also wish to shut off the water heater. Do this by turning off the cold water supply valve on top and the breaker at the breaker panel on the exterior back wall of the home. Drain the tank by running a hose from the spigot on the bottom to the closet floor drain. If you leave the tank full, keep the power on and set the temperature to its lowest or "vacation" setting. Check manufacturer's directions for additional hints and instructions.

#### Fiberglass Fixtures

For normal cleaning use a nonabrasive bathroom cleanser and sponge or nylon cleaning pad. Avoid steel wool, scrapers, and scouring pads. Auto wax can provide a shine and restore an attractive appearance.

#### Freezing Pipes

Provided the home is heated at a normal level, pipes should not freeze at temperatures above 0 degrees Fahrenheit. Set the heat at a minimum of 55 degrees F if you are away during winter months.

In unusually frigid weather or if you will be gone more than a day or two, open cabinet doors to allow warm air to circulate around pipes. Use an ordinary hair dryer to thaw pipes that are frozen. Never use an open flame.

#### Gold or Brass Finish

Avoid using any abrasive cleaners on gold or antique brass fixtures. Use only mild detergent and water or a cleaning product recommended by the manufacturer.

#### Jetted Tubs

If your home includes a jetted tub follow manufacturer directions for its use and care. Never operate the jets unless the water level is at least one inch above the jets. Be cautious about using the tub if you are pregnant or have heart disease or

high blood pressure; discuss the use of the tub with your doctor. Tie or pin long hair to keep it from away from the jets where it might become tangled - a potentially dangerous event.

Clean and disinfect the system every one to two months, depending on usage. To do this, fill the tub with lukewarm water and add one cup of liquid chlorine bleach. Run the jets for 10 to 15 minutes, drain and fill again. Run for 10 minutes with plain water, drain.

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

#### Low Flush Toilets

We want to draw your attention to a water-saving regulation that went into effect in 1993, which prohibits the manufacture of toilets that use more than 1.6 gallons of water per flush. In the search for a balance among comfort, convenience, and sensible use of natural resources, the government conducted several studies. The 1.6-gallon toilet turned out to be the size that overall consistently saves water.

As a result of implementing this standard, flushing twice is occasionally necessary to completely empty the toilet bowl. Even though you flush twice on occasion, rest assured that overall you are saving water and we have complied with the law. Similarly, flow restrictors are manufactured into most faucets and all shower heads and cannot be removed. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

#### Low Pressure

Occasional cleaning of the aerators on your faucets (normally every three to four months) will allow proper flow of water. The water department controls the overall water pressure.

#### Main Shut-Off

The water supply to your home can be shut-off entirely in two locations. The first is at the meter in the front sidewalk and the second is at the valve box adjacent to your front door. We will point both of these out during your orientation.

#### Marble or Manufactured Marble

Marble and manufactured marble will not chip as readily as porcelain enamel but can be damaged by a sharp blow. Avoid abrasive cleansers or razor blades on manufactured marble; both damage the surface. Always mix hot and cold water at manufactured marble sinks; running only hot water can damage the sink.

#### Outside Faucets

Outside faucets (sillcocks) are freeze-proof, but in order for this feature to be effective, you must remove hoses during cold weather, even if the faucet is located in your garage. If a hose is left attached, the water that remains in the hose can freeze and expand back into the pipe, causing a break in the line. Repair of a broken line that feeds an exterior faucet is a maintenance item. Note that Bennett Miller Homes does not warrant sillcocks against freezing.

## Running Toilet

To stop running water, check the shut-off float in the tank. You will most likely find it has lifted too high in the tank, preventing the valve from shutting off completely. In this case, gently bend the float rod down until it stops the water at the correct level. The float should be free and not rub the side of the tank or any other parts. Also check the chain on the flush handle. If it is too tight, it will prevent the rubber stopper at the bottom of the tank from sealing, resulting in running water.

## Shut-Offs

Your main water shut-off is located near your meter. You use this shut-off for major water emergencies such as a water line break or when you install a sprinkler system or build an addition to your home. Each toilet has a shut-off on the water line under the tank. Hot and cold shut-offs for each sink are on the water lines under the sink.

## Sprinklers

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

See also Landscaping/Sprinkler.

## Stainless Steel

Clean stainless steel sinks with soap and water to preserve their luster. Avoid using abrasive cleaners or steel wool pads; these will damage the finish. Prevent bleach from coming into prolonged contact with the sink as it can pit the surface. An occasional cleaning with a good stainless steel cleaner will enhance the finish. Rub in the direction of the polish or grain lines and dry the sink to prevent water spots.

Avoid leaving produce on a stainless steel surface, since prolonged contact with produce can stain the finish. Also avoid using the sink as a cutting board; sharp knives will gouge the finish.

Local water conditions affect the appearance of stainless steel. A white film can develop on the sink if you have over-softened water or water with a high concentration of minerals. In hard water areas, a brown surface stain can form appearing like rust. Tank Care

Avoid exposing the toilet to blows from sharp or heavy objects, which can cause chipping or cracking. Avoid abnormal pressures against the sides of the tank. It is possible to crack the tank at the points where it is attached to the bowl.

## Water Filter or Softener

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

## Troubleshooting Tips: Plumbing

### No Water Anywhere in the Home

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

Main shut off in the valve box beside your front door is open.  
Main shut off at the meter in the sidewalk is open.  
Individual shut-offs for each water-using item are open.

No Hot Water

See Water Heater

Leak Involving One Sink, Tub, or Toilet

Check caulking and grout. Confirm shower door or tub enclosure was properly closed. Turn water supply off to that item. Use other facilities in your home and report problem on next business day.

Leak Involving a Main Line

Turn water off at the meter in your home. Call emergency number for service.

Back Up at One Toilet

If only one toilet is affected, corrections occur during normal business hours.

Shut off the water supply to the toilet involved. Use a plunger to clear the blockage. Use a snake to clear the blockage. If you've been in your home fewer than 30 days, contact Bennett Miller Homes or the plumber listed on your Emergency Phone Numbers sheet. If you've been in your home over 30 days, contact a router service.

Sewer Back Up Affecting Entire Home

If you've been in your home fewer than 30 days, contact Bennett Miller Homes or the plumber listed on your Emergency Phone Numbers sheet. If you've been in your home over 30 days, contact a router service. Remove personal belongings to a safe location. If items are soiled, contact your homeowner insurance company.

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

Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During the orientation we will confirm that all plumbing fixtures are in acceptable condition and are functioning properly, and that all faucets and drains operate freely.

Clogged Drain

Bennett Miller Homes will correct clogged drains that occur during the first 30 days after closing. If a household item is removed from a clogged drain during this time, we will bill you for the drain service. After the first 30 days, you are responsible for correcting clogged drains.

Cosmetic Damage

Bennett Miller Homes will correct any fixture damage noted on the orientation list. Repairing chips, scratches, or other surface damage noted subsequent to the orientation list is your responsibility.

#### Exterior Faucets

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

#### Freezing Pipes

Provided the home is heated at a normal level, pipes should not freeze. Set heat at 55 degrees F if you are away during winter months.

#### Leaks

Bennett Miller Homes will repair leaks in the plumbing system. If a plumbing leak caused by a warranted item results in drywall or floor covering damage, Bennett Miller Homes will repair or replace items that were part of the home as originally purchased. We do not make adjustments for secondary damages (for example, damage to wallpaper, drapes, and personal belongings). Insurance should cover these items.

#### Noise

Changes in temperature or the flow of the water itself will cause some noise in the pipes. This is normal and requires no repair. Bennett Miller Homes will repair persistent water hammer. Expect temperatures to vary if water is used in more than one location in the home at the exact same time.

#### Supply

Bennett Miller Homes will correct construction conditions that disrupt the supply of water to your home if they involve service from the main water supply to your home, provided actions of yours have not caused the problem. Disruption of service due to failure of the water department system is the responsibility of the water department to correct.

### **Property Boundaries**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

At closing you will receive a copy of a survey that shows your lot and the location of your home on the lot. To construct the home Bennett Miller Homes established the property boundaries and corners.

During construction, some of the monuments that mark the lot corners may be affected or covered up by grading, excavation, installation of utility lines and other typical construction activities. If you wish to install a fence, swimming pool, add a deck or patio to your home, or otherwise establish a permanent structure, we advise that you have professional surveyors locate and mark property boundaries to be certain they are accurate and you have found all corners.

See also Easements.

## **Railings**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Stained or wrought iron railings in your home require little maintenance beyond occasional dusting or polishing. Protect railings from sharp objects or moisture. Cover them during move-in so large pieces of furniture do not cause dents or scratches.

Stained railings will show variation in the way the wood grain took the stain. Some designs show seams where pieces of wood came together to form the railing.

### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

## **Resilient (vinyl) Flooring**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Although resilient floors are designed for minimum care, they do have maintenance needs. Follow any manufacturer's specific recommendations for care and cleaning. Some resilient floors require regular application of a good floor finish. This assures you of retaining a high gloss. However, avoid using cleaning or finishing agents on the new floor until the adhesive has thoroughly set. This will take about two weeks.

### Color and Pattern

Your color selection sheets provide a record of the brand, style, and color of floor coverings in your home. Please retain this information for future reference.

### Limit Water

Wipe up spills and vacuum crumbs instead of washing resilient floors frequently with water. Limit mopping or washing with water; excessive amounts of water on resilient floors can penetrate seams and get under edges, causing the material to lift and curl.

### Moving Furniture

Moving appliances across resilient floor covering can result in tears and wrinkles. Install coasters on furniture legs to prevent permanent damage. If you damage the resilient floor, you can have it successfully patched by professionals. If any scraps remain when installation of your floor covering is complete, we leave them in the hope that having the matching dye lot will make such repairs less apparent.

### No-Wax Flooring

The resilient flooring installed in your home is the no-wax type. No-wax means a clear, tough coating that provides both a shiny appearance and a durable surface.

However, even this surface will scuff or mark. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for maintaining the finish.

#### Raised Nail Heads

Raised nail heads are the result of movements of the floor joist caused by natural shrinkage and deflection. We have used special nails and glued the underlayment to help minimize this movement. If a nail head becomes visible through resilient flooring, place a block of wood over it and hit the block with a hammer to reset the nail.

#### Scrubbing and Buffing

Frequent scrubbing or electric buffing is harder on floors than regular foot traffic. Use acrylic finishes if you scrub or buff.

#### Seams

Any brand or type of resilient flooring may separate slightly due to shrinkage. Seams can lift or curl if excessive moisture is allowed to penetrate them. You can use a special caulking at tub or floor joints to seal seams at those locations. Avoid getting large amounts of water on the floor from baths and showers.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm that resilient floor covering is in acceptable condition during your orientation. Bennett Miller Homes limited warranty does not cover damage to resilient floors caused by moving furniture or appliances into the home. We can assist you in contacting professionals who can repair such damage if it occurs in your home. Bennett Miller Homes is not responsible for discontinued selections.

#### Adhesion

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

Bennett Miller Homes has sanded and filled the joints of underlayment to minimize the possibility of ridges showing through resilient floor coverings. Ridging is measured by centering a 6-inch straight edge perpendicular to the ridge with one end tight to the floor. If the opposite end of the straight edge is 1/8 inch or more from the floor, Bennett Miller Homes will repair this condition.

#### Seams

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

### **Roof**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

The shingles on your roof do not require any treatment or sealer. The less activity your roof experiences, the less likely it is that problems will occur.

#### Clean Gutters

Maintain the gutters and downspouts so that they are free of debris and able to quickly drain precipitation from the roof.

#### Ice Dam

On occasion, depending on conditions and exposure, as rising heat from inside your home melts snow on the roof, the water runs down and when it reaches the cold eaves, it may freeze. An accumulation of this type of ice dams the subsequent runoff and the water begins to back up, sometimes working its way up and under shingles, ultimately leading into your home through windows or ceilings.

If your home design or orientation makes it vulnerable to this occurrence, you may want to install an electric gutter heater strip in the susceptible areas.

#### Leaks

If a leak occurs, try to detect the exact location. This will greatly simplify finding the area that requires repair when the roof is dry.

#### Limit Walking

Limit walking on your roof. Your weight and movement can loosen the roofing material and in turn result in leaks. Never walk on the roof of your home when the shingles are wet - they are slippery.

#### Severe Weather

After severe storms, do a visual inspection of the roof for damages. Notify your insurance company if you find pieces of shingle in the yard or shingle edges lifted on the roof.

#### Troubleshooting Tips: Roof Leak

Please keep in mind that roof leaks cannot be repaired while the roof is wet. However, you can get on the schedule to be in line when conditions dry out, so do call in your roof leak.

Confirm the source of the water is the roof rather than from a

Plumbing leak

Open window on a higher floor

Ice dam

Clogged gutter or downspout

Blowing rain or snow coming in through code required roof vents

Gap in caulking

Where practical, place a container under dripping water. If a ceiling is involved, use a screwdriver to poke a small hole in the drywall to release the water. Even if the

troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call. Remove personal belongings to prevent damage to them. If damage occurs, contact your homeowner insurance company to submit a claim. Report the leak to Bennett Miller Homes during first available business hours.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Bennett Miller Homes will repair roof leaks other than those caused by severe weather, such as hail damage, or some action you have taken, such as walking on the roof. Roof repairs are made only when the roof is dry.

#### Ice Dam

An ice build-up (ice dam) may develop in the eaves during extended periods of cold and snow. Your homeowner insurance may cover this damage which is excluded from warranty. Inclement Weather

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

### **Rough Carpentry**

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

#### Floor Deflection

Floors will deflect (bend) when walked on. This will be more noticeable next to hutches, bookcases, pianos, chairs, and other heavy furniture. This is not a structural deficiency and Bennett Miller Homes will take no action for this occurrence.

#### Floor Level

Floors will be level to within 1/4 inch within any 32-inch distance as measured perpendicular to any ridge or indentation. Bennett Miller Homes will correct floor slope that exceeds 1/240 of the room.

#### Plumb Walls

Bennett Miller Homes will correct walls that are out of plumb more than 1/2 inch in an 8-foot distance or walls that are bowed more than 1/4 inch in any 32-inch measurement.

### **Siding**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Siding expands and contracts in response to changes in humidity and temperature. Slight waves are visible in siding under moist weather conditions; shrinkage and separations will be more noticeable under dry conditions. These behaviors cannot be

entirely eliminated.

#### Wood and Wood Products

Wood or wood-product siding will require routine refinishing. The timing will vary with climatic conditions. Maintain caulking to minimize moisture entry into the siding. Note that some paint colors will require more maintenance than others and some sides of the home may show signs of wear sooner based on their exposure to the elements. Some wood siding, such as cedar, is subject to more cracking and will require more maintenance attention.

#### Vinyl

Vinyl siding will occasionally require cleaning. Start at the top to avoid streaking and use a cleaning product recommended by your siding manufacturer. Follow directions carefully.

#### Cement Based Products

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

See also Paint and Wood Trim.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Bennett Miller Homes warrants all siding to be free of defects in material and workmanship. We will confirm the good condition of the siding during your orientation. Subsequent damage to the siding will be your responsibility to repair.

Bennett Miller Homes will caulk and apply touch-up paint to cracks that exceed 3/16 inch. We provide this repair one time only near the end of the first year. Paint or stain touch-up will not match.

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

### **Smoke Detectors**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Read the manufacturer's manual for detailed information on the care of your smoke detectors.

#### Battery

If a smoke detector makes a chirping sound that is a sign that the battery needs to be replaced. Follow manufacturer instructions for installing a new battery. Most smoke detectors use a 9 volt battery.

#### Cleaning

For your safety, clean each smoke detector monthly to prevent a false alarm or lack

of response in a fire. After cleaning, push the test button to confirm the alarm is working.

#### Locations

Smoke detectors are installed in accordance with building codes, which dictate locations. Bennett Miller Homes cannot omit any smoke detector and you should not remove or disable any smoke detector.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Bennett Miller Homes does not represent that the smoke detectors will provide the protection for which they are installed or intended. We will test smoke detectors during the orientation to confirm that they are working and to familiarize you with the alarm. You are responsible for obtaining fire insurance.

### **Stairs**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

No known method of installation prevents all vibration or squeaks in a staircase. A shrinkage crack will develop where the stairs meet the wall. When this occurs, apply a thin bead of latex caulk and, when dry, touch up with paint.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

### **Termites**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

We treat the soil under your foundation in order to deter termite infestations. Plan to check for termites annually. Treatment for termites or other types of insects or animal infestations is your responsibility.

#### Regular Inspections

Regularly inspect your home for signs of termites or conditions that would allow their attack. Check for wrinkles or waves in wood trim. Tap wood to see if it sounds or feels hollow. Inspect under the carpet tack strip by lifting the edge of carpet in the corner of a room. The tack strip is untreated and provides a convenient path for termites through your home. Watch for tubes of dirt, called mud tubes, that extend from the soil up to your home. Keep soil away from any wood parts of your home. Be certain all roof water and precipitation moves quickly away from your home's foundation. Avoid storing wood on the ground and against your home. Maintain a safe zone of at least two feet in width around the perimeter of your home. Avoid planting grass or shrubs, installing any sprinkler device, or digging of any kind in this area. If you disturb this area, have it re-treated to restore protection. Before installing stepping stones, river rock, concrete, or so on, against the home, chemically treat the area that will be underneath the new material. If you add onto or change the exterior of

your home, be sure to have the areas treated first.

If you believe you see signs of termites or if you have any questions, contact your termite treatment company for guidance.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

Bennett Miller Homes warranty excludes treatment for any insect (such as termites and ants) or animal (such as mice) infestations.

### **Ventilation**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Homes today are built more tightly than ever. This saves energy dollars but creates a potential concern. Condensation, cooking odors, indoor pollutants, radon, and carbon monoxide may all accumulate. We provide mechanical and passive methods for ventilating homes. Your attention to ventilation is important to health and safety. Building codes require attic and crawl space vents to minimize accumulation of moisture.

#### Daily Habits

Your daily habits can help keep your home well ventilated:

Do not cover or interfere in any way with the fresh air supply to your furnace. Develop the habit of running the hood fan when you are cooking. Ditto the bath fans when bathrooms are in use. Air your house by opening windows for a time when weather permits.

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

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

### **Water Heater: Electric**

#### Homeowner Care and Maintenance

Carefully read the manufacturer's literature and warranty for your specific model of water heater.

#### Drain Tank

Review and follow the manufacturer's timetable and instructions for draining several gallons of water from the bottom of the water heater. This reduces build-up of chemical deposits from the water, thereby prolonging the life of the tank as well as saving energy dollars. Also drain the tank if it is being shut down during periods of freezing temperatures. Carefully follow the instructions in the manufacturer's

literature.

#### Element Cleaning or Replacement

The heating elements in the water heater will require periodic cleaning. The frequency is determined in part by the quality of the water in your area. Again, refer to the manufacturer's literature for step-by-step instructions and drawings, or contact an authorized service company.

#### Pressure Relief Valve

At least once each year, manually operate the pressure relief valve. Stay clear of the discharge line to avoid injury. See manufacturer's literature for diagrams and detailed instructions.

#### Safety

Keep the area around a water heater clear of stored household items. Never use the top of the water heater as a storage shelf.

#### Temperature

Temperature settings on an electric water heater will produce approximately the temperatures listed below:

Hot 120 degrees F A 130 degrees F B 140 degrees F C 150 degrees F Very Hot 160 degrees F

The recommended setting for operation of a dishwasher is B, or 140 degrees. Higher settings can waste energy dollars and increase the danger of injury from scalding. Hot water will take longer to arrive at sinks, tubs, and showers that are farther from the water heater.

#### TROUBLE SHOOTING TIPS: NO HOT WATER

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the

Water heater breaker on your main electric panel is in the on position. (Remember if a breaker trips you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.)

Temperature setting is not on vacation or too low.

Water supply valve is open.

Refer to the manufacturer's literature for specific locations of these items and possibly other troubleshooting tips.

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

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty

Refer to the manufacturer's limited warranty for complete information regarding warranty coverage on your water heater.

## **Windows and Screens**

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Contact a glass company for reglazing of any windows that break. Glass is difficult to install without special tools.

### Aluminum

Clean aluminum metal surfaces with warm, clear water. Do not use powdered cleaner. After each cleaning, apply a silicone lubricant. Clean glass as needed with vinegar and water, a commercial glass cleaner, or the product recommended by the window manufacturer.

### Condensation

Condensation on interior surfaces of the window and frame is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures. Your family's lifestyle controls the humidity level within your home.

### Screen Storage and Maintenance

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

### Sills

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

### Sticking Windows

Most sliding windows (both vertical and horizontal) are designed for a 10-pound pull. If sticking occurs or excessive pressure is required to open or close a window, apply a silicone lubricant. This is available at hardware stores. Avoid petroleum-based products.

### Tinting

Applying tinting or foil lining to dual pane windows can result in broken windows due to heat build-up. Some manufacturers void their warranty on the windows if you apply tinting or foil lining. Contact the manufacturer to check on their current policy before you apply such coatings.

### Weep Holes

In heavy rains, water may collect in the bottom channel of window frames. Weep

holes are provided to allow excess water to escape to the outside. Keep the bottom window channels and weep holes free of dirt and debris for proper operation.

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

We will confirm that all windows and screens are in acceptable condition during the orientation. Bennett Miller Homes will repair or replace broken windows or damaged screens noted on the orientation list. Windows should operate with reasonable ease and locks should perform as designed. If they do not, Bennett Miller Homes will provide adjustments.

#### Condensation

Condensation on interior surfaces of the window and frame is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures. You influence the humidity level within your home; Bennett Miller Homes provides no corrective measure for this condition.

Condensation that accumulates between the panes of glass in dual-glazed windows indicates a broken seal. Bennett Miller Homes will replace the window if this occurs during the warranty period.

#### Infiltration

Some air and dust will infiltrate around windows, especially before the installation of landscaping in the general area. Bennett Miller Homes warranty excludes this occurrence.

#### Scratches

Bennett Miller Homes confirms that all window glass is in acceptable condition at the orientation. Minor scratches on windows can result from delivery, handling, and other construction activities. Bennett Miller Homes will replace windows that have scratches readily visible from a distance of 4 feet. Bennett Miller Homes does not replace windows that have scratches visible only under certain lighting conditions.

#### Tinting

If you add tinting to dual-glazed windows, all warranties are voided. Damage can result from condensation or excessive heat build-up between the panes of glass. Refer to the manufacturer's literature for additional information.

See also Ventilation

### **Wood Trim**

#### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Shrinkage of wood trim occurs during the first two years or longer, depending on temperature and humidity. All lumber is more vulnerable to shrinkage during the heating season. Maintaining a moderate and stable temperature helps to minimize the effects of shrinkage. Wood will shrink less lengthwise than across the grain. Wood shrinkage can result in separation at joints of trim pieces. You can usually correct this with caulking and touch-up painting.

Shrinkage may also cause a piece of trim to pull away from the wall. If this occurs, drive in another nail close to, but not exactly in, the existing nail hole. Fill the old nail hole with putty and touch up with paint as needed. If the base shoe (small trim between base molding and the floor) appears to be lifting from the floor, this is probably due to slight shrinkage of the floor joists below. Again, you can correct this condition by removing the old nails and nailing. You may prefer to wait until after the first heating season to make any needed repairs at one time when redecorating.

See also Expansion and Contraction

#### Bennett Miller Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines

During the orientation we will confirm that wood trim is in acceptable condition. Minor imperfections in wood materials will be visible and will require no action. Bennett Miller Homes will correct readily noticeable construction damage such as chips and gouges listed during the orientation.

#### Exterior

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

#### Raised Grain

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