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**HOMEOWNER MANUAL**

**A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO  
BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE  
FOR YOUR NEW HOME**

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## *Whittaker Homes*

### **Congratulations...**

...on your decision to purchase a new Whittaker home. We share the excitement about your new residence and look forward to you becoming part of the Whittaker family.

### **So, you're ready to begin the building of your new home.**

But before we get off and running, allow us to present you this simple, step-by-step guide to making the experience a pleasant one. This Whittaker Homeowner Manual is carefully designed to assist you in building your new home ... providing detailed information to answer questions you may have during and after this process. In addition, this helpful tool gives maintenance guidelines, as well as information about your Home Buyers Warranty: the exclusive warranty for your Whittaker home.

Also enclosed you will find virtually everything needed to transform the picture you have in your mind into the picture-perfect home. You will be led through every stage of the selections/ construction process allowing you to actively and effectively participate in the building. In addition, it will help you to choose the exact amenities you desire...reducing last-minute decisions that might arise.

Think of this book as your personal "building blueprint" ... the perfect reference to the who, what, when, where and why of building your new Whittaker home from start to finish.

Rest assured that Whittaker Homes works endlessly to assemble and maintain the very best tradespeople to ensure a product worthy of the Whittaker name. In fact, unlike other builders, all of our homes are built by actual Whittaker employees who are 100% AFL-CIO union members and are proud of what they do...building your home as if it were their own.

### **Whittaker Homes has its own foundation on which we build our business.**

For nearly a quarter of a century, Whittaker Homes has conducted its business by a set of proven principles and beliefs that have grown our business from a small enterprise to a powerhouse family owned business to an integral part of a vast national network of builders. They are:

- HONESTY in all our dealings...communicating truthfully with our customers at all times
- INTEGRITY which we define as doing what we say we will do...keeping our promises and commitments
- COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE showing a passion for truly serving our customers and fostering relationships
- TEAMWORK resulting in cooperation, sharing, open communication/problem solving and an overall collective effort to improve the end result
- TRUST AND RESPECT for the opinions and ideas of every individual involved in the building process, from Whittaker professionals to the clients themselves.

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After all, we're celebrating a decade as Missouri's #1 Home Builder for a reason.

### **Did you hear that?**

There ... we can hear the heavy equipment starting their engines. So you better get in gear too! If you're ready (and of course you are), turn to the next page right now!

## What Happens Next After Purchasing Your New Home?

### *An Overview of Your New Home Experience*

Now that you have written your Sale Contract, you will be receiving a signed copy of the contract by mail within one week from our office. The Sale Contract and various addenda establish our agreement regarding the purchase of your new home. We suggest you insert these documents at the end of this section.

Purchasing a new home is an exciting experience. The process is also complex, with many details to be decided and arranged. While Whittaker Homes is building your new home, you participate by taking care of several important aspects of your purchase. The chronological list that follows outlines the events that typically take place in the purchase of a new home. Where time frames are specified, it is vital that they be observed in order for us to make a timely delivery to you.

### **Applying for Your Loan**

Once the Sale Contract has been signed by both parties, finalizing the details for financing is next. This must be applied for within **seven** days unless your contract is contingent upon the sale of your existing home. In that case, you must begin arranging for financing within seven days after this contingency is released. Although you may choose any financial institution, we suggest using New Town Mortgage, LLC. Ask your salesperson for details and see Section 3, *Applying for Your Loan*, for further information regarding the loan process.

### **Your New Home Selections**

Section 4 of this manual, *New Home Selections*, also known as the “work order,” will assist you in the exciting process of personalizing your new home with your selections. This will be done immediately if you have a firm or non-contingent contract. Please call **636-916-2000** to schedule your appointment. You will find a sample of the work order form at the end of this section. There are many details that you must decide at the work order appointment. **To avoid any surprises, please review the work order form before your appointment so you will be familiar with the decisions you will be asked to make at that time.** You may also wish to go through the displays with this list prior to your appointment to get more ideas for what you would like in your home. Your home will be constructed according to the information on the work order.

### **Construction of Your Home**

After all contingencies are released, earnest money deposits paid and work order completed, construction will start on your home. Please read Section 5, *Construction of Your Home*, for guidelines on safety, security, and work in progress. The list “What to Expect During

Construction,” found in Section 5, will answer most of your questions regarding the timing and stages of construction of your home.

## **Homeowner Orientation**

The Homeowner Orientation, also referred to as a walk-thru, has two purposes. The first is to demonstrate the features of your home and discuss maintenance and limited warranty. Equally important, we want to confirm that we have delivered your new home at the quality level shown in our display homes and with all your selections correctly installed. For detailed information, please review Section 6, *Homeowner Orientation*.

## **Closing on Your Home**

A description of the documents you will sign and other important details about the closing process are discussed in Section 7, *Closing on Your Home*. While you are free to use any title insurance company, we suggest you use Lewis and Clark Title Company, conveniently located next to our office and underwritten by Transnation Title, America’s largest title insurance company. We have included guidelines to assist you in preparing for closing and move-in.

## **Moving into Your New Home**

In Section 8, *Moving into Your New Home*, you will find some tips to help make your move a smoother one.

## **Caring for Your Home**

Many of your responsibilities, as an owner and Whittaker Homes' responsibilities under the terms of our Limited Warranty are discussed in *Caring for Your Home*, Section 9. Begin now to become familiar with the maintenance your home will need and our warranty service commitment to you.

## **Your Feedback and Suggestions . . .**

Our desire to maintain open communication with you extends through the buying process and after your move-in. In an effort to improve the product and service we provide, we welcome your comments on how we've performed. We survey our customers after move-in. Our goal is to build the best home and the best customer relationship possible. Your feedback helps us reach that goal. There is no such thing as a “perfect house” but we try to get it as close to “perfect” as humanly possible.

## **Referrals**

As time passes, if your housing needs change, we are ready at all times to build you another home. We also appreciate your referrals. Our office is always happy to provide you with information about where we are currently building and the products we offer.

## Who's Who?

### *Some Names You Should Know*

Two-way communication is vital to a mutually satisfactory association. Not understanding what is happening and not knowing to whom you should speak can cause you frustration and dissatisfaction. This must be avoided and it is our earnest intention to do so. We believe that it is our responsibility to establish and maintain clear lines of communication. The professionals listed below are glad to assist you or find the answers to your questions.

Name	Phone Number
<i>Sales Person</i> _____ (Before Construction)	_____
<i>Superintendent</i> _____	_____
<i>Lender</i> _____ <i>New Town Mortgage, LLC</i>	<i>636-916-2065..</i>
_____ <i>John Kurz</i>	_____ <i>314-220-6424 cell</i>
<i>Selections Coordinator</i> _____ (During Construction)	_____ <i>636-916-2000</i>
<i>Title Company</i> _____ <i>Lewis and Clark</i>	_____ <i>636-916-5110</i>
_____	_____
<i>Closing Department</i> _____	_____ <i>636-916-1511</i>
<i>Warranty Service</i> _____ (After Closing)	_____ <i>636-916-1015</i>

***Note to Home Buyer:***

The completed sale contract and addenda can be inserted here.

## Applying for Your Loan

The first item that requires your attention is the selection of a lender and completion of a mortgage application. Please plan to accomplish this within **seven** days. Take the completed Sale Contract with you when you first visit your lender. We at Whittaker Homes recommend that you contact New Town Mortgage, LLC for the financing of your new home.

Only New Town Mortgage, LLC can closely coordinate their procedures with Whittaker Homes' construction operations. This insures a smooth experience with minimum stress for our new homeowners. Getting your mortgage is much less complicated through New Town Mortgage, LLC than with other lenders.

As today's consumers become more sophisticated, so do your options for a mortgage loan. New Town Mortgage, LLC will work hard to understand your circumstances and help you identify the right financing option for you. They're committed to helping you understand your options so that you can make educated decisions throughout your home buying process.

### **New Town Mortgage, LLC's Seven Steps to an Easy Loan Closing**

Congratulations on the purchase of your new home. The following is a guide to the loan process while building your new home. By following these easy steps, we can simplify and speed up the loan process. Please carefully read the following:

#### ***Step 1. Personal Information***

Complete the Fast App. provided by your sales person. Once you have completed the Fast App., fax it to the number listed on the app. If you have not obtained a Fast App., we can either email it or take your application over the phone.

#### ***Step 2. Documents***

Gather your personal documents. We may need the following items to process your loan:

1. 30 days of your most recent pay-stubs.
2. The last 2 years W-2's. If self-employed, last 2 years of your federal tax returns.
3. 30 days of your most recent bank & asset statements (401-K, IRA, etc.). ALL PAGES
4. If you are divorced and pay or receive child support, a copy of your divorce decree.

#### ***Step 3. Application***

We will set a time to sit down and review your loan application. At this time we go over your information for accuracy and review your mortgage plan.

#### ***Step 4. Earnest Money Deposits***

You will need to provide proof that the checks you have written for your earnest money deposits have been cashed. You do this by either providing your bank statement that shows the check number has cleared, or a copy of the cancelled check after it clears your account. Please fax this in as soon as it clears your bank. On-line printouts must have your name and account

number present. Also, we may use a bank printout but it must be signed, stamped and dated by the bank teller.

***Step 5. Updating Your Loan***

Once your new home is under roof, we will need to update your loan file. Contact your loan processor at this point so we can review which documents will need to be updated. Typically we need updated pay-stubs and bank statements. These can be faxed in.

***Step 6. Homeowners Insurance***

When you are within 3 weeks of your closing date, you will need to obtain your homeowners insurance. The builder will contact you with this date. Give us your Insurance Agents phone number or email address, and we will contact them with the necessary information they need.

***Step 7. Closing***

The day before you close, the Title Company will contact you as to the amount of money you will need to bring to the closing. This will need to be in the form of a Cashier's Check. On the day of closing, you will first do your final walk through inspection. After that is complete, you will go to the title company with your check and we will sign the loan closing documents. After that is complete, you will receive the keys to your new home.

**To Get Started Call  
John Kurz  
Mortgage Consultant  
314-220-6424 Cell**

**Other Lending Institutions' Guidelines**

Your lender's job is to understand your particular financial circumstances completely. All information on the application will be reviewed at your meeting with the loan officer. Rarely does a situation arise that your loan officer has not encountered in the past. Do not hesitate to discuss any questions you have regarding your assets, income, or credit. By providing complete information you prevent delays or extra trips to deliver documents.

**Loan Application Checklist**

The amount of documentation and information required for a mortgage from another mortgage lender can seem overwhelming. You can facilitate the application process by collecting as much of the needed information as you can before your appointment. The checklist that follows is a general guide to assist you with the loan application. Some of the items listed may not apply to you and almost certainly your lender will request some items which we have not mentioned, but this list will get you off to a good start.

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### *Property Information*

- \_\_\_ The sale contract will include the legal description of the property and the price.

### *Personal Information*

- \_\_\_ Social Security number and driver's license for each borrower
- \_\_\_ Home addresses for the last two years
- \_\_\_ Divorce decree and separation agreements, if applicable

### *Income*

- \_\_\_ Most recent paystubs
- \_\_\_ Documentation on any supplemental income such as bonuses or commissions
- \_\_\_ Names, addresses, and phone numbers of all employers for last two years
- \_\_\_ W-2s for last two years
- \_\_\_ If self-employed or commissioned sales, copies of your tax returns for the last two years with schedules and year-to-date profit & loss for current year, signed by an accountant
- \_\_\_ Documentation of alimony or child support, if this income is to be considered for the loan

### *Real Estate Owned*

- \_\_\_ Names, addresses, phone numbers, and account numbers of all mortgage lenders and landlords for the last two years
- \_\_\_ Copies of leases and two years tax returns for any rental property
- \_\_\_ Market value estimate

### *Liquid Assets*

- \_\_\_ Complete names, addresses, phone numbers and account numbers for all bank accounts, credit union accounts, 401K accounts, and investment accounts
- \_\_\_ Copies of three months most recent statements for all bank accounts
- \_\_\_ Copies of any notes receivable
- \_\_\_ Value of other assets such as auto, household goods and collectibles
- \_\_\_ Cash value of life insurance policies
- \_\_\_ Vested interest in retirement funds, IRAs, etc.

### *Liabilities*

- \_\_\_ Names and account numbers for all revolving charge cards, balance and current monthly payment amount
- \_\_\_ Names, addresses, phone numbers and account numbers for all installment debt, approximate balance and monthly payments for such items as autos and mortgage
- \_\_\_ Alimony or child support payments

\_\_\_ Names, addresses, phone numbers and account numbers for all accounts recently paid off, if to be used to establish credit

NOTE: You might be asked to pay for a credit report and appraisal upon signing the application.

### Loan Processing

Once all preliminary information has been given to your loan officer, your lender sends verification forms to your employers, banks, and current mortgage company or landlord and also orders a credit report and appraisal. You sign a release to authorize these steps. Your lender will provide you with a Good Faith Estimate and a Truth-in-Lending Disclosure.

The **Good Faith Estimate** lists the costs you will incur at closing. Some of the numbers listed on this form are prorated, subject to change based on the actual date of the closing. Others are set fees which should remain the same.

The **Truth-in-Lending Disclosure** shows the total cost to you, over the term of the loan, for your specific financing. The calculation is based on the assumption that you own the home and make regular payments throughout the term of the loan.

The lender sends **Verification of Employment (VOE)** forms to all employers for the last two years. The employers complete the form, sign and return it to the lender. The forms show the dates of employment, the amount of money you earned last year, and how much you have earned so far this year. The VOE documents bonuses and overtime you earned.

**Verification of Deposit (VOD)** forms go to each banking institution listed on your application. The institutions indicate the date you opened each account, average balances for the last three months, and the amount of money you have in each account on the day they complete the form. Any loans or overdraft accounts you have with the bank will also be shown.

Mortgage companies and landlords complete **Verification of Mortgage (VOM)** forms. These document for the lender how much you owe, the amount of your monthly payment, and whether you make your payments by the due date.

Your **Credit Report** shows the amounts of money you owe to each of your creditors, minimum monthly payments, and your manner of payment.

The **Appraisal** confirms the value of the home you are purchasing for you and your lender.

Typically several weeks pass as these reports and forms are returned to the lender. If any delays are encountered, the loan officer may contact you for assistance. The credit reporting agency may call you to verify that the information they have gathered is correct.

Once the loan processor has collected this standard documentation you may be asked to

write letters in regard to your assets, income, or credit. Few loans are finalized without some additional information being obtained just before the package is submitted to the underwriter for final approval. At this point you may become frustrated with the loan process. Please remember that your lender requests these letters *to assist* you in obtaining your financing. Do not hesitate to discuss your concerns with your loan officer. Perhaps he or she can provide some additional insight on what may seem to be redundant requests.

Prior to the processor submitting your file to the underwriters for final approval, he or she will verify the final sales price. Make sure that copies of all addenda, such as change orders signed after the original sale contract was completed, have been sent to the lender. This assists the lender in determining the exact loan amount. If change orders affect the total price after this point, the loan may have to be resubmitted for the higher amount or the lender may ask you to pay for the changes and additional items in cash.

### **Loan Approval**

During your first meeting, you and your lender determine the timing to obtain pre-qualification. This allows us to start the home even though final approval is still pending. You will discuss additional items that may be needed to obtain final loan approval. You should receive loan approval no later than two weeks after your first meeting with the lender. Loan approval may take longer if the documents requested are not returned to the lender in a timely manner.

### **Contingencies**

Loan approvals often carry "conditions of approval." The sale of a previous home or proof of funds are two examples of conditions of approval. Discuss any concern you may have about such conditions with your loan officer and obtain any requested documentation as soon as possible. Once all contingencies are met, final loan approval can be obtained.

### **Loan Lock**

The only thing anyone knows for certain about interest rates is that they will change. Do not rely on anyone's predictions regarding rates. Locking your rate prematurely can result in extra expense if your new home is not complete in time to close within the lock period. We are happy to update you throughout the process of construction on the estimated completion date. ***Until we reach a point in construction where factors outside our control can no longer affect the completion date, the decision to lock your loan is at best a gamble.***

## **New Home Selections**

Part of the fun of buying a new home is selecting colors and finish materials. You will make some of these choices at the Whittaker Homes Selections Center and others at our suppliers' showrooms. This is when you will be personalizing your home for your needs. Your new home selections are done by appointment only. The Selections Center is located at 3333-2 Rue Royale in St. Charles. Appointments are at 9 a.m. or 1:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Your initial meeting will take approximately 3 hours. If a second meeting is desired you can arrange that individually with your Selections Coordinator. Whittaker Homes does have a browse room available Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. that you are welcome to take advantage of before, during and after your selections process. The sooner we complete the selections process, the sooner we can start building your new home!

Included in this section is a copy of the actual selections work order form. The selections process is very detailed, we ask that you spend time before your appointment reviewing the items on the form and make notes on the specific items you would like in your new home. We suggest going through the displays again to get ideas.

### **Selection Hints**

Please be thorough. Our Selections Sheets are very detailed. Make sure all blanks are filled in completely. Costly errors happen due to assumptions and incomplete Selections Sheets. This is the time to specify any special needs. For example: furniture size, refrigerator size, countertop height.

The selections check list is an overview of the many things to consider when building a new home. It is by no means a complete list. The possibilities for your new home far exceed popular ideas we suggest on our option and upgrade lists. In addition to the available options, you may have custom features you want us to incorporate into your new home. Think. Dream. Imagine. We will assist you in any way that we can to make these decisions as easy as possible. Please keep in mind that your new neighbors have this same opportunity and may request still other features. We will be happy to provide you with pricing on duplicating such items in your home, but make no claim that we have mentioned or offered every possible idea.

You are welcome to bring cushions or swatches to showrooms to coordinate colors. View color samples in both natural and artificial light to get an accurate impression of the color. Variations between samples and actual materials installed are possible. This is due to the manufacturer's coloring process (dye lots) and to the fact that over time, sunlight and other environmental factors affect the samples.

Some limitations may be placed on exterior choices by your Homeowners Association and may be further limited due to selections your future neighbors have already made. The

sooner you can make your selections, the greater the number of choices you have. Driving through the area to view existing homes is one way to select exterior colors. Selections often look different on a full size home.

Because no two buyers have the same taste, we reserve the right to place a hold on your selections until your loan has been approved and all contingencies are released.

If any of your selections have been discontinued, we will contact you and ask you to make an alternate selection within five days.

Occasionally it happens that a home is already under construction and some or all of these choices will have been made by Whittaker Homes.

For purchasers of homes that are currently on display please use them as a guideline. We ask that you thoroughly go through the display with the options list shown in the display so that you are aware of all the non-standard items. If there is anything that is of specific importance to you, it would be best to confirm what will be standard on the home during the selections process. For any homes not displayed, please take time to go through the plans, cabinet layouts, electrical layout, flooring breaks, etc. with your selections coordinator.

Your home is assembled by dozens of trade contractors. It seldom occurs that exactly the same individuals work on every home and even if they did, each one would still be unique. The exact placement of switches, outlets, registers, and so on will vary slightly from the model and other homes of the same floor plan.

Upon completion of the color selections form, double check all colors, numbers and names before signing and dating each page. Please retain your selection sheets for future reference at the end of this section. They are useful for matching paint colors, tile grout, and replacement items in your home.

After your selections have been completed, your selections coordinator will give you the necessary information you need in order to make your lighting selections (if applicable). We ask that you make your lighting selections within 15 days after you have completed your work order.

Whittaker Homes asks that you pay 10% of the added options from your selections forms. This payment is due within two weeks after you have signed your selections forms.

### **Change Orders**

In order to deliver your home as close as possible to the targeted date, we order many items well in advance of installation. Once a particular item is ordered, making further changes may involve an adjustment in the planned completion date and additional costs. There is a \$100 change order fee for each change you make. All fees are to be paid in full when the change is made. By working within the boundaries of the change order schedule, both can usually be avoided.

## CHECK LIST FOR SELECTIONS PROCESS

**House Placement on Lot** – Confirm left or right-hand configuration, driveway, easements and utilities.

**Basement** – Steel and column placement, plumbing stack locations, sump pump location, furnace placement, window and door layout if applicable, rough-in plumbing for bath or bar, foundation height, insulated basement windows, framed vs. concrete rear wall and siding on exposed sides of foundation if applicable, future finish plans.

**Elevation** – Check locations of brick, siding, shutters, window and/or door trim, gable vents, dormers, porch columns, porch railing, grills in windows and/or doors, style of front door and sidelites, roof pitch and style (i.e. hip vs. gable), colors for siding, brick and mortar, roof, trim, front door and sidelites, garage door, shutters.

**Garage** – garage size, garage door sizes, electrical outlets and overhead light locations, coachlights or floodlights, garage door opener pre-wire or installation, insulation, drywalled walls, garage service door.

**Living Room** – electrical receptacle, light fixture and switch locations, wall sizes for furniture placement, floor register and/or cold air return locations, added decorative trim work such as crown molding or chair railing.

**Dining Room/Breakfast Room** – electrical receptacle, light fixture and switch locations, wall sizes for furniture placement, floor register and/or cold air return locations, added decorative trim work such as crown molding or chair railing.

**Great Room** – overhead light requirements (i.e. fans, recessed lights), receptacle locations, need for floor outlets, wall sizes for furniture placement, locations of floor registers and/or cold air returns, fireplace placement, any decorative trim.

**Kitchen** – standard cabinet layout, drawer and door placement and sizes, cabinet choice, type of wood, color of wood, style of cabinet, refrigerator opening, icemaker hookup, soffits above cabinets, need for hardware, crown molding, any specific needs in cabinet layout (e.g. lazy susan, microwave cabinet, appliance garage), countertop style and color, overhang on island (if applicable) venting for range hood, appliance placement, features on appliances, colors, kitchen sink and faucet, microwave pre-wire, receptacles overhead light and switch locations.

**Laundry Room** – gas or electric hook up for dryer, need for laundry tub, shelving, receptacle and switch location.

**Bath Rooms** – vanity cabinet layouts, vanity with or without drawers, lighting, receptacle locations, mirrors, tub style, upgrade commodes, shower, faucets, shower doors, whirlpool,

cultured marble color.

**Bed Rooms** – wall sizes for furniture placement, lighting and electrical placement, closet shelving, floor register and/or cold air return locations.

**Specific Structural Needs** – bays, vaults, coffered ceilings, ceiling heights, patio door upgrades, added windows, upgrade windows, cantilevers, decks, foundation enlargements, house wrap, pocket doors, added doors, door swings and skylights.

**Miscellaneous** – heating and cooling, insulation for interior and exterior walls, security or intercom needs, pre-wire for ceiling fans, wiring for phone, cable/TV, satellite, fireplace specifications (gas vs. wood burning), elevation, glass doors, firebox size, interior trim work, paint color, style and type of interior doors and trim, window seats, staircase construction, volute handrails, oak vs. hemlock, exposed treads on stairs, stain for exposed wood, bookshelves, cased openings, crown mold, chair rail, beams, patio, driveway, sidewalk additions, screwed versus nailed drywall and subfloor, flooring needs, upgrade vinyl, upgrade carpet and pad, ceramic, wood flooring, laminate flooring, exterior electrical outlets, larger water heater.



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*Note to Home Buyer:*

Insert your records of your new home selections here.

## Construction of Your Home

The construction of a new home differs from other manufacturing processes in several ways. By keeping these differences in mind, you can enjoy participating in the construction process and assist us in building your new home.

- As consumers, we rarely have the opportunity to watch as products we purchase are created. Your new home is created in front of you.
- You have more opportunity for input into the design and finish details of a new home than most other products. Our success in personalizing your home depends on effective communication.
- Because of the time required for construction, you have many opportunities to ask questions and discuss details.

We understand that you may want to visit your new home during construction. For liability and safety reasons, we ask that you do not enter the home while it is under construction. Please make note of the following excerpt as taken from paragraph 20 of your sale contract.

**“NO ENTRY PRIOR TO CLOSING: Neither the Purchasers, their family, agents, or guests shall place any goods, equipment, or furnishings in the home or otherwise enter the residence or upon the Lot until the residence has been completed and the Purchasers have closed on the purchase of the home as provided in this Contract. Purchasers acknowledge that any such entry onto the property is forbidden, shall constitute a trespass, and be strictly at Purchasers’ own risk.”** (The only exception to this would be your new home orientation just prior to closing.)

### Plans and Specifications

We construct each home to comply with the standard plans and specifications approved by the applicable building department. The plans and specifications become part of our agreements with trade contractors and suppliers. **These contracts can only be changed by written instructions from Whittaker Homes.**

### *Regulatory Changes*

From time to time, city or county agencies adopt new codes or regulations, which can affect your home. Such changes are usually adopted in the interest of safety and are legal requirements with which Whittaker Homes must comply. The codes and requirements that are in effect for each area can vary somewhat. Therefore, the same floor plan may be constructed slightly different in each of two different jurisdictions, or at two different times within the same jurisdiction.

### *Individual Foundation Designs*

Another area where variations between homes can appear is in the foundation system. The foundation design is specific to each lot. Because of variations in soil conditions between lots, your foundation type may be different from your neighbors' or that of the same home in another neighborhood.

### *Changes in Materials, Products, and Methods*

The new home industry, building trades, and product manufacturers are continually watching for improved methods and better products. In addition, manufacturers sometimes make model changes that can impact our final product. As a result, we may use methods or materials in your home that differ from those in our other homes.

In all instances, any substitution of method or product will be of equal or better quality than that shown in our other homes. Since such substitutions or changes may become necessary due to matters outside our control, we reserve the right to make them without notification.

### *Natural Variations*

Your home is assembled by dozens of trade contractors. It seldom occurs that exactly the same individuals work on every home, and even if they did, each one would still be unique. **The exact placement of switches, outlets, registers, and so on will vary slightly from the model and other homes of the same floor plan.**

## Quality

Your new home will be built to the quality standards demonstrated in our other homes. Each new home is a handcrafted product--part art, part science, and part raw labor. The efforts of many people come together. We coordinate and supervise these contributions to produce your new home.

During a process that takes several months and involves dozens of people, from time to time an error occurs. We have systems and procedures for inspecting our homes to assure the level of quality meets our requirements. We inspect every step of construction and are responsible for quality control. In addition, a number of inspections are conducted at different stages by the county or an engineer. Your home must pass each inspection before construction continues.

We also respect your interest and appreciate your attachment to your new home. However, to avoid duplication of efforts, confusion, misunderstandings, or compounding errors, we ask that you do one of two things.

- 1) Bring any of your concerns up with your selections coordinator, or

2) You are welcome to complete one of the *Our Customer Wants to Know. . .* forms included at the end of this manual. Simply send or fax the completed form to our office. The date and time it was received will be noted and we will be back in touch with you within two business days with a response. If the matter is urgent you may call your selections coordinator.

During the construction process, every home built experiences some days when it is not at its best. Homes under construction endure wind, rain, snow, foot traffic, and activities that generate noise, dust, and trash. Material scraps are a by-product of the process. Although your new home is cleaned by each trade upon completion of their portion of the work, during your visits you will encounter some messy moments. Keep in mind that the homes you toured once endured these ugly duckling stages.

### **Trade Contractors**

Your home is built through the combined efforts of specialists in many trades--from the excavation and foundation stage, through framing, mechanicals and insulation, to drywall, trim and finish work. In order to ensure you the highest possible standard of construction, only authorized suppliers, trade contractors, and Whittaker Homes employees are permitted to perform work in your home.

Suppliers and trade contractors have no authority to enter into agreements for Whittaker Homes. For your protection and theirs, the terms of our trade contractor agreements prohibit alterations without written authorization from Whittaker Homes. Their failure to comply with this procedure can result in termination of their contract.

### **Schedules**

The estimated completion date for your new home begins as an estimate. Until the roof is on and the structure is enclosed, weather can dramatically affect the estimated completion date. Even after the home itself is past the potential for weather related delays, installation of utility services, final grading, and concrete flatwork--to mention a few examples--can be severely impacted by weather. Extended periods of wet weather or freezing temperatures bring work to a stop in the entire region. When favorable conditions return, the trades people go back to work, picking up where they left off. Please understand they are as anxious to get caught up as you are to see progress on your home.

#### ***Estimated Completion Date Updates***

You may request an update periodically on the progress of your new home by faxing in an "*Our Customer Wants to Know...*" form. You are also welcome to check with your selections coordinator. As completion nears, more factors come under our control and we can be more precise about the date. Expect a firm closing date 3-4 weeks prior to completion.

We suggest that until you receive this commitment you avoid finalizing arrangements for your move. Up until that time, flexibility is the key to comfort, sanity, and convenience. We want you to enjoy this process and avoid unnecessary stress caused by uncertainty that cannot be avoided. Review the "Loan Lock" heading in Section 3, *Applying for Your Loan* for additional suggestions on this topic.

### *"Nothing's Happening"*

Expect several days during construction of your home when it appears as though nothing is happening. This can occur for a number of reasons. Each trade is scheduled days or weeks in advance of the actual work, this is referred to as lead time. Time is allotted for completion of their contribution to your home. Sometimes one trade completes its work a bit ahead of schedule. The next trade already has an assigned time slot, which usually cannot be changed on short notice. Progress also pauses while the home awaits building department inspections. This is a part of the normal sequence of the construction schedule and occurs at several points in every home. If you have questions about the pace of work, please contact your selections coordinator. We have included a general outline of the construction process for you on the next page.

## What to Expect During Construction

1. Construction of your new home will take approximately 12 to 20 weeks after it has been released for a start (subject to weather, etc.)
2. Building permits are obtained and the house is staked on the lot.
3. The building site is then excavated so the foundation can be poured. First, the footing is formed and poured. Next, the foundation walls are formed and poured. After the foundation wall forms are stripped, a damp-proofing material is applied and the foundation is allowed to cure. Approximately one week after it is poured, the foundation is backfilled.
4. Steel I-beams and lumber are delivered to your homesite so framing can begin.
5. Framing is a lengthy process. The sub-floor is constructed and the first floor walls are raised. If you've chosen a 2-story home, the second floor decking is constructed next and the upper level walls are raised. Now, roof trusses are set in place and the roof sheathing is applied. Finally, the windows and exterior doors are installed.
6. After framing has been completed, roofing materials are applied and the rough mechanicals begin. The rough plumbing is installed first, followed by the HVAC system, electric and low voltage wiring. If you've selected a fireplace, the firebox is now installed.
7. Once the rough mechanicals have been completed, the home is inspected by both local building and fire inspectors.
8. Next, the basement floor is poured and the home is insulated. Following insulation, the drywall is hung. (Other than framing, this is probably the most dramatic change you will see in your new home.) The drywall is then taped, mudded and sanded.
9. Drywalling complete, the interior is sprayed with its first coat of paint. Any vinyl, hardwood or ceramic flooring is laid at this time and your home is ready for trim materials.
10. Cabinetry, interior doors, moldings (base, casing, crown, etc.), ceramic tile and marble are installed. After the interior trim has been completed, it's stained or painted, as specified on your work order from color selections.
11. Finish materials are next on the agenda: marble vanity tops, plumbing accessories, lights, switches and receptacles, the HVAC system, TV and phone jacks, carpeting and the second coat of paint is applied to the walls.
12. Your home undergoes a thorough cleaning and the final tune-up begins with the "punch" stage. The carpenter returns to make final adjustments, the drywall and paint are touched-up wherever needed and a laborer attends to any miscellaneous items, as well as, the final cleaning of your home.
13. Once your home has passed its final building and fire inspections, you're ready for your Home Orientation Walk-Thru with our walk-thru personnel.

## Homeowner Orientation

Your Homeowner Orientation is an introduction to your new home and its many features --a meeting that goes beyond the traditional walk-thru to include a detailed demonstration of your home and information regarding its maintenance.

### Scheduling

We schedule the orientation with you as your home nears completion. Appointments are available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The last orientation begins at 1p.m. We meet at your new home. The orientation occurs the day of closing. Expect your orientation to take approximately two hours.

### Orientation Forms

We have included copies of the forms we use at the orientation at the end of this section. In addition, the suggestions that follow will help you to derive the greatest benefit from your orientation.

### Preparation

Allow enough time. We expect the orientation to take nearly 2 hours. By arranging your schedule so you can use the full amount of time allotted, you will derive maximum benefit from the orientation.

If you have questions--about home maintenance or the limited warranty coverage--make note of them to bring up at the orientation. If you have not already done so, please read *Caring for Your Home*, Section 9 of this manual, prior to the orientation.

Past experience has shown that the orientation is most beneficial when buyers are able to focus all their attention on their new home and the information we present. Although we appreciate that friends and relatives are anxious to see your new home, it would be best if they visit at another time. Similarly, we suggest that, if possible, children and pets not accompany you at this time.

If a real estate agent has been involved with your purchase, he or she is not required to attend but is welcome.

### Acceptance

In addition to introducing you to your new home, the orientation is also an opportunity for you and Whittaker Homes to confirm that the home meets the quality standards shown in our other homes and that all selections and changes have been completed. We note details that need attention on the orientation forms.

Cosmetic surface damage caused during construction is readily noticeable during the orientation. Such damage can also occur during the move-in process or through daily activities. Therefore, *after we correct any items noted during the orientation, repair of cosmetic surface damage is your responsibility. This includes paint touch-up. Our limited warranty excludes cosmetic damage to items such as*

- Sinks, tubs, and plumbing fixtures
- Countertops and cabinet doors
- Light fixtures, mirrors, and glass
- Windows and screens
- All flooring
- Doors, trim, and hardware
- Paint and drywall
- Finish on appliances

### Completion of Items

Whittaker Homes takes responsibility for resolving any items noted as provided in your Sale Contract. Most items will be completed prior to your move-in. If work needs to be performed in your new home after your move in, construction personnel are available for appointments Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please note that only those items listed will be corrected or resolved. No verbal commitments of any kind will be honored by Whittaker Homes.

### Future Service

Whittaker Homes responds to warranty items according to the terms and conditions of the Home Buyers Warranty. For more details, review *Caring for Your Home*, Section 9.

## Whittaker Homeowner Manual

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### Note to Home Buyer:

At your Homeowner Orientation, you will receive:

- an *Emergency Phone Number* for the plumber after hours or on weekends.
- the manufacturer's literature for the furnace, water heater, and other consumer products. Copies of this material for standard items are available for your review in our sales office.
- copies of completed orientation forms. We suggest you insert them here.

## Closing on Your Home

Whittaker Homes recognizes that timing is vitally important in planning your move and locking your loan. We can specify an exact delivery date when construction reaches a point where weather and other factors are unlikely to affect completion of your home. This occurs about four weeks prior to closing. Until then, many factors can impact the schedule.

- Weather conditions may delay pouring your foundation and may affect framing, roofing, and exterior finish.
- Material shortages and labor strikes may also affect the construction schedule.
- If you delay in responding to a request by your lender, this can affect work progress.
- Change orders signed after the original sale contract has been completed can add time to the schedule.

### Date of Closing

The closing takes place shortly after your orientation. Whittaker Homes will notify you both by phone and in writing of the date of closing prior to the settlement appointment. We also notify the lender and Lewis and Clark Title on every closing. If you are using another Title Company, it is your responsibility to confirm the closing with them. We set this appointment with at least three weeks notice. Typically, the closing process takes from 45 minutes to an hour (not including the new home orientation).

### Location of Closing

The closing on your new home typically takes place at the title company, although it occasionally occurs at the office of the lender. We confirm the location with you when we set the appointment. We recommend you use Lewis and Clark Title Company. They are located next to our corporate office and are underwritten by Transnation Title Company, the largest title insurance company in America. Lewis and Clark Title is affiliated with Whittaker Homes and you are not obligated to use their title services. In our experience, however, closings go smoother when our customers use Lewis and Clark Title.

### Closing Documents

At closing, the documents necessary to convey your new home to you and to close the loan from the Mortgage Company will be executed and delivered. In addition to these standard items, the lender, the title company, and Whittaker Homes may require other documents to be signed. The principal documents typically include--

***Special Warranty Deed*** The Special Warranty Deed conveys the home and lot to you, subject only to permitted exceptions. This does not apply if you already own the lot.

***Title Commitment*** At closing, we will deliver to you a standard form ALTA owner's title insurance commitment, committing to insure merchantable title of your home to you in the amount of the purchase price, subject to the permitted title exceptions that may be described in the purchase agreement. Review the title commitment carefully. If you have any questions, ask your title company. Within 60 days after the closing, the title company mails a standard ALTA owner's title insurance policy, insuring you title to your home in accordance with the commitment you received at the closing. The title insurance policy should be kept with your other valuable papers.

***Home Buyers Warranty*** We provide a copy of the Home Buyers Warranty in this manual for your review. Please read it thoroughly. Your limited warranty goes into effect on the date of closing.

***Promissory Note*** The Promissory Note is from you, payable to the lender in the principal amount of the loan, plus interest. One twelfth of your annual taxes and homeowner's insurance will be added to the principal and interest payment to determine your total monthly payment.

***Deed of Trust*** This encumbers your home as security for repayment of the Promissory Note.

### **Closing Expenses**

Certain customary items in connection with the property will be prorated to the date of closing such as prepaid expenses, reserves required by your lender and homeowner's association, if applicable. Prorations of general real property taxes and assessments will be based on the current year's taxes and assessments, or if they are unavailable, on the taxes and assessments for the prior year. Other closing expenses may include costs for a survey, flood letter, and title insurance.

### **"The Final Number"**

The final cost figure is available 1-2 days prior to the actual closing. Although a reasonably close estimate may be determined prior to the date of closing, the proration of several items included are affected by the closing date and cannot be calculated until that date is known.

### **Preparation**

Plan to bring a certified or cashier's check made out to the **Title Company** to the closing table. In your planning, be sure to allow time to arrange for and obtain these funds. In addition, please keep the following items in mind.

***Documents*** The Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA) provides you with many protections. Under this law you can review the settlement page that lists costs you are paying at closing one day prior to the appointment. Although these documents are not negotiable and thousands of home buyers have signed them, you should read them before the closing.

## Whittaker Homeowner Manual

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***Insurance*** You need to provide proof of a homeowner's policy from your insurance company. Your insurance agent should know exactly what is needed. We suggest you arrange for this no later than three weeks prior to the expected closing date.

***Whittaker Homes or Lender Issues*** The Title Company is not authorized to negotiate or make representations on behalf of any of the parties involved in the closing. Therefore, please discuss any questions, agreements, or other details directly with us or your lender in advance of the closing.

***Utilities*** Whittaker Homes will have utility service removed from its name on the day of closing. You will need to notify all applicable utility companies of your move so that service is provided in your name. We suggest that you contact these companies two weeks ahead of time to avoid any interruption in service. On the next page we have provided a list of various utilities to assist you in making these arrangements. There is space to note the phone number and the date you contacted them.

**Utility and Community Services**

	Phone #	Date Contacted/ Notes
Gas	_____	_____
Electric	_____	_____
Telephone	_____	_____
Water	_____	_____
Sewer	_____	_____
Trash Collection	_____	_____
Recycling	_____	_____
Cable TV	_____	_____
Post Office	_____	_____
Newspaper	_____	_____

## Moving into Your New Home

The activities of moving day are different from typical daily living. You may hear yourself asking questions such as “Where did we get all of this stuff?” or “Did you remember to bring toilet paper?” The following checklists can make moving a bit less chaotic.

Take precautions to protect vulnerable surfaces such as hardwood or resilient floors. Cover rails with moving pads or blankets. Remove doors where furniture might be a tight fit. You can protect carpet with ribbed, plastic runners.

Professional movers should have insurance for any damage they might accidentally cause. Friends and relatives will not. They are also unlikely to have the training and practiced skills of professional movers. If you are moving yourself, organize the schedule to avoid rushing and include rest breaks. People who are tired or in a hurry are more likely to hurt themselves or your belongings.

By planning ahead we hope you will have a smooth move!

### Moving Preparation Checklist

- Compare proposals of professional movers.
  - Costs for services such as packing and unpacking
  - Costs of packing materials and boxes
  - Distance and weight charges
  - Insurance
  - Availability and notice needed
  - Make truck reservation early
  - Reconfirm a week prior to your move
  
- Self-move.
  - Make truck reservation early
  - Costs of packing materials and boxes
  - Include a reservation for a dolly, a hand truck and moving pads
  - Reconfirm a week prior to your move
  
- Involve children in planning and preparing for the move.
- Donate unwanted items.
- Return borrowed items.
- Properly discard flammable materials.
- Empty refrigerator.
- Create a file for storing documents about your home and manufacturers’ literature.
- Retain receipts for tax purposes. Moving costs may be deductible.
- Send change of address cards to magazines and book clubs six weeks prior to your move.  
Also notify relatives, friends and your newspaper delivery person. (The U.S. Postal

Service provides a free kit that includes change-of address cards for various purposes, money-saving tips and other information on moving. Ask for it at your local post office. Postal Service website, [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) provides similar information and you can fill out the forms on-line. Complete the form while on the screen then print it out for your signature and send in. If you do not receive a written confirmation within five business days call 1-800-275-8777.)

- Give the forwarding order to your post office a month prior to your move to assure uninterrupted service.
- Transfer or start utility service.
  - Water and sewer
  - Gas
  - Electric
  - Telephone
  - Cable television
  - Trash collection
  - Security service, if applicable
- Register children in their new schools.
- Transfer medical and dental records, if necessary.
- Arrange for homeowner insurance and obtain the certificate you need for closing.
- Order checks with your new address and update financial records.
- Update your driver's license and your vehicle and voter registrations.

### **Packing Materials**

- Boxes of various sizes, cartons for mattresses.
- Packing tape and heavy cord.
- Packing paper, newspaper, bubble wrap.
- Labels to identify boxes (include a number, room/name), "Fragile" labels for special items.
- Markers.
- Master packing list. (List each box by number with name/room and a brief description of contents.)
- Scissors.
- Furniture pads, blankets, rugs.

### **Moving Day Necessities**

- Children's toys and games.
- Light bulbs.
- Toilet paper.
- Beverages and snacks.
- Paper towels.
- Soap and hand towels.
- Trash bags.
- First-aid kit.

- Prescription medication.
- Medical supplies for special needs.
- Paper, pad and pen.
- Shelf liners.
- Small tools.
  - Tape measure
  - Scissors
  - Screw drivers
  - Hammer
- Ice maker hook-up kit.
- Dryer vent flex hose.
- New hoses for washing machine.
- Picture hangers.
- Plant hooks.
- Scratch cover stick or liquid.
- Phone and phone book.

One last suggestion—moving into a new home is a lot of work. However well you have planned the details, becoming truly settled takes most families a long time. Be realistic in your expectations and enjoy the process of making your new house into your new home.

## **Caring for Your Home**

Your home has been constructed with quality materials and the labor of experienced craftsmen. Prior to our using any material, it must meet our specifications for quality and durability. All work is done under our supervision to attain the best possible results for your investment.

A home is one of the last hand-built products left in the world. Home building is part art, part science and part hard labor. Once the natural and man-made materials have been assembled, the components interact with each other and the environment. Although quality materials and workmanship have been used in your home, this does not mean that it will be free from care and maintenance. A home, like an automobile, requires care and attention from day one. General homeowner maintenance is essential to providing a quality home for a lifetime.

### **Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

We are proud of the homes we build and the neighborhoods in which we build. We strive to create long lasting value. This cannot be achieved unless you, as the homeowner, properly maintain your home and all of its components. Periodic maintenance is necessary because of normal wear and tear, the inherent characteristics of the materials used in your home, and normal service required by the mechanical systems. Natural fluctuations in temperature and humidity also impact your home.

Many times a minor adjustment or repair done immediately saves a more serious, time-consuming, and sometimes costly repair later. Note also that negligence of routine maintenance can void applicable limited warranty coverage on all or part of your home. By caring for your new home attentively, you insure your enjoyment of it for years. The attention provided by each homeowner contributes significantly to the overall desirability of the community.

We recognize that it is impossible to anticipate and describe every thing that may be needed for good home care, however, we have covered many important details. The subjects covered include components of homes we build, listed in alphabetical order. Each topic includes suggestions for use and maintenance followed by Whittaker Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines. Some components may be discussed here which are not present in your home.

Please take time to read the literature provided by the manufacturers of consumer products and other items in your home. Although much of the information may be familiar to you, some points may be significantly different from homes you have had in the past. The information contained in the manufacturers' material is not repeated here.

We make every effort to keep our information current and accurate. However, if any detail in our discussion conflicts with the manufacturer's recommendations, the manufacturer recommendations should be followed. Activate specific manufacturer warranties by completing and mailing any registration cards included with their materials. In some cases, manufacturer warranties may extend beyond the first year; it is in your best interest to be apprised of such coverage.

### **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

While we strive to build a defect-free home, we are realistic enough to know that we may make mistakes or that something in the home may not perform as intended. When either occurs we will make necessary corrections. In support of this commitment, Whittaker Homes provides you with a limited warranty. In addition to the information contained in the limited warranty itself, details about first year material and workmanship standards are included in this manual. The purpose is to let you know what our quality standard is for the typical concerns that can come up in a new home. For each item, our standards are described and what we will do to remedy items which do not meet our standards is explained.

Our criteria for qualifying warranty repairs are based on our written warranty and typical industry practice in our region and meet or exceed those practices for the components of your home. However, we reserve the right to exceed these guidelines if common sense or individual circumstances dictate without being obligated to exceed all guidelines to a similar degree or for all homeowners.

The signed limited warranty document will be mailed to you shortly after your closing. We include a specimen copy at the end of this section for your review and another specimen copy will be given to you at closing. Please read through this information as well as the service procedures that are discussed on the following pages. If you have any questions regarding the standards or procedures, contact our office.

*Our warranty service system is designed based on your written report of non-emergency items. This provides you with maximum protection and allows us to operate efficiently, thereby providing faster service to all homeowners. Emergency reports are the only items taken by phone.*

## Reporting Procedures

### *Forty-five Day Letter*

In order for our service program to operate at maximum efficiency, as well as for your own convenience, we suggest that you wait 45 days before submitting any warranty list. This allows you sufficient time to become settled in your new home and thoroughly examine all components.

### *11-Month Letter*

Near the end of the eleventh month of your workmanship and materials warranty, you should submit your 11-month letter. We will also be happy to discuss any maintenance questions you may have at that time.

### *Emergency Service*

Emergency, as defined by the limited warranty, includes situations such as:

- Total loss of heat when the outside temperature is below 45 degrees F.
- Total loss of electricity. (Check with the utility company prior to reporting this circumstance to Whittaker Homes or an electrician.)
- Total loss of water. (Check with the water department to be certain the problem is not a general outage in the area.)
- Plumbing leak that requires the entire water supply be shut off.
- Gas leak. (Contact your utility company or plumber if the leak is at the furnace or water heater supply lines.)

During business hours, call the Whittaker Homes Customer Service office:

**636-916-1015**

On weekends, holidays, or after hours, call the necessary contractor directly. The plumber's phone number is listed on the *Emergency Phone Numbers* sheet you receive at orientation.

### *Other Warranty Service*

If you wish to initiate non-emergency warranty service between the 45-day and 11-month letter, you are welcome to do so by sending in a service request form or writing a letter. These requests will be evaluated and those that cannot wait until the 11-month letter will be handled according to the same procedures that apply to the 45-day and 11-month letters.

### *Kitchen Appliance Warranties*

The manufacturers of kitchen appliances will work directly with you if any repairs are needed for these products. Customer service phone numbers are listed in the use and care materials for each appliance. Be prepared to provide the model and serial number of the item and the closing date on your home. Appliance warranties are generally for one year; refer to the literature provided by the manufacturer for complete information.

### **Service Processing Procedures**

You can help us to serve you better by providing complete information:

- Name, subdivision and lot number, and phone numbers where you can be reached during business hours.
- A complete description of the problem. For example, "Guest bath--cold water line leaks under sink" rather than "plumbing problem".

When we receive a warranty service request, we may contact you for an inspection appointment. Warranty inspection appointments are available Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We inspect the items listed in your written request to confirm warranty coverage and determine appropriate action. Generally reported items fall into one of three categories.

- Subcontractor item
- In-house item
- Home maintenance item

If a subcontractor or an in-house employee is required to complete repairs, we issue a warranty work order and the repair technician contacts you to schedule the work. Warranty work is done Monday through Friday, between 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. We intend to complete warranty work orders within 10 days of the date issued unless you are unavailable for access. If a delay is caused by a back ordered part or similar circumstance, we will let you know.

If the item is home maintenance, we will review the maintenance steps with you and offer whatever informational assistance we can. Whittaker Homes does not provide routine home maintenance.

## *Reporting Warranty Items*

The many details of warranty coverage can be confusing. We hope this chart will make reporting items easier. If you do not know whom to contact, call our office and we will guide you.

**Appliances** Contact manufacturer directly with model and serial number, closing date, and description of problem.

**Emergency** During our business hours (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.) call our Customer Service office, 916-1015.

After business hours or on weekends or holidays, contact the trade or appropriate utility company directly using the emergency numbers you received at your orientation.

**Non-emergency** Mail or fax your written list of items to our office. Service request forms can be found at the end of this manual or you can request more by calling our office.

3333-4 Rue Royale  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
Fax (636) 916-2019

**Questions?** Call the Customer Service office during normal business hours, 916-1015.

**Storm damage or other natural disaster** Contact your homeowner's insurance agent immediately, contain damage as much as possible without endangering yourself. In extreme situations, photograph the damage.

**Hours** Office: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.  
Inspection appointments: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. until 4 p.m.  
Work appointments: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. until 3 p.m.

# Air Conditioning

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Air conditioning can add much to the comfort of your home, but it can be used improperly or inefficiently, resulting in wasted energy and frustration. These hints and suggestions are provided to help you maximize your air conditioning system.

To use your air conditioning system efficiently, understand that it is a whole-house system. The air conditioner unit is the mechanism that produces cooler air. The air conditioning system involves everything inside your home including, for example, drapes 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 of paramount importance 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 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 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 airflow to occupied parts of your home by adjusting the vents. Likewise, when the seasons change, readjust them for comfortable heating.

### *Compressor Level*

Maintain the A/C compressor in a level position to prevent inefficient operation and damage to the equipment. See also, *Grading and Drainage*.

### *Humidifier*

If a humidifier is installed on the furnace system, turn it off when you use the air conditioning; otherwise, the additional moisture can cause a freeze-up of the cooling system.

### *Manufacturer Instructions*

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

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

The air conditioning system should be capable of maintaining 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 five feet above the floor. Lower temperature settings are often possible but neither the manufacturer nor Whittaker Homes guarantee this.

### *Compressor*

The air conditioning compressor must be in a level position to operate correctly. If it settles during the first year, Whittaker Homes will correct this.

### *Non-Emergency*

Lack of air conditioning service is not an emergency. Heating and air conditioning contractors in our region respond to air conditioning service requests in the order received.

### *Temperature Variations*

Temperatures will vary from room to room by three to ten degrees F.

# Appliances

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Read and follow all manufacturer instructions for the use and maintenance of each appliance in your home and keep them available for reference.

### *Manufacturer Service*

If a problem arises with an appliance, call the customer service number listed in the manufacturer's warranty. When reporting warranty items to the appliance manufacturer, be prepared to supply the following details.

- Date of purchase (your closing date)
- Serial and model numbers, found on a metal plate or sticker on the side or bottom of each appliance
- Description of the problem

### *Registration*

Mail warranty registration cards directly to the manufacturer.

## WHITTAKER 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 in accordance with the terms and conditions of these written warranties.

## Appliance Serial Numbers

For warranty service on an appliance, contact the appropriate manufacturer directly at the service number provided in the appliance literature. You will need to supply the model and serial number (usually located on a small metal plate or seal attached to the appliance in an inconspicuous location), and the date of purchase (your closing date).

Closing Date

<i>Appliance</i>	<i>Manufacturer</i>	<i>Model #</i>	<i>Serial #</i>	<i>Service Phone #</i>
Range				
Range Hood				
Cooktop				
Oven				
Microwave				
Dishwasher				
Disposal				

# Asphalt

## Homeowner CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Asphalt is a flexible and specialized surface. Like any other surface in your home, it requires protection from things that 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. This includes people, bicycles, lawn mowers, and any other traffic.

### *Chemical Spills*

Asphalt is a petroleum product. Gasoline, oil, turpentine, or other solvent or petroleum products can dissolve or damage the surface. Such spills should be washed with soap and water, and then rinsed 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.

### *Non-Residential Traffic*

Avoid non-residential traffic such as heavy trucks on your driveway; it was designed for residential uses only.

### *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. Your asphalt driveway does not need to be surface treated. However, if you choose to treat yours wait a minimum of 12 months and use a dilute asphalt emulsion, rather than the more common coal tar sealant.

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY**

We perform any asphalt repairs by overlay patching. Whittaker 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; Whittaker 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 1-1/2 inches across the width of the driveway is normal. Settling or depressions elsewhere in the driveway of up to 1-1/2 inches in any eight-foot radius are considered normal. We will repair settling that exceeds these standards.

### ***Thermal Cracking***

Your drive will exhibit thermal cracking, usually during the first 12 months. These cracks help your driveway adapt to the heating and freezing cycles. Cracks should be evaluated in the hottest months--July or August. We will repair cracks that exceed 1/2 inch in width.

## Attic Access

### **Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

The attic space is neither designed nor intended for storage. We provide access to this area for maintaining mechanical equipment that may traverse the attic space. When you perform needed tasks in the attic, use caution and avoid stepping off wood members onto the drywall. This can result in personal injury or damage to the ceiling below. Such injury or damage is not covered by your limited warranty.

### **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

Whittaker Homes inspects the attic prior to your closing to confirm insulation is correct.

# Brass Fixtures

## Homeowner USE & 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, or scratches from sharp objects cause the protective coating to crack or peel, exposing the brass and resulting in spotting and discoloration.

### *Cleaning*

Initial care for these products requires only periodic cleaning with a mild, non-abrasive 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 supplies with a high mineral content are 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*

Brass, like sterling silver, will gradually tarnish and eventually take on an antique appearance.

## WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES

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

# Brick

## Homeowner USE & 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.

### *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. This allows moisture that accumulates behind the brick to escape. Do not fill these weep holes or permit landscaping materials to cover them.

## WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES

We check the brickwork during the orientation to confirm correct installation of designated materials.

### *Cracks*

One time during the warranty period, we repair masonry cracks that exceed 1/4 inch in width. This should be put on your 11-month letter.

# Cabinets

## **Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

Your selection sheets are your record of the brand, style and color of cabinets in your home. If you selected wood or wood veneer cabinets, expect differences in grain and color between and within the cabinet components due to the 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 a quarter to protect against excessive build-up. Avoid paraffin-based spray waxes or 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 crock pot--too near the cabinet. When operating such appliances, place them in a location that is not directly under a cabinet.

## **WHITTAKER 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 as measured from the face of the cabinet frame to the furthestmost point of warpage on the drawer or door front in a closed position, we will correct this by adjustment or replacement.

### *Wood Grain*

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

# Carpet

## Homeowner USE & 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 manufacturers' recommendations for additional information on the care of your floor coverings.

### *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 abrade 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 helps maintain 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. Professional cleaning should be performed annually using the manufacturer's suggested method of cleaning.

Below are some conditions that may occur with your new carpet:

### *Burns*

Any kind of burn should be taken care of 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.

### *Crushing*

Furniture and traffic may crush a carpet's pile fibers. Frequent vacuuming in high traffic areas and placing 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. This can be delayed by frequently removing soil by vacuuming, regularly changing air filters in heating and air conditioning systems, keeping humidity and temperatures from getting too high, and reducing sunlight exposure with window coverings.

### ***Filtration***

If interior doors are kept closed while the air conditioning is operating, the 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.

### ***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 it gets. 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 the carpeting restretched by a professional 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 the material has a defect making the seam appear to be more pronounced than usual. The more dense and uniform the carpet texture, the more visible the seams will be. Carpet styles with low tight naps will 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. Examples of how carpet seams diminish after they have been vacuumed and experienced traffic can be seen in the model homes.

### *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 and lighter in these areas. A good vacuuming so the pile is all going 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 the snag off. 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 the sprout off. Do not attempt to pull it as the other fibers will come out in the process.

### *Stains*

No carpet is stainproof. Although your carpet manufacturer designates your carpet stain resistant, some substances may still cause permanent staining. These include hair dyes, shoe polish, paints, or India ink. Some substances destroy or change the color of carpets, these include but are not limited to 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.

Please 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 altogether, look for carpets made with anti-static built in. You can also install a humidifier to help control static build up.

## **WHITTAKER 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. Whittaker Homes will not be 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. Whittaker Homes will repair any gaps or fraying.

# Caulking

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Time and weather will shrink and dry caulking so that it no longer provides a good seal. As a matter of routine maintenance, check the caulking and make repairs as needed. A humidifier can also help reduce shrinkage. Caulking compounds and dispenser guns are available at hardware stores. Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully to be certain 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 but works best where water is present, for example, where tub meets tile or a sink meets a countertop.

## WHITTAKER 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 this be performed with the service items listed on your 11-month letter.

# Ceramic Tile

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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

### *Cleaning*

Ceramic tile floors are one 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*

Grout that becomes yellowed or stained can be cleaned 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 which can be 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. 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.

## **WHITTAKER 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. Whittaker 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. Whittaker 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 maintenance responsibility.

# Concrete Flatwork

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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

Interior concrete slabs are floating--they are not attached to the home's foundation walls. These are not a structural (load bearing) element of the home and are not covered by the ten-year structural warranty.

We install in the basement floor and garage floor what are known as “zip strips” in an effort to control random cracking of these slabs.

### *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. Sweeping is the recommended method 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 or causing more cracking. Maintenance of 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 can be purchased at most hardware stores.

### *Heavy Vehicles*

Do not permit heavy vehicles such as moving vans or concrete trucks to drive on your concrete work. We designed and installed this concrete for residential use only.

### *Ice, Snow, & Chemicals*

Remove ice and snow from concrete slabs as promptly as possible after snowstorms. 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.

### *Sealer*

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

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

Concrete basement floor slabs are floating--they are not attached to the home's foundation walls. These are not a structural (load bearing) element of the home and are not covered by the structural warranty. If your home has a concrete slab with finish flooring, the limited warranty coverage is for one year unless the requirements of your loan state otherwise.

### *Cracks*

If concrete cracks in basement floor slabs reach 1/4 inch in width or vertical displacement, Whittaker Homes will patch or repair them during the first warranty year only. Subsequently, concrete slab maintenance is your responsibility.

### *Finished Floors (Slab on Grade)*

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

### ***Level Floors***

Concrete floors in 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.

### ***Settling or Heaving***

Whittaker Homes will repair slabs that settle or heave in excess of two inches or if such movement results in negative (toward the house) drainage or hazardous vertical displacement within the first year.

### ***Spalling (Surface Chips)***

Repeated hosing of concrete for cleaning, animal urine, radiator overflow, fertilizer, failure to shovel snow and ice, ice melting agents, or road salts from vehicles are some of the causes of spalling. Repair of spalling is a home maintenance task.

### ***Standing Water***

Water may stand on exterior concrete slabs for several hours after precipitation or from roof runoff.

# Condensation

## **Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

Condensation on interior surfaces of the windows and frames comes from high humidity within the home combined with low outside temperatures and inadequate ventilation. These conditions are significantly influenced by family lifestyle. If your home includes a humidifier, closely observe manufacturer's directions, especially during periods of cooler temperatures. See the Andersen Window booklet in your closing packet for additional information.

# Countertops

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Use a cutting board to protect your counters when you cut, chop, and so on. Protect the counter from heat and 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 keep cigarettes in an ashtray rather than setting them on the edge of the counter.

### *Caulking*

The caulking between the countertop and the wall, along the joint at the backsplash and around the sink may shrink, leaving a slight gap. Maintaining a good seal in these locations is important in keeping moisture from reaching the wood under the laminates and preventing warping. Addition of a humidifier can help. Refer to *Caulking* for additional information.

### *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 can be used to make counters gleam.

See also, *Ceramic Tile*.

## WHITTAKER 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, scratches, and so on, noted on the orientation list; repair of surface damage that occurs during or after your move-in is one of your home maintenance responsibilities.

### *Laminates*

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

### *Man-made Marble and Laminates*

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*

Separations of countertops from walls, backsplash, and around sinks result from normal shrinkage of materials. Whittaker 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 & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

The doors installed in your home are wood products subject to the natural characteristics of wood such as shrinkage and warpage. Due to natural fluctuations of humidity and the use of forced air furnaces, showers, dishwashers, and so on, interior doors may require minor adjustments from time to time.

### *Bifold Doors*

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

### *Exterior Finish*

To insure longer life for your exterior doors, plan to refinish them at least once a year. Stained exterior doors with clear finishes tend to weather faster than a painted door. Treat the finish with a wood preserver (such as Old English) quarterly to preserve the varnish and prevent the door from drying and cracking. Reseal the stained exterior doors whenever the finish begins cracking or crazing.

### *Failure to Latch*

If a door will not latch due to 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. Also vaseline petroleum jelly or a liquid soap such as dishwashing detergent or Softsoap can be added to the hinge pins to stop squeaks and reduce gray shavings. 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 himself/herself in a room. The top edge of the door casing is often used as a place to keep the key. Some types of privacy locks can be opened with a small screwdriver or similarly shaped device.

### *Locks*

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

### *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 hardware loose and causes the door to sag.

### *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 areas that are exposed as a result is your home maintenance responsibility.

### *Sticking*

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

Before planing a door due to 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 Strip*

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

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

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

### *Adjustments*

Due to normal settling of the home, doors may require adjustment for proper fit. Whittaker Homes will make such adjustments during the first year.

### *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 areas that are exposed as a result are your home maintenance responsibility, Whittaker Homes will repair split panels that allow light to be visible.

### *Warping*

Whittaker Homes will repair interior doors that warp in excess of 1/4 inch and exterior doors in excess of 3/4 inch. Exterior doors should touch weatherstrip. Doors must go through all four seasons before being replaced.

# Drywall

## Homeowner USE & 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.

### *Repairs*

With the exception of the one-time repair service provided by Whittaker Homes, care of drywall is your maintenance responsibility. Most drywall repairs can be easily made; this work is best done when the room is to be redecorated.

Hairline cracks can be repaired with a coat of paint; slightly larger cracks can be repaired with spackle or caulk. To correct a nail pop, reset the nail with a hammer. 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, then paint. Indentations caused by sharp objects can be filled with spackle in the same manner.

## WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES

During the orientation, we confirm that drywall surfaces are in acceptable condition. One time during the materials and workmanship warranty, Whittaker Homes will repair drywall shrinkage cracks and nail pops as outlined in the warranty document and 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*

Whittaker Homes does not repair drywall flaws which are only visible under particular lighting conditions.

### *Related Warranty Repairs*

If a drywall repair is a result of poor workmanship (such as blisters in tape), or other warranty-based repair (such as a plumbing leak), Whittaker 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

## Whittaker Homeowner Manual

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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. Due to the effects of time on paint and wallpaper, as well as possible dye lot variations, touch-ups may not match the surrounding area.

# Electrical

## Homeowner USE & 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.

### *Breaker Tripping*

Breakers trip due to overloads caused by plugging too many appliances into the circuit, a worn cord or defective item, 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 the electrician. If the circuit remains on, one of the items you unplugged is defective and requires repair or replacement.

### *What is an Arc Fault Breaker?*

It is a new type of circuit breaker with additional circuit protection, which mitigates the effects of an arcing fault.

## HOMEOWNER INSTRUCTIONS FOR A 2-POLE INDEPENDENT TRIP

1. For circuit breaker BRANCH/FEEDER ARC FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER (AFCI)  
Listing mark is on front of breaker.  
How do you locate an Arc Fault Breaker inside the panel?
2. Look for the circuit breaker that has a label on its front that reads “ARC FAULT BREAKER”. The label and the “TEST” buttons can be seen without removing the front trim on the panel board.
3. Homeowner to use the “TEST” buttons one at a time on the front of the ARC FAULT breaker to test the Arc Fault test circuit by tripping the breaker. The breaker

handles move to either the middle position or “OFF”. First push or move one of the test the Arc fault test circuit by tripping the breaker. The breaker handles must trip otherwise the breaker must be replaced. Restore power by moving each of the breaker handles firmly to the “OFF” position and then moving each of the breaker handles firmly to the “ON” position. Next test the other half of the breaker. Push or move the remaining test button. Breaker handles must trip, otherwise it must be replaced. A qualified electrician must be used to replace a breaker. After testing restore power.

4. Test regularly, at least once per month, following the test method outlined above.

What do you if an Arc Fault Breaker trips?

5. If the breaker handle trips (handle moves to “OFF” position or to a mid-position) remove all loads from the receptacles in this branch circuit. Restore power to the breaker to see if it will stay “ON”. If the breaker trips again, have an electrician check the permanent electrical wiring by first turning off any wall switches that control light fixtures or outlets. The fault could be arcing, poor insulation, short wires, wet connections, wet conduit, a neutral lead pinched to a ground metal box, receptacle leakage, or other faults which could cause safety features of the circuit breaker to open the circuit. If the breaker stays on, then switch the breaker to the “OFF” position and reconnect one of the loads. First connect a 120-volt 40-watt or higher light bulb load to one of the circuits. Turn the breaker “ON” and switch on that load. If the breaker trips with just this load connected, then please call an electrician to resolve. If the breaker remains “ON”, and the load operates normally, add additional loads. This process should be continued until the breaker trips or stays on. The load, which has been added last and caused a trip, should be examined for possible faults. The fault could be among those listed above.

The total load on the breaker should also be calculated to determine if a possible overload condition exists before reusing the device (see Note A below). Loads suspected of having faults should not be restored to service. If the breaker remains “ON” with all the original loads reconnected, push the breaker handles to the “OFF” position, wait 1 or 2 minutes, and move the handles to the handles to the handles to the “ON” position. Breaker tripping would indicate that inrush currents are too high. Reduce load until breaker can stay on.

Note A: Possible overload conditions can be checked by adding the currents drawn by various loads (watts/120) and comparing the sum to the breaker handle rating.

If you have questions regarding this information, please contact your original electrical contractor.

### ***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.

### ***GFI (Ground Fault Interrupter)***

GFI receptacles have a built-in element which senses fluctuations in power. Installation of these receptacles is required by building codes in bathrooms, kitchen, outside, and 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 GFI devices.

<p><b>Do not plug a refrigerator or food freezer into a GFI controlled outlet. The likelihood of the contents being ruined is high. Such damage is not covered by the limited warranty.</b></p>
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Each GFI receptacle 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 GFI device trips during normal use it may be an indication of a faulty appliance and investigation is in order. One GFI device can control up to six outlets.

### ***Ground***

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

### ***Modifications***

For any modification you wish to make, contact the electrician listed on the ***Emergency Phone Numbers*** sheet you receive at your 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 one that is controlled by a wall switch or GFI. Next check the breaker.

If there are small children in the home, install safety plugs to cover unused outlets. Teach children never to 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 this service.

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

Having another Electrician or Homeowners that install light fixtures, ceiling fans or make modifications to your electrical system during the warranty period can void that portion of your limited electrical warranty. Any modification should be made by your original electrical contractor. During the orientation we confirm that light fixtures are in acceptable condition. Whittaker Homes limited warranty excludes any fixture you supplied.

### *Designed Load*

Whittaker 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, Whittaker Homes will repair or replace them.

### *GFI (Ground Fault Interrupter)*

Whittaker Homes is not responsible for food spoilage that results from your plugging refrigerators or freezers into a GFI outlet.

### *Power Surge*

Power surges are the result of local conditions beyond the control of Whittaker 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, computers, and so on.

### *Items Covered under the 2-Year Systems Coverage*

Please consult the 2-10 Home Buyers Warranty manual for items covered under the 2-year systems coverage.

# Expansion & Contraction

## Homeowner USE & 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, where tile grout meets tub or sink, and so on. While this can be alarming to 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 you need to conceal this minor evidence of a natural phenomenon. Properly installed caulking shrinks and cracks. Maintenance of caulking is your responsibility.

## WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY

Whittaker Homes provides one time repairs to many of the effects of expansion and contraction. See individual categories for details.

# Fireplace

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Most of us feel a fireplace is an excellent way to create a warm, cozy atmosphere. However, without sufficient information, your use of the fireplace can result in heat (and dollars) being wasted. To help prevent that, consider the following points.

Look upon burning a fire as a luxury that adds much to the atmosphere but just a little to the heat in a home. About 10% of the heat produced by a fire is radiated into the house.

In many older homes, the air used by the fireplace for combustion is replaced with cold outside air drawn in through cracks around doors and windows. However, your home is constructed so tightly that this does not happen. We install a fresh air vent to supply the fireplace with combustion air and reduce the amount of heated air the fire draws from your house. Open this vent prior to starting the fire as you do the damper.

When not in use the damper and cold air vent should be closed. Leaving these open is equivalent to having an open window in the house. If the fire is still burning, but you are finished enjoying it, use glass doors to prevent heated air from being drawn up the chimney until your damper can be closed. Glass doors may help reduce cold air infiltration down the chimney and into your home when the fireplace is not in use.

One caution on the use of glass doors: Do not close them over a roaring fire, especially if you are burning hard woods (such as oak or hickory) because this could break the glass. Also, when closing the doors over a burning fire, open the mesh screens first. This prevents excessive heat build-up on the mesh which might result in warping or discoloration.

Your objective in building a fire should be a clean, steady, slow-burning fire. Begin with a small fire to allow the components of the fireplace to heat up slowly. Failure to do so may damage the fireplace and can void the warranty. Start the fire by burning kindling and newspaper under the grate; two to three layers of logs stacked with air space between, largest logs to the rear, works best. One sheet of paper burned on top of the stack will help the chimney start to draw. Any logs 6" in diameter or larger should be split.

**Do not burn trash in the fireplace and never use any type of liquid fire starter.**

Old ashes and coals should be removed from under the grate when completely cool. A light layer is desirable as an insulator and will help to reflect heat.

### *Chimney Cleaning*

Creosote and other wood burning by-products accumulate inside the flue over a period of time. This build-up can be a fire hazard. The way you use your fireplace and the type of wood you burn determines the timing on having your chimney cleaned. For instance, burning soft woods or improperly seasoned woods necessitates more frequent cleaning. A qualified chimney sweep should be hired for this cleaning.

### *Spark Arrester*

If the spark arrester becomes clogged the diminished airflow will affect the performance of the fireplace and may be a fire hazard. Have the arrester cleaned professionally when needed.

### *Gas Fireplace*

Whittaker Homes offers direct-vent gas fireplaces. If you ordered this type of fireplace, it is demonstrated during the orientation. Read and follow all manufacturer directions.

Be aware of a delay between turning the switch on and flame ignition. The flames should ignite gently and silently. If you notice any deviation in this and any gas smell, shut the switch off immediately and report it.

The exterior vent cover for a direct vent gas fireplace becomes extremely hot when the fireplace is operating.

### *Natural Stone Material Information*

As is the case with any natural material, there will be variations in color and markings in each individual piece of natural stone. These variations should not be regarded as defects. They are characteristics of natural stone that give the material its natural beauty and uniqueness. Variations in veining, color, and movement are present in any natural material. There will also be fissures, small visible lines on the surface of a slab which rarely indicate or affect the structural integrity of the product or your project. Fissures are sometimes confused with cracks. Fissures are surface marks only, and will not affect the stone in any way. Beauty marks, natural mineral deposit concentrations, and pitting or pock marks are also a natural occurrence in natural stone products and will not affect the stone in any way, and will not expand or grow. The presence of any of these characteristics adds to the uniqueness of your material, and in the majority does not compromise the durability of the product. A product of nature can not be expected to look man made. Imperfection is the art and perfection of natural stone.

### *Slate & Marble Care & Cleaning*

The slate or marble facing on your fireplace has been carefully matched, custom cut and polished. The surface is susceptible to scratching and staining. With a minimum of care it will continue to enhance the beauty, warmth and charm of your fireplace for many years to come.

- Keep facing and hearth free of dust and grit.
- To remove surface dust and dirt, wipe with a soft cloth and warm, clean water.
- NEVER use corrosives, strong detergents, or scouring powders to clean slate or marble.
- Marble stain! Always wipe up spills immediately. Water, coffee, alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, and citrus juices containing acids, penetrate into the polished surface of the surround.
- Remove water spots with a neutral soap diluted in warm water. Rinse with clean water and dry with a soft cloth.
- With slate, the occasional application of tung oil may be required to restore the sleek black finish.
- There are marble sealers, cleaners and polishes available at many fine retailers. BEFORE using these products, read and follow directions carefully.

### **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

Fireplaces are not intended to be the sole heat source in the home. The fireplace should function properly when Whittaker Homes' and the manufacturer's directions are followed.

#### ***Chimney Separation***

Separation of a brick chimney from a newly constructed home may occur. Whittaker Homes will repair separation from the main structure in excess of 1/2 inch in 10 feet. Caulking or grouting is acceptable up to 1/2-inch displacement.

#### ***Cracks***

Normal shrinkage of mortar results in hairline cracks in masonry. Whittaker Homes will repair cracks that exceed 1/4" in width. The repair is pointing or patching and will be done matching the mortar color as closely as possible, but some variation is expected.

Exterior masonry may have chips, irregular surfaces, color variations and so on which occur during manufacturing, shipping, or handling. Unless such conditions affect the structural integrity of the home, no repair is provided.

#### ***Discoloration***

Discoloration of the firebox or brick is a normal result of use and requires no corrective action. Mortar-style fireplaces may develop cracks due to temperature changes and other factors.

#### ***Downdraft***

Although extremely high winds can result in a downdraft, this condition should be temporary

and occasional. We will determine and correct the cause of continuous malfunction.

### ***Glass Doors***

During the orientation we confirm that glass doors, when included with the home, are in acceptable condition.

### ***Water Infiltration***

In unusually heavy or prolonged precipitation, especially when accompanied by high winds, some water can enter the home through the chimney. The limited warranty excludes this occurrence.

# Foundation

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

We install the foundation of your home in accordance with the recommendations of our consulting engineer. The walls of the foundation are poured concrete with steel reinforcing rods. To protect your home's foundation, follow guidelines for installation and maintenance of landscaping and drainage.

### *Cracks*

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

### *Dampness*

Due to the amount of water in concrete, basements may be damp. Condensation can form on water lines and drip onto the floor.

### *Future Construction in Basement*

If you decide to perform additional construction in the basement, obtain guidelines from a licensed engineer, obtain a building permit, and comply with all codes and safety requirements. Whittaker Homes does not warrant that a permit will be obtainable due to the possibility of unforeseeable changes in building codes.

## WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES

The foundation of your home has been designed and installed in accordance with the recommendations of an engineer. The walls of the foundation are poured concrete with steel reinforcing rods.

### *Cracks*

Shrinkage or backfill cracks are not unusual in foundation walls, especially at the corners of basement windows. Whittaker Homes will seal cracks that exceed 1/8 inch in width.

### *Cosmetic Imperfections*

Slight cosmetic imperfections in foundation walls, 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.

### *Leaks*

Whittaker Homes will correct conditions within the first year which permit water to enter the basement, provided you have complied with the drainage, landscaping, and maintenance guidelines.

# Garage Overhead Door

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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

### *30 Weight Oil*

Every six months apply a 30-weight automobile oil or similar lubricant to all moving parts: track, rollers, hinges, pulleys, and springs. At the same time, check to see that all hardware is tight and operating as intended without binding or scraping. Avoid over lubricating to prevent drips on vehicles, or the concrete floor.

### *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.

### *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.**

### *Painting*

The garage door should be repainted when the home is repainted 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.

**WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

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

*Light Visible*

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

# Gas Shut-Offs

## **Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

You will find shut-offs on gas lines near their connection to each item that operates on gas. In addition, there is a main shut off at the meter. We point these out during the orientation. If you suspect a gas leak, leave the home and call the Gas Company immediately for emergency service.

# Gas Water Heater

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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

### *Condensation*

Condensation inside your new water heater may drip onto the burner flame. This causes no harm and in most cases will disappear in a short period of time.

### *Drain Tank*

Review and follow manufacturer's timetable and instructions for draining several gallons of water from the bottom of the water heater. This reduces the build up of chemical deposits from the water, prolonging the life of the tank and saving energy dollars.

### *Pilot*

Never light a gas pilot when the water heater tank is empty. Always turn off the gas before shutting off the cold water supply (located at the top of the tank).

To light the water heater pilot, first remove the cover panel on the tank to expose the pilot. Then rotate the on/off/pilot knob to the pilot position. When the knob is in this position, the red button can be depressed.

While depressing the red button, hold a match at the pilot. Once the pilot lights, continue to hold the red button down for 30 to 60 seconds. When you release the red button the pilot should stay lit. If it does not, wait several minutes to allow the gas to dissipate from the tank and repeat the entire process again. If it stays lit, rotate the on/off/pilot knob to the on position.

Reinstall the cover panel and then adjust the temperature setting with the regulating knob on the front of the tank.

Water heaters sometimes collect small quantities of dirty water and scale in the main gas lines which may put out the pilot light.

While away from home for an extended period of time, set the temperature to its lowest point and leave the pilot lit.

### *Safety*

The area around a gas-fired water heater should be vacuumed as needed to prevent dust from interfering with proper flame combustion. The top of a heater should not be used as a storage shelf.

### *Temperature*

The recommended thermostat setting for normal everyday use is "normal." Higher settings can result in injury and waste energy.

### *No Hot Water*

If you discover you have no hot water, check the pilot, temperature setting, and water supply valve before calling for service. Refer to the manufacturer's literature for specific locations of these items and other troubleshooting information.

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

Please refer to the manufacturer's limited warranty for information regarding coverage of the water heater.

See also, *Plumbing*.

# Grading & Drainage

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

The final grades around your home have been inspected and approved for proper drainage of your lot. Inspections are made by the local building authorities as well as Whittaker Homes.

### *Drainage*

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 major structural damage and will void your warranty.

### *Roof Water*

Do not remove the splash blocks or downspout extensions from under the downspouts. Keep these in place at all times, sloped so the water drains away from your home quickly.

### *Rototilling*

Rototilling can significantly change drainage swales. You can minimize this by rototilling parallel to the 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 considerable 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.

See also, *Landscaping*.

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

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

### ***Backfill Settlement***

Backfilled or excavated areas around foundation and at utility trenches should not interfere with the drainage away from your home. If these areas settle during the first year, Whittaker Homes will fill the areas one time.

### ***Erosion***

Whittaker 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***

Whittaker 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 Whittaker Homes will inspect drainage problems reported in writing during the warranty period, compare grades to those we originally established and advise you as to corrective actions you might take.

### ***Swales***

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

### ***Under Concrete***

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

### ***Winter Grading***

Due to weather conditions, especially during winter and early spring, it may happen that the final grade has not been established at the time of closing. The status of your grading is documented at

## Whittaker Homeowner Manual

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the time of delivery. When conditions permit, grading work will continue. Confirm that we have completed your grading prior to beginning landscaping.

# Gutters & Downspouts

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Check gutters periodically and remove leaves or other debris. Materials that accumulate in gutters can slow water draining from the roof, cause overflows, or clog the downspouts.

### *Extensions or Splashblocks*

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

### *Downspout Extenders*

Installing down spout extenders until your yard is established is the Homeowner's responsibility. We recommend that every homeowner purchase and install the flexible black plastic extenders to help direct the flow of water away from your house.

This pipe is inexpensive and worth the time it takes to attach it to your downspouts. Some homeowners elect to bury this pipe. Please do whatever you feel will fit your needs the best. Usually the pipe can be removed once the yard has been established.

### *Sump Pump Extenders*

Installing extenders to direct the flow of water away from your home is the Homeowner's responsibility. Installing the flexible black plastic pipe to your sump pump discharge will help water from pooling near your foundation.

### *Ladders*

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

### *Leaks*

If a joint between sections of gutter drips, caulk the inside joint using a commercial gutter caulking compound available at hardware stores.

### *Paint*

Gutters and downspouts are painted to match your home. They should be repainted when you repaint your home.

*Snow and Ice*

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

**WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

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

*Leaks*

We correct leaks that occur during the warranty period.

*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 & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

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

## **WHITTAKER 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.

Door latches and locks may require minor adjustments due to normal shrinkage of the framing. Whittaker Homes will provide these adjustments. Whittaker Homes will repair hardware items that do not function as intended.

# Hardwood Floors

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

In daily care of hardwood floor, preventive maintenance is the primary goal. Refer to manufacturer's recommendations specific to your flooring.

### *Cleaning*

Sweep on a daily basis or as needed. Never wet mop a hardwood floor. Excessive water causes wood to expand, possibly damaging the floor. For pre-finished polyurethane floors see the manufacturer's guidelines for cleaning. For Bruce floor coverings, the manufacturer recommends using Duraluster for cleaning.

Check with the hardwood company if your floor has a water-based finish.

### *Dimples*

Heavy furniture or dropping heavy or sharp objects can result in dimples.

### *Filmy Appearance*

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

### *Furniture Legs*

Install proper floor protectors on furniture used on hardwood floors. Protectors will allow chairs to move easily over the floor without scuffing. Clean the protectors on a regular basis to remove any grit that may accumulate.

### *Humidity*

Wood floors respond noticeably to changes in humidity in your home, especially during winter months. 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 and they become dull and worn you may want to have an extra coat of polyurethane applied. This work should be done by a qualified contractor. The exact timing will depend on your particular lifestyle. If another finish was used, please refer to the manufacturer's recommendations.

### ***Separation (see also, Warping)***

Expect some shrinkage around heat vents or any heat producing appliances.

### ***Shoes***

Keep high heels in good repair. Heels which 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 on a **damp** cloth for tough food spills. Dry thoroughly to avoid warping.

### ***Splinters***

When new, small splinters of wood can appear.

### ***Traffic Paths***

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

### ***Warping***

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

### ***Wax***

Waxing and the use of products like Murphy's 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 level of luster.

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

During the orientation we will confirm that hardwood floors are in acceptable condition. We 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 Whittaker Homes will fill them one time on job finished floors. Whittaker 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.

# Heating System

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Good maintenance of the furnace can save energy dollars as well as prolong the life of the furnace itself. 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, heat can be diminished in seldom used or interior rooms. This is an individual matter and you will need to balance the system for your family.

### *Avoid Overheating*

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

### *Blower Panel*

The blower panel must be positioned correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. This panel compresses a button that tells the blower it is safe to operate. If this panel is not on tightly, the fan will not come on.

### *Combustion Air*

Furnaces we install in basements include combustion air vents.

<p><b>Never cover these or block the combustion air vent in any way. Outside air is needed to supply the furnace with sufficient oxygen. Blocking the combustion air vent will cause the furnace to draw air down the vent pipe and pull poisonous gases back into your home.</b></p>
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### *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***

Remember to change or clean the filter monthly during the heating season (all year if you also have air conditioning). A clogged filter can slow air flow 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 quantities for the sake of convenience.

### ***Furnished Home***

The heating system design was planned 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 to you than you would expect.

### ***Fuse***

Some furnaces have a fuse directly above the on/off switch. This fuse is an S12, S10, or S15 fuse. It absorbs any spikes in the line such as a close electrical strike or power surges. Unlike old fuses that burn out and are easily detectable, these fuses, similar to automobile fuses, have a spring that depresses when tripped. Unless you have examined these quite carefully before, it may be hard to determine if the fuse has blown. We suggest that you buy some extra fuses to have on hand.

### ***Gas Odor***

If you smell gas, call the customer service department during business hours and the emergency plumbing number after hours. You may also call the Gas Company.

### ***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 and should pass quickly.

### ***On-off Switch***

The furnace has an on-off blower switch. This switch looks like a regular light switch and is located in a metal box outside the furnace. When turned off, this switch overrides all furnace commands and shuts down the blower. This is usually only done when maintenance service is being performed although young children have been known to turn the furnace off using this switch. (If your furnace is a high efficiency furnace, there is no pilot and no on-off switch.)

### ***Pilot***

On models with manually lit pilots, lighting the furnace pilot involves several steps. First remove the cover panel to expose the pilot. Then rotate the on-off-pilot knob to pilot. When the knob is in this position, the red button can be depressed.

While depressing the red button, hold a match at the pilot. Once the pilot lights, continue to hold the red button down for 30 to 60 seconds. When you release the red button the pilot should stay lit. If it does not, wait several minutes to allow any gas to dissipate from the furnace area and repeat the entire process again. If the pilot stays lit, rotate the on-off-pilot knob to the on position. Reinstall the cover panel.

These instructions can also be found on a sticker on the furnace and in the manufacturer's literature.

### ***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. The rooms further away from the furnace will usually need to be opened more.

### ***Return Air Vents***

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

### ***Temperature***

Normal temperature variations from floor to floor (depending on the style of home) can be 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 of time 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 less inconvenient to discover it prior to the heating season.

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

Heating systems will be installed in accordance with local building codes, as well as 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, five feet above the floor. In extremely cold temperatures (10 degrees below or colder), the system should be able to maintain a temperature differential of 70 degrees.

### ***Duct Placement***

The exact placement of heat ducts will 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, Whittaker 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, oilcanning will be corrected by Whittaker Homes.

### ***Thermostat***

Thermostats are calibrated to plus or minus five degrees.

# Heat Pump

## Homeowner CARE AND MAINTENANCE

If your home contains a heat pump system you should be aware of the performance characteristics unique to heat pump systems. As with any system, read the manufacturer's literature and follow all instructions for efficient operation and maintenance of your system. Clean or replace filters once a month. Provide professional service for your system at least once every two years.

### *Air Circulation Across Coils*

Keep the outside unit clear of any materials that would interfere with air circulation. Snow, ice, landscaping materials, trash, leaves, and other items that may accumulate can cause inefficiency or damage the unit.

### *Air Conditioning and Heating*

A heat pump system operates differently from a gas, forced air furnace. The same system provides both heat and air conditioning. This is possible because a refrigerant flows back and forth in the coils of the heat pump, controlled by a reversing valve. In the heating mode the heat pump removes heat from the outside air and transfers it to the inside air. In the cooling mode, it does just the opposite, removing heat from the inside air and discharging it outside of the home. This heating and cooling activity is controlled by the thermostat inside your home.

### *Air Temperature at Vents*

Do not expect dramatic temperature differences in the air coming from the vents as is common with other kinds of systems. The coils used in a heat pump system operate at lower temperatures than those common in a gas, forced air system. As a result, for example, in the heat mode, air from the supply vents will typically range from 85-90 degrees F. The vents will not feel hot, though the air discharged is warmer than the air in the room by as much as 20 degrees.

### *Auxiliary Heat System*

At lower outside temperatures, there is less heat for the heat pump to draw from the exterior air. Therefore, from time to time the auxiliary heat system will come on to maintain the temperature you set at the thermostat. The auxiliary system will also come on whenever the temperature at the thermostat is moved 1.5 degrees or more at one time. If the light stays on when the outside temperature is more than 30 degrees F, contact a service person.

### *Defrost Cycle*

When the heat pump is operating in the heat mode, it is possible for the coils outside to reach below freezing temperatures. Moisture in the air will condense into frost and accumulate on the coils under these circumstances. From time to time the system will go into defrost mode to clear accumulated frost from the coils. This is a normal part of the operation of the system and will occur automatically. During the defrost cycle, the outside fan will stop temporarily. The temperature of airflow into the home will be a bit lower during the defrost cycle. The defrost cycle can only occur once every ninety minutes and lasts no longer than ten minutes.

### *Night Set Back*

Unless you have a night set back thermostat designed to work with a heat pump system, do not turn the thermostat down in the evenings. Adjust the temperature a fraction of a degree at a time until a comfortable, permanent setting is found.

### *Register Adjustment*

Registers will require adjustment from time to time to maximize your family's comfort. Do not completely close off more than one supply register at a time. This can restrict the airflow too much and reduce efficiency of the system. A good technique is to completely open all the vents. Gradually move the temperature setting up until the coolest room is comfortable. Then gradually close the vents in the warmer rooms until all rooms are comfortable as well. Reverse the process for air conditioning.

### *Return Air Vents*

As with any heating system, return air vents must be clear so the air flows through the ducts unimpeded. Avoid placing furniture where it would block the return air vents.

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

Refer to the manufacturer's limited warranty for information regarding warranty coverage.

# Humidifier

## **Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

Operate a humidifier only with the furnace, not with the air conditioner. Clean the moisture pad according the manufacturer's instructions and suggested timetable.

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

Please refer to the manufacturer's limited warranty for information regarding coverage of the humidifier.

# Insulation

## **Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

The effectiveness of blown insulation is diminished if it is uneven. The last step in any work done in your attic (for example, the installation of a TV antenna) should be to confirm that the insulation lays smooth and even. Do not step on drywall ceilings; personal injury or damage to drywall will result.

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

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

Insulation will be installed to meet or exceed the building codes applicable at the time of construction and outlined as part of your purchase agreement.

# Landscaping

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Plan to install the basic components of your landscaping as soon after closing as weather permits. In addition to meeting your homeowners' association requirements to landscape in a timely manner, well-designed and installed landscaping prevents erosion and protects the foundation of your home.

### *Additions*

Prior to the installation of patio additions or other permanent improvements, review the soils and take soil conditions into consideration in the design or engineering of your addition.

### *Backfill*

We construct the foundation of your home beginning with an excavation into the earth. When the foundation walls are complete, the area surrounding them is backfilled. Soil in this area is not as compact as undisturbed ground. Water can penetrate through the backfill area to the lower areas of your foundation. This can cause potentially severe problems such as wet basements, cracks in foundation walls, and floor slab movement. Avoid this through proper installation of landscaping and good maintenance of drainage. (See also, Grading & Drainage)

Backfill areas will settle and require prompt attention to avoid damage to your home and voiding of the structural warranty.

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

### *Bark or Rock Beds*

Do not allow edgings around decorative rock or bark beds to dam the free flow of water away from the home. A non-woven landscape fabric can be used between the soil and rock or bark to restrict weed growth while still permitting normal evaporation of ground moisture. Rock or bark should not touch the brick or siding on your home.

### ***First 5'***

Do not place plants of any type within three feet or sprinkler heads within five feet of your home.

### ***Irrigation***

Make provisions for efficient irrigation. Conduct operational checks on a weekly basis to ensure proper performance of the system. Sprinkler heads should be directed away from the home. Trickler or bubbler type irrigation systems are not recommended for use adjacent to the structure. Drain and service sprinkler systems on a regular basis.

### ***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. Prune woody plants as needed. Group plants with similar water, sun, and space requirements together. See also, *Xeriscape*.

### ***Plant Selection***

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

### ***Requirements***

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

### ***Soil Mix***

Provide good soil mixes with sufficient organic material. Use mulch at least three inches deep to hold soil moisture and to help prevent weeds and soil compaction.

Apply appropriate fertilizer, weed and pest controls, and so on, as needed for optimum growth. Investigate organic compounds for additional protection of the environment.

### *Utility Lines*

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

### *Waiting to Landscape*

Ground left unlandscaped erodes. Correcting erosion that occurs after closing is your responsibility.

### *Xeriscape*

Whittaker 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 all 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.

## **WHITTAKER 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. Any damage to landscaping from wildlife is not covered and is the responsibility of the homeowner.

# Mirrors

## **Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

To clean your mirrors use any reliable liquid glass cleaner or polisher available at most hardware or grocery stores. Avoid splashing water under the mirror. The moisture will cause the silvering to deteriorate.

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

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

# Paint and Stain

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Due to 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, as opposed to gloss paints, show washing marks more easily. Often, homeowners prefer the results obtained by touching up rather than washing.

### *Colors*

Your selection 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/stained surfaces of your home's exterior annually. Repaint before much chipping or wearing away of the original finish occurs; this saves 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. The chemical structure of the paint used on the exterior is governed by the climatic conditions. Over a period of time, this finish will fade and dull a bit.

When you repaint the exterior of your home, begin by resetting popped nails, remove blistered or peeling portions of paint with a wire-brush or putty knife. Sand, spot with primer, 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 and the house should be inspected after such weather. Report damage caused by severe weather to your insurance company promptly.

### *Stain*

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

### *Touch-up*

When doing paint touch-up 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.

Samples of each kind of paint used on your home will be left for you at the end of construction. Store these with the lids tightly in place and in a location where they are not subjected to extreme temperatures.

### *Wall Cracks*

We suggest that you wait until the 11-month letter to report drywall cracks or other separations due to shrinkage.

See also, *Drywall*.

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

During your orientation we confirm that all painted or stained surfaces are in acceptable condition. Whittaker 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 due to the effects of sun and weather. Whittaker Homes limited warranty excludes this occurrence.

### *Touch-up Visible*

Paint touch-ups are visible under certain lighting conditions.

### *Wood Grain*

Due to wood characteristics, color variations 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. Whittaker Homes does not provide corrections for this condition.

## Phone Jacks

### **Homeowner USE & 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.

### **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

Whittaker Homes will correct outlets positioned so that a phone cannot be installed due to the placement of a cabinet or countertop that is part of the original home.

Wiring that does not perform as intended from the phone service box into the home will be repaired by Whittaker Homes. From the service box outward, care of the wiring is the responsibility of the local Telephone Company.

# Plumbing

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

We want to draw your attention to a water saving regulation that went into effect in 1993 prohibiting 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 saves water--overall.

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. These can not be removed. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

### *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. (See *Dripping Faucet* for additional information.)

### *Basement Construction*

If you perform any construction in your basement, take care to insure that the plumbing lines are not isolated from the heating source without insulation being added.

### *Cleaning*

Follow manufacturer's directions for cleaning fixtures. Avoid abrasive cleansers; they remove the shiny finish leaving 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 with a dry cloth to prevent water spots.

### *Clogs*

The main causes of toilet clogs are domestic items such as paper diapers, excessive amounts of toilet paper, sanitary supplies, Q-tips, dental floss, children's toys, and so on. Many plumbing clogs are caused by improper garbage disposal use. Always use plenty of cold water when running the disposal. This applies to grease also. 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 10-15 seconds after shutting off the disposal.

Clogged traps can usually be cleared 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, pull out the rod attached to the plunger and lift 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 remove the faucet stem, change the cartridge, and reinstall the faucet stem. For repairing or replacing the shower head read the manufacturer's recommendations. 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 will be away for an extended period of time, it is best to 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 gas control at the bottom--and drain the tank (run a hose from the spigot on the bottom to the basement floor drain). If you leave the tank full, keep the pilot on and set the temperature to its lowest or "vacation" setting. Check manufacturer's directions for additional hints and instructions.

### ***Freezing Pipes***

Provided the home is heated at a normal level, pipes should not freeze at temperatures above 0 degrees F. Heat should be set at 65 degrees if you are away during winter months. Keep garage doors closed to protect plumbing lines that may run through this area from freezing temperatures.

In unusually frigid weather or if you will be gone more than a day or two, open cabinets doors to allow warm air to circulate around pipes. You may also wish to let waterlines drip. An ordinary hair dryer can be used 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.

### ***Laundry Tub***

If you have a laundry room tub, the faucet does not have an aerator. This is to allow the tub faucet to accept a hose connection. The tub should be winterized if it is located in the garage. The water line should be shut off and anti-freeze poured in the trap.

### ***Leaks***

If a major plumbing leak occurs the first step is to turn off the supply of water to the area involved. This may mean shutting off the water to the entire home. Then, if you are still within the warranty period call the customer service office during normal business hours or the emergency number if after hours or on the weekend. If you are out of warranty, contact a qualified plumbing contractor.

### ***Low Pressure***

Occasional (normally every 3-4 months) cleaning of the aerators on your faucets will allow proper flow of water. The water department controls the overall water pressure.

### ***Marble or Man-made Marble***

Marble and man-made marble will not chip as readily as porcelain enamel but can be damaged by a sharp blow. Avoid abrasive cleansers or razor blades on man-made marble; both damage the surface.

### ***Outside Faucets***

Outside faucets are freeze proof, but in order for this feature to be effective, hoses must be removed 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 Whittaker Homes does not warrant sillcocks against freezing.

### ***Porcelain***

Porcelain enamel can be damaged by a sharp blow from a heavy object. It can also be scratched. Do not stand in the bathtub wearing shoes unless you have placed a protective layer of newspaper over the bottom of the tub. If paint is splattered onto the porcelain enamel surfaces during redecorating, wipe it up immediately. If a spot dries before you notice it, use a recommended solvent such as Zud.

### ***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, adjust the screw on the ballcock, turning it clockwise  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn until the proper water level is reached. 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 in the basement where your water service enters the home. You would use this shut-off for major water emergencies such as a water line break or if you install a sprinkler system or if you plan an addition to your home.

Each toilet has a shut-off on the water line under the tank. Pedestal sinks have a shut-off, as well as, any sink that doesn't have an overflow. Shut-off valves for all other sinks are provided by Whittaker Homes.

### *Sprinklers*

Routine inspection of sprinkler heads and seasonal service are essential to proper functioning. A sprinkler system you install subsequent to closing is your responsibility.

### *Stainless Steel*

Clean stainless steel sinks with soap and water to preserve their luster. Avoid abrasive cleaners; these will damage the finish. An occasional cleaning with a good stainless steel cleaner, such as Zud, will enhance the finish. Avoid leaving produce on a stainless steel surface since prolonged contact with produce can stain the finish.

### *Tank Care*

Similarly, avoid exposing the toilet to blows from sharp or heavy objects; this 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. To remove mold or mildew build-up under toilet rim, place ¼ cup of bleach in the tank then flush. This should clean out the system. **It is not recommended to use chlorine tablets, such as Tidy Bowl or 2000 Flushes, in the tank, this can cause deterioration of brass and rubber.**

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

During the orientation we will confirm that all plumbing fixtures are in acceptable condition and that all faucets and drains operate freely. Whittaker Homes will investigate all clogs in the first year. If it is determined to be a warrantable item there will be no charge. If damage is due to homeowner negligence or if a household item is removed from a clogged drain during this time, you will be billed for the drain service.

### *Cosmetic Damage*

Whittaker Homes will correct any fixture damage noted on the orientation list. Chips, scratches, and other surface damage noted subsequent to the orientation list are your responsibility.

### ***Exterior Faucets***

Whittaker 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 65 degrees if you are away during winter months. Keep garage doors closed to protect plumbing lines which may run through this area.

### ***Leaks***

Whittaker Homes will repair leaks in the plumbing system. If a plumbing leak caused by a warranted item results in drywall or floor covering damage, Whittaker Homes will repair or replace items that were part of the home as originally purchased. We do not make adjustments for secondary damages (wallpaper, drapes, personal belongings, and so on). 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. Whittaker Homes will repair consistent water hammer. Temperature variations can be expected if water is being used in more than one location in the home. PVC pipes will make a popping or clicking noise due to thermal expansion.

### ***Supply***

Whittaker Homes will correct construction conditions that disrupt the supply of water to your home.

### ***Items Covered Under the 2-Year Systems Coverage***

Please consult the 2-10 Home Buyers Warranty manual for items covered under the 2-year systems coverage.

# Resilient Flooring

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Although resilient floors are designed for minimum care, they do vary in 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, no cleaning or finishing agents should be used on the new floor until the adhesive has set thoroughly. This takes about two weeks.

### *Color and Pattern*

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*

Use caution when moving appliances across resilient floor covering. Tears and wrinkles can result. Coasters should be installed on furniture legs to prevent permanent damage. If you damage the resilient floor it can often be successfully patched by professionals. We leave any remnants of floor covering materials for this reason.

### *No Wax*

The resilient flooring installed in your home is the no-wax type. No-wax means a clear, tough coating which provides both a shiny appearance and a wearing 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. Special nails have been used 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 & Buffing***

Frequent scrubbing or electric buffing is harder on floors than regular foot traffic. Use acrylic finishes often 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 seams. A special caulking can be used at tub or floor joints to seal seams at those locations. Avoid getting large amounts of water on the floor from baths and showers.

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

We will confirm that resilient floor covering is in acceptable condition during your orientation. Whittaker 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.

### ***Adhesion***

Resilient floor covering should adhere. Whittaker Homes will repair lifting or bubbling and nail pops that appear on the surface. Whittaker Homes is not responsible for discontinued selections.

### ***Ridges***

The joints of underlayment have been sanded and filled to minimize the possibility of ridges showing through resilient floor coverings. Ridging is measured by centering a six-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, Whittaker Homes will repair this condition.

### ***Seams***

Seams will occur and are sealed at the time of installation. Whittaker 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. Whittaker Homes will correct curling at seams unless caused by excessive water.

# Roof

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

The shingles on your roof do not require any treatment or sealer.

### *Clean Gutters*

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

### *Leaks*

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

### *Limit Walking*

Limit walking on your roof especially in valleys and on ridges. The 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 shingles in the yard or shingle edges lifted on the roof.

## WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES

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

### *Ice Build-up*

Ice build-up may develop in the eaves during extended periods of cold and snow. Damage that results from this is excluded from warranty coverage. Your insurance may cover this damage.

### *Inclement Weather*

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

## Rough Carpentry

### WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES

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

#### *Floor Deflection*

Floors will deflect when walked on. This will be more noticeable next to hutches, bookcases, and so on. This is not a structural deficiency and Whittaker Homes will take no action for this occurrence.

#### *Floor Level*

Floors shall not have more than 1/4-inch ridge or depression within a 32-inch measurement parallel to the joists. Whittaker Homes will correct floor slope that exceeds 1/240 of the room width or length. (e.g., a 10'0" wide room shall not be out of level by more than 1/2 inch).

#### *Plumb Walls*

Whittaker Homes will correct walls that are out of plumb more than one inch in an 8-foot vertical measurement or walls that are bowed more than 1/2 inch within a 36-inch horizontal or vertical measurement.

# Siding

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Siding expands and contracts in response to changes in humidity and temperature. Slight waves can be seen in siding under certain weather conditions; this cannot be entirely eliminated.

Wood or wood product siding will require routine refinishing. The timing will vary with climatic conditions.

See also, *Paint* and *Wood Trim*.

## WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES

We will correct any separation at joints or where siding meets another material if the separation allows water to enter the home. Whittaker Homes will correct delaminating or splitting siding. Siding to match the original as closely as possible will be used, however, the Homeowner should be aware that the new finish may not exactly match the original surface texture or color.

## Sink Holes

### *Sink Holes*

Settling of ground around foundation, utility trenches or other areas on the property where excavation and back fill have taken place that affect drainage away from the home.

### *Construction Standard*

Settling of ground around foundation wall, utility trenches or other filled areas that exceeds a maximum of six inches from finished grade established by Builder.

### *Builders Responsibility*

Builder shall fill settled areas affecting proper drainage, one time only, during the first year Warranty period. Builder is then responsible for removal and replacement of shrubs and other landscaping (installed by Builder) affected by placement of the fill.

Builder will fill sinkholes that are affecting foundation walls, concrete; driveways, walkways, patios, stoops, steps and porches during the first year Warranty period.

Sinkholes that are not affecting concrete will be filled on a one-time basis, we recommend at the 11month letter. If you wish to have a sinkhole filled prior to the 11month letter, please submit your Warranty Service request in writing. Under the 2-10 Home Buyers Warranty we are not obligated to address further settling.

# Smoke Detectors

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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

### *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 red button to test; the alarm should sound. Change batteries every six months.

Three things may cause the smoke detectors to go off when there is not a fire:

1. Extreme changes in temperature
2. Electrical storm/lightning
3. Small insects or spider webs in the unit

There are two lights on the smoke detector. The green light stays on indicating A/C power. Red light flashes every 45 seconds indicating that the battery power is OK. The smoke alarm will chirp when the battery needs to be replaced. When any smoke detector in an interconnected series triggers an alarm, its red light will flash rapidly. The red lights will remain **off** on any remaining alarms in the series. This feature helps identify which detector triggered the alarm.

## WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES

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

# Stairs

## **Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

No known method of installation prevents all vibration or squeaking in a staircase when used by adults. Valutes are a beautiful addition to your staircase but do not swing or slide down the handrails. Furniture polish should not be used on totally exposed treads or landings.

# Stucco

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Stucco is a brittle cement product that is subject to expansion and contraction. Minor hairline cracks will develop in the outer layer of stucco. This is normal and does not reduce the function of the stucco in any way.

### *Drainage*

To ensure proper drainage, keep dirt and concrete flatwork a minimum of six inches from the stucco screed. Do not pour concrete or masonry over the stucco screed.

### *Efflorescence*

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

### *Sprinklers*

Since stucco is not a water barrier, avoid spraying water from irrigation or watering systems on stucco surfaces. Check the spray from the lawn and plant irrigation system frequently to make certain that water is not spraying or accumulating on stucco surfaces.

## WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES

One time during the warranty period, Whittaker Homes will repair stucco cracks that exceed 1/8 inch in width. The repair will not match the surrounding area exactly.

## Vents

### **Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

Attic ventilation is required by building codes and therefore Whittaker Homes must include the required vents. Occasionally, depending on the force and direction of the wind, rain or snow will infiltrate these vents causing spotting on the ceiling. Whittaker Homes is not responsible for such weather damage and this item is excluded from warranty coverage.

In homes with crawl spaces, two or more vents are included. Open these vents in the summer and in winter close them and pull insulation over them inside the crawl space.

### **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

Attic ventilation is required by building codes and therefore Whittaker Homes cannot omit it. Occasionally, depending on the force and direction, wind, rain or snow will infiltrate through these vents causing spotting on the ceiling. Whittaker Homes is not responsible for such weather damage and this item is excluded from warranty coverage.

## Yard Care and Maintenance

This notice has been prepared to help you in the care and treatment of your new yard. We feel our past experience can be very helpful and would like to share some thoughts, ideas and cautions with you. Weather conditions do dictate when the grading can be completed. As we cautioned in the New Home Buyers Guide, the ground may still be too wet to hold the weight of a tractor. There will be times when grading will have to be postponed, so that the soil will have time to dry. Please be patient, our professionals will complete the work as quickly as possible when they feel the conditions are right.

The grading plan was determined by an Engineering firm for the entire subdivision before any homes were placed on the lots. This grading plan must also be approved by the County. When our professionals come into your yard to complete your grading, they have already been informed by the Engineers and the County what needs to be done. They are not allowed to make any changes to the grading plan. Some yards will require swales and other yards will require berms. These grading plans are necessary to deflect and direct the flow of water throughout all yards. Please allow our professionals to do their jobs as they have been instructed.

You may see some rocks surfacing in your yard after the grading has been completed. We will do our best to remove the majority of rocks, however, it is not humanly possible to remove every rock from your yard. With proper care and maintenance, these rocks will not keep your yard from growing.

Installing down spout extenders until your yard is established is a necessity. We recommend that every homeowner purchase and install the flexible black plastic extenders to help direct the flow of water away from your house, patio and sidewalk. This pipe is inexpensive and well worth the time it takes to attach it to your downspouts. Some homeowners elect to bury this pipe. Please do whatever you feel will fit your needs. Usually the pipe can be removed once the yard has been established.

The next step is the planting of seed and straw. We use a quality blend of grass seed mixed with fertilizer. Once the seed is distributed over your yard, the straw is mechanically blown to cover the seed and allow it to germinate. There will be an overspray when using this method of application which means you may have straw scattered on your patio and roof. We feel the density of the straw being blown far outweighs the manual straw application and will help you to have a better strand of grass when your yard begins to grow. We apologize in advance for the overspray and hope you feel it is a small price to pay for a thicker and greener lawn.

Watering your yard on a regular basis the most important thing you, as a homeowner, will need to do. Whether you decide to seed and straw or sod, **YOU MUST WATER YOUR LAWN.** Sod will need to be thoroughly soaked within 24 hours of laying. Seed will require constant watering for several days. Again, we use quality seed, fertilizer and a heavy straw application, but that is only the beginning. As your yard starts to come in you may want to add additional seed, fertilizer and weed killer. This will be your responsibility, Whittaker cannot be responsible for the watering and caring of your yard. If you fail to give your yard proper care and attention you will be very disappointed in the results.

We would like to prepare you ahead of time that settling will occur in most new yards. Should the ground settle around your home, at sewer lines or at water lines, Whittaker Homes will fill these areas. We are responsible to fill these areas only **ONE** time. For this reason, we advise you to put any information about settling in your 11 month letter. We have found in the past that it is not wise to fill these areas immediately. The availability of dry soil and weather conditions play an important part in when these areas can and will be filled.

We will do our best to give the components of a good yard but the key is in the proper care and maintenance from you, the homeowner. Please feel free to contact our Customer Service department with any questions you may have about proper maintenance.

## How to care for your New Sod

### Step #1 : Watering

All new sod should be watered thoroughly on a daily basis for four (4) weeks or until fully rooted.

In cool weather (less than 70 degrees Fahrenheit), water every day for the first few days, then taper off to every other day.

A good means of measuring the watering needs of your lawn is to use a 12-inch screwdriver as a probe. A properly maintained lawn will allow you to penetrate the soil to a depth of six (6) to eight (8) inches.

If you have an automatic sprinkler system, make sure that all areas are being covered evenly. If certain areas start to turn brown, they are probably lacking water.

Irrigate more often with less amount of water. Automatic sprinkler systems perform best when waterings are spread out into three (3) waterings of short duration during a 24 hour period.

### Step #2 : Mowing

Mowing may begin as soon as the grass is rooted. For best results, mow to a height of 3" to 3 1/2 inches.

### Step #3 : Fertilizing

Fertilize your lawn moderately about 30 days after installation. A slow release fertilizer is preferred. Continue to fertilize your lawn every spring and fall to maintain a lush green lawn. Cooler temperatures are best to apply fertilizer.

### Step #4 : Weed Control

Sod should be installed for at least one (1) month and mowed four (4) times or more before applying weed control. If you wish to fertilize at the same time you apply weed control, we suggest Scotts Turf Builder +2. For weed control only, use Scotts Lawn Weed Control or apply Ortho Weed-B-Gone using an Ortho garden hose sprayer.

When sod is cut it is weed free. If weeds appear in your sod, it is usually due to air-borne weed seeds being deposited as a result of continued earth movement in your area.

## How to care for your New Seeded Lawn

Your lawn has been seeded with a seed mixture of:

Turf Type Fescue  
Kentucky Bluegrass  
Perennial Ryegrass  
Annual Ryegrass

In addition to the seed, an application of starter fertilizer (13.13.13) has been applied to your lawn.

You should now keep your lawn damp. This is best done by watering your lawn lightly a few times per day. If this is not possible, then you should water your lawn little more heavily in the morning or evening. Let your grass grow tall (4" - 5") before you cut it for the first time.

If your lawn has been seeded in the spring or summer, over-seed and apply fertilizer in the fall. If your lawn has been seeded in the fall, over-seed and fertilize the following spring.

**Again, most importantly, keep the ground moist!**

# Waterproofing

## **Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

We spray your foundation walls with an asphalt damp-proofing material. Although we make every effort to assure a dry basement, during times of excessive moisture some dampness may be noticed. Over time, natural compaction of soils in the backfill areas will usually eliminate this. Careful maintenance of positive drainage will also protect your basement from this condition.

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

Whittaker Homes will correct conditions that allow actual water to enter the basement unless the cause is improper installation of landscaping or lack of adequate maintenance of drainage. See also, *Landscaping*.

# Windows, Screens, & Patio Doors

## Homeowner USE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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

### *Cleaning*

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. The humidity level within the home is largely influenced and controlled by your family's lifestyle.

### *Door Locks*

Acquaint yourself with the operation of patio door hardware for maximum security.

### *Door Tracks*

Keep patio door tracks clean for smooth operation and to prevent damage to the door frame. Silicone lubricants work well for these tracks.

### *Invisible glass*

Under certain lighting conditions, door glass may be hard to see. If you keep the screen fully closed when the glass door is open, everyone will be accustomed to opening something before going through.

### *Sticking Windows*

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

### *Storing Screens*

Many homeowners remove and store screens for the winter to allow more light into the home. Use caution: screens perforate easily and the frames bend if not handled with care.

### *Ventilation*

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

### *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. Some windows do not require weep holes.

## **WHITTAKER HOMES LIMITED WARRANTY GUIDELINES**

We will confirm that all windows and screens are in acceptable condition during the orientation. Whittaker 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.

### *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; Whittaker Homes provides no corrective measure for this condition. Homeowners with humidifiers should closely observe manufacturer's directions, especially during extremely cold periods.

### *Infiltration*

Some air and dust will infiltrate around windows, especially prior to the installation of landscaping in the general area.

# Wood Trim

## Homeowner USE & 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 by caulking and touch up painting.

Shrinkage may also cause a piece of trim to pull away from the wall. If this occurs, drive another nail in close to, but not 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. Similar to a piece of trim that is pulling away, this can be corrected by removing the old nails and re-nailing.

You may prefer to wait until after the first heating season to make any needed repairs at one time or when redecorating.

See also, *Expansion and Contraction*.

## WHITTAKER 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 require no action. Whittaker Homes will correct readily noticeable construction damage such as chips, gouges, and so on that are listed during the orientation.

### *Exterior*

Whittaker Homes will caulk and apply touch-up paint to cracks in exterior trim components that exceed 3/8 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 allow 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; this condition is excluded from warranty coverage.

[Builder]  
[Address]

*Warranty Service Request*

INSERT OUR 45-DAY/11-MONTH LETTER FORM

_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____

Comment

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Homeowner \_\_\_\_\_



## *Model Maintenance Schedule*

Item	Monthly	Quarterly	Semi-Annually	Annually	Comment
Clean/test smoke alarms	X				
Test/reset all GFIs	X				
Clean/change furnace filter	X				
Operate heat system			X		early in the fall
Operate A/C system			X		early in the spring
Inspect drainage			X		
Seal concrete cracks			X		
Inspect exterior paint or stain			X		
Touch up caulk and grout			X		
Lube garage overhead door & tighten bolts			X		
Drain some water from bottom of water heater				X	or as directed by the manufacturer's literature
Clean gutters			X		
Operate pressure relief valve on water heater				X	
Clean window weep holes				X	or as needed
Chimney cleaning				X	or as needed





## *Notes*

## Notes