

New Home Reference Guide



In this section, we've compiled several tips and helpful hints for your reference to help you properly maintain your home, adding to the appearance and long-term enjoyment of your home. Topics covered include:

- Homeowner Reminders
- Helpful Hints
- Tips for Closing up a Home for Extended Vacations
- Water Conservation Tips

Homeowner Reminders

- 1) Clean and/or replace air filter monthly.
- 2) Grease and oil garage door rollers three (3) times per year. Use a lightweight oil on chain driven operator; apply light oil on garage door hinges.
- 3) Clean kitchen range exhaust hood filters at least every 4 months. Turn clips, remove filter, soak in warm sudsy water, rinse, dry and replace.
- 4) Keep water out of miters. This will cause lifting and separation of kitchen counter tops.
- 5) Wax cultured marble two (2) times a year. Recommend using a Gel Gloss.
- 6) Hard calcium rings in the toilet can be removed by rubbing with a pumice stone (available at any of the larger grocery stores).
- 7) Test GFI breaker (located in kitchen and garage) every month; red button should be out and black button is the test button.
- 8) Test smoke detector monthly. Push button and you should hear a beep.
- 9) Check interior paint and redecorate when needed.
- 10) Oil motors of appliances as directed in instruction manuals.
- 11) Check cords and plugs of all electrical appliances for wear. If necessary, have them repaired or replaced.
- 12) Check for voids in shower tile grout and repair as required.

Helpful Hints Concerning Your New Home

Duplicate Keys – Have these made and keep them in a convenient place in the event of loss or lock-out. When you take a vacation, a key left with a neighbor for use in the event of an emergency is a good idea. If you forget to tend to something, your neighbor might be able to take care of it.

Fire Extinguishers – Every home should be equipped with at least one fire extinguisher. Each member of the family should be familiar with its location and operation. Have it checked annually to be sure it functions properly and is fully charged. Be sure you and your family members know how to turn off the electricity and water in the event of an emergency of any sort.

First Aid Kit – Keep a first aid kit or its equivalent in a convenient location. Buy and keep with it a booklet on first aid procedures and home safety.

Home Tool Kit – You will need a few basic tools and supplies for everyday use in keeping your home in tip-top shape. Suggested items are: utility wrench (size 16), standard hand pliers, medium size screwdriver, claw hammer, a box of assorted wire nails and brads, sturdy penknife and a roll of tape.



Hints For Closing Up A Home

Should you leave your house for an extended period of time (greater than three weeks), we recommend the following:

- 1) Notify the Police Department of departure and who has access to your home or whom to contact in case of emergency.
- 2) Thermostat – It is recommended to leave your thermostat at 85°F. Windows should be covered to help keep the heat out and to prevent the sun from fading carpet and furniture.
- 3) Toilets – Lift lids and stretch plastic wrap over bowl tightly. This will keep the bowl from drying out too quickly. Shut off water supply valve under tank.
- 4) Dishwasher – Close door. Do not latch or lock in position. Also, all drains should be closed, which will help to eliminate any sewer gases from coming back up into home because of lack of use.
- 5) Garbage Disposal – After the last of the water is run, pour 1/2 - 3/4 cup of salad oil in disposal. This will keep blades lubricated and handle what little moisture remains on the bottom and thus prevent rusting.
- 6) Automatic Garage Door Opener – The switch should be in the OFF position.

If you have the power to your home turned off, you will need to do the following:

- 1) Leave pails of water in the sink and bath tub. This will put moisture in the house during the very hot dry summer. DO NOT fill up sinks or tubs, use pails only.
- 2) Be sure to leave the refrigerator door partially open.

Water Conservation

Outside

- 1) Water during the cool time of day. Early morning is best. Avoid the peak watering time (4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.).
- 2) Do not water on windy or rainy days.
- 3) Do not water every day. To determine if your lawn needs water, step on the grass. If it springs back when you move your foot, your lawn doesn't need water.
- 4) When you do water, let the water soak down to the roots.
- 5) Call your local nursery to find out about drought resistant plants, how much water different plants needs, and what irrigation and watering systems are best for your needs.
- 6) Adjust sprinklers so they only water your lawn and plants, and not the sidewalk, street or side of the house.
- 7) Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway and sidewalk.
- 8) Do not leave the hose running while you wash your car. Use a shut-off nozzle on your hose or use a bucket and rag.
- 9) Check for leaks in pipes, hoses, faucets and couplings.
- 10) Cover your pool with Styrofoam sheets or a pool cover to cut down on evaporation.

Water Conservation

Inside

- 1) Check all faucets and pipes for leaks.
- 2) Check your toilet for leaks. Put a few drops of food coloring in the tank. Wait a few minutes. If the color shows up in the bowl, you have a leak.
- 3) Call your local hardware store and ask about water-saving devices for toilets, showers, and faucets.
- 4) Do not use the toilet as a wastebasket or ashtray.
- 5) Turn off the water while shaving, washing your hands or brushing your teeth.
- 6) Take shorter showers – turn off the water while you soap yourself up.
- 7) Wrap your exposed hot water pipes and water heater with insulating material to speed up delivery of hot water to your tap.
- 8) Always wash full loads of dishes. Or if you wash dishes by hand, don't let the water run.
- 9) Keep a bottle of cold water in your refrigerator for drinking purposes.
- 10) Wash only full loads of clothes – or adjust the water level in your washer for smaller loads.
- 11) Remove food from the freezer before it's needed rather than using running water to thaw it.
- 12) Use your garbage disposal sparingly.
- 13) Use leftover drinking water on your plants.