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## **EXCAVATION, BACKFILL, GRADING AND FILL**

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### **Property Boundaries**

At plan signing, you will receive a copy of a site plan that shows your lot and the location of your home on the lot. To construct the home, Veridian Homes established the property boundaries and corners.

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

### **Easements**

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

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

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

### **Grading and Drainage**

Yards drain from one to another. You and your neighbors share an overall drainage plan for the community. Use caution when installing landscaping, fencing, or additions to your home to prevent causing water problems on adjacent lots.

### **Drainage**

At the time of the rough grade, the grade around your home will pitch away at least 1 %. In most cases, drainage swales do not follow property boundaries. It is not uncommon to see settling, therefore 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 Dry Basement Guarantee and Veridian Homes one (1) year limited warranty.

### **Exterior Finish Materials**

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

### **Roof Water**

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.

### **Settling**

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



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## CAST IN PLACE CONCRETE

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### Concrete Flatwork

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

Movement of the basement slab or any concrete slab results in cracking. Minimize this movement by following Veridian Homes landscaping recommendations, the objective of which is to prevent moisture from reaching soils around and under the home.

### **Cleaning**

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

### **Cracks**

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

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

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

### **Expansion Joints**

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

### **Heavy Vehicles**

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

Residential vehicles should not drive on fresh concrete for 7 – 10 days. Vehicles should not be parked on concrete within 28 days of pour date.

### Ice, Snow, and Chemicals

Driving or parking on snow creates ice on the drive, which magnifies the effects of snow on the concrete surface. Remove ice and snow from concrete slabs as promptly as possible after 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. Never use salt on concrete.

### Sealer

A concrete sealer, available at your local concrete manufacturer or building supply, will help you keep an unpainted concrete floor clean. Do not use soap on unpainted concrete.

Seal your concrete driveway and garage floor yearly to help prevent salt and water damage.

### Concrete Foundation

We install the foundation of your home according to 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 Standards for Installation and Maintenance of Landscaping and Drainage in this manual.

### Cracks

Even though an engineer designed the foundation and we constructed it according to engineering requirements, surface cracks can still develop 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. The use of a dehumidifier can help to mitigate excess moisture.

### Future Construction in Basement

If you decide to perform additional construction in the basement, obtain Standards from a licensed engineer, obtain a building permit, and comply with all codes and safety requirements. Veridian Homes does not warrant that you will be able to obtain such a permit because of the possibility that building codes may change. All work performed by outside vendors affecting other systems in your home are not covered by Veridian Homes' one (1) year warranty.



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## CONCRETE WALL AND WATERPROOFING

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### **Basement Waterproofing**

The basement waterproofing system consists of an asphalt waterproofing membrane; a foam drainage board, interior and exterior perimeter drain tile and a sump pump. Careful maintenance of positive drainage will direct water away from your basement and is necessary to continue your warranty coverage.

After Veridian Homes one-year Limited Warranty expires, the system installer provides warranty coverage for an additional period of time depending on the system you selected in your contract.

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## WELL SYSTEMS

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### Septic and Well Pump Systems

A septic system consists of two basic parts. First a septic tank, and second an underground disposal field. Bacteria break down solids forming a sludge, which is moved by incoming water out to the disposal field where it is filtered out into the soil. To help preserve the effectiveness of the system, keep these points in mind:

- Avoid disposing of chemicals such as solvents, oils, paints, and so on, through the septic system
- Avoid using commercial drain cleaners. These can kill the bacteria that are working to break down the solid waste matter.
- Food from a disposal decomposes more slowly and adds to the solids in the tank. Coffee grounds may clog the system.
- Avoid disposing of any paper product (diapers, sanitary supplies, paper towels and so on) other than toilet paper through the system.
- Do not rely on yeast or chemical additive to digest sludge. These are not an alternative to regular pumping and may actually harm the system.
- Drain surface water away from the disposal field. Eliminate unnecessary sources of water in the area of the disposal field. Plant only sod over the disposal field. Avoid fertilizers in this area.
- Conserve indoor water use to put less strain on the system. Correct leaky faucets or running toilets promptly. Keep in mind that a water softener will generate 30 to 85 gallons of water every regeneration cycle.
- Do not drive on the disposal field or build over it.

### **Pumping the System**

Over time, the matter not broken down by the bacteria can clog the system. This will happen in spite of careful use and good maintenance. To prevent serious problems, regular pumping to clean out the tank is essential—usually every 1 to 2 years, more often if usage is heavy.

### **System Failure**

Signs that your septic system is failing include:

- Black water with a foul odor backing up in drains or toilets.
- Toilets flush slowly.
- Water ponds on top of the disposal field.
- Grass stays green over the disposal field even in dry weather.

If you believe your system requires attention, call a professional to assess the situation. Have the system pumped. If a new system is required, a permit must be obtained from the county or municipality where your home is located.

### **Water Softener**

Prior to installing a water softener, discuss with the vendor whether the system you are considering will adversely affect your septic system.

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## ROUGH CARPENTRY

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### Expansion and Contraction

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

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

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## ELECTRICAL

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### Electrical System

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 protect the electrical wiring and equipment in your home from overloading. They are the safety valves of your home's electrical system. Circuit breakers have three positions: on, off, and tripped. When a circuit breaker trips, it must first be turned off before it can be turned on. Switching the breaker directly from tripped to on will not restore service.

### **Breakers Tripping**

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

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

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

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

*Caution: Never plug a refrigerator or food freezer into a GFCI-controlled outlet. The likelihood of the contents being ruined is high and the limited warranty does not cover such damage.*

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

### **Grounded System**

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

### Modifications

If you wish to make any modifications, contact the electrician listed on the service panel. Having another electrician modify your electrical system during the warranty period can void that portion of your limited warranty.

### Outlets

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

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

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

### Underground Cables

Before digging, check the location of buried service leads by calling Diggers Hotline at 1-800-242-8511. Maintain positive drainage around the foundation to protect electrical service connections.

### Troubleshooting Tips

#### No Electrical Service Anywhere in the Home

Before calling for service, check to confirm the following:

- Service is not out in the entire area. If so, contact the utility company.
- Main breaker and individual breakers are all in the ON position.

#### In Case of a Power Failure

In case of a power failure, first determine if your neighbors have power. If not, notify the power company.

#### No Electrical Power to One or More Outlets

Before calling for service, check to confirm the following:

- Main breaker and individual breakers are all in the ON position.
- Applicable wall switch is ON.
- GFCI is set (see details on GFCIs, earlier in this section).
- Item you want to use is plugged in.
- Item you want to use works in other outlets.
- Bulb in the lamp is good.

### Bath Fans

- If the fan becomes louder over time, contact your electrician for service.
- Bath fans can be louder than other identical fans in the home due to duct runs to vent the fan (bends along the runs).

### Breaker Trips

- The circuit you are using may not be big enough to handle your device. Irons, roasters, hair dryers and freezers usually require a 20-amp circuit rather than a normal circuit of 15 amps.
- The device you are using could be bad. Test it by trying a different receptacle in another part of the house. If it still trips a breaker, your device is most likely bad.

### Outside Receptacles (Outlets) are not working

- All outside receptacles are GFI protected.
- The receptacles could be set OFF by moisture or over loads. Unplug the device you are using and allow it to dry and retry later.
- Your extension cord could be bad.

### Power Surges

- Power surges should be checked out by your electrical power company (MG&E, Alliant, etc.). These surges may cause your electrical bill to be higher than normal.

### Switches – Only one side of a 3 or 4 way switch will work

- This indicates that one of the switches has gone bad or is hooked up incorrectly. Service by an electrician is required.

### Phone Jacks

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.

### Troubleshooting Tips

#### Phones, TV, Computer (Data)

- If no lines are working at all, Contact your local telephone company.
- If some lines are working, call electrician for service.
- If no TV is working, Call TV, Cable, or satellite installer.

### Smoke Detectors

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

### Battery

If a smoke detector makes a chirping sound, that is a sign that the battery needs to be replaced. Follow manufacturer instructions for installing a new battery. Most smoke detectors use a 9-volt battery. Change battery two times per year or as needed. Dust or high humidity can also cause false alarms.

### Cleaning

For your safety, clean each smoke detector monthly to prevent a false alarm or lack of response in a fire. After cleaning, push the test button to confirm the alarm is working.

### Locations

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

### Alarm System

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

### Troubleshooting Tips

#### Alarm goes off

- CHECK FOR SMOKE OR A FIRE: CALL 911 if necessary.

#### Alarm Sounds

- Check the batteries in all detectors. The detector will alarm if a battery is no longer functioning properly.
- If one detector alarms, all will alarm. You need to find the one that is not functioning. There are green indicator lights that will help you through this process.
- GREEN: Indicates that detector is normal
- RED: Indicates which detector is causing the alarm
- FLASHING GREEN: Indicates that the unit needs to be reset. Push the flashing green button.
- Short intermittent beeps indicate that the battery is low. Replace the battery.





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## PLUMBING

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### Plumbing

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

### **Aerators**

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

### **Basement Construction**

If you perform any construction in your basement, ensure that the plumbing lines in the basement 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 and leave behind a porous surface that is difficult to keep clean. Clean plumbing fixtures with a soft sponge and soapy water (a nonabrasive cleaner or a liquid detergent is usually recommended by manufacturers). Then polish the fixtures with a dry cloth to prevent water spots. Care for brass fixtures with a good-quality brass cleaner, available at most hardware stores.

### **Clogs**

The main causes of toilet clogs are domestic items such as disposable diapers, excessive amounts of toilet paper, sanitary supplies, Q-tips, dental floss, and children's toys. If an overflow occurs, immediately shut down the water supply located at the base of the toilet. The toilets are not caulked to the flooring so an excessive overflow of water can enter into the cavity causing drywall staining to areas beneath, if present. The homeowner will be responsible if repairs are necessary.

Improper garbage disposal use also causes many plumbing clogs. Always use plenty of cold water when running the disposal. This recommendation also applies to grease. When supplied with a steady flow of cold water, the grease congeals and is cut up by the blades. If you use hot water, the grease remains a liquid, then cools and solidifies in the sewer line. Allow the water to run 10 to 15 seconds after shutting off the disposal.

### **Extended Absence**

If you plan to be away for an extended period, you should drain your water supply lines. To do this, shut off the main supply line and open the faucets to relieve pressure in the lines. You may also wish to shut off the water heater. Do this by turning off the cold water supply valve on top and the gas control at the bottom. Drain the tank by running 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. *See also Extended Absence checklist.*

### Fiberglass Fixtures

For normal cleaning use a nonabrasive bathroom cleaning product and sponge recommended by the manufacturer.

### Freezing Pipes

Provided the home is heated at a normal level, pipes should not freeze at temperatures above 0 degrees Fahrenheit. Set the heat at a minimum of 55 degrees F if you are away during winter months. Keep garage doors closed to protect plumbing lines running through this area from freezing temperatures.

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

### Garbage Disposal

Garbage disposal should operate according to manufacturer's specifications. If a malfunction is not due to homeowner misuse, Veridian Homes will repair.

Avoid putting large amounts of fibrous materials (such as banana peels or corn husks) down your disposal. Avoid grinding bones or other hard materials. Avoid using the dishwasher and the garbage disposal at the same time. This is because they share a common waste line and using them both at the same time will reduce their efficiency.

### Gold or Brass Finish

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

### Jetted Tubs

If your home includes a jetted tub, follow manufacturer directions for its use and care. Never operate the jets unless the water level is at least one inch above the jets. Be cautious about using the tub if you are pregnant or have heart disease or high blood pressure; discuss the use of the tub with your doctor. Tie or pin long hair up to keep it from away from the jets where it might become tangled—a potentially dangerous event.

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

Use a cleaning product recommended by the manufacturer and avoid abrasive cleansers.

### Laundry Tub

If you have a laundry tub, the faucet does not have an aerator. This is to allow the laundry tub faucet to accept a hose connection.

### 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 contact the appropriate contractor.

### Low Flush Toilets

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

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

### Low Pressure

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

### Main Shut-Off

The water supply to your home can be shut-off entirely in two locations. The first is at the street and the second is at the meter. We will demonstrate the water shut-off valve on the inside of your home during your final new home inspection.

### Outside Faucets

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

### Porcelain

You can damage porcelain enamel with a sharp blow from a heavy object or by scratching. Do not stand in the bathtub wearing shoes unless you have placed a protective layer of newspaper over the bottom of the tub. If you splatter paint onto the porcelain enamel surfaces during redecorating, wipe it up immediately. If a spot dries before you notice it, use a recommended solvent.

### Shut-Offs

Your main water shut-off is located near your meter. You use this shut-off for major water emergencies such as a water line break. Each toilet has a shut-off on the water line under the tank. Hot and cold shut-offs for each sink are on the water lines under the sink.

### Stainless Steel

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

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

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

### **Tank Care**

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

Avoid the use of chloride tablets within the toilet tanks. These commonly deteriorate the metal and plastic components within the tank and void the warranty. Installing one after closing can void the warranty unless done so by the plumber who originally installed the plumbing in the home.

### **Water Filter or Softener**

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

## **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS**

### **No Hot Water**

- See Water Heater

### **Leak Involving One Sink, Tub, or Toilet**

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

### **Leak Involving a Main Line**

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

### **Back Up at One Toilet**

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

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

### **Garbage Disposal Quits**

- Most disposals have a reset button that works in much the same manner as a circuit breaker. Should the disposal become overloaded with a substance it cannot grind, it will turn itself off. If the disposal quits working, press in the red reset button located on the disposal

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unit and it should resume operation. If it still does not start you may need to dislodge any clogged material with special tool supplied. Never put your hands in the disposal.

### **Sewer Back Up Affecting Entire Home**

- If you've been in your home fewer than 30 days, contact Veridian Homes or the plumber listed on your Emergency Phone Numbers sheet.
- If you've been in your home over 30 days, contact plumbing contractor.
- Remove personal belongings to a safe location. If items are soiled, contact your homeowner insurance company.
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Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.

### **Gas Water Heater**

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

### **Safety**

Vacuum the area around a gas-fired water heater to prevent dust from interfering with proper flame combustion. Avoid using the top of a heater as a storage shelf.

### **Temperature**

The recommended thermostat setting for normal everyday use is about 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Higher settings can result in wasted energy dollars and increase the danger of injury from scalding. Hot water will take longer to arrive at sinks, tubs, and showers that are farther from the water heater.

### **Troubleshooting Tips**

#### **No Hot Water**

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Power vent is switched on and plugged in.
- Temperature setting is not on "vacation" or too low.
- Water supply valve is open.

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

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

### **Sump Pump**

Your home is equipped with a perimeter drain and sump pump. The perimeter drain runs around the foundation to gather water and channel it to the sump pit, or crock. When the water reaches a certain level, the pump comes on and pumps the water out of your home. Read and follow the manufacturer's directions for use and care of your sump pump.

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## **Continuous Operation**

The pump may run often or even continuously based on ground water, season, or precipitation. This is normal under such conditions.

## **Discharge**

Know where the discharge for your sump pump system is and keep the end of the drain clear of debris so that water can flow out easily. Ensure the extension is attached to allow water to flow away from the house.

## **Power Supply**

The sump pump runs on electricity. If power goes off, the pump cannot operate. Storm water (not sewage) could then enter your basement. You may wish to install a back-up system to guard against this possibility. Homeowner insurance does not usually cover damage to your property from this source; you may want to obtain a rider to cover this.

## **Roof Water**

Ensure that roof water drains quickly away from the home to avoid circulating it through your sump pump. Keep a positive grade away from the house and downspout extensions or splash blocks in place to channel water away from your home.

## **Routine Check**

Periodically check to confirm the pump is plugged in, the circuit breaker is on and that the pump operates. To check the operation of your sump pump, pour five gallons or more of water into the sump pump crock (hole). The pump should come on and pump the water out. Follow this procedure once a year.

### Air Conditioning

The air conditioning system should maintain a temperature of 78 degrees or a differential of 15 degrees from the outside temperature, measured in the center of each room at a height of 5 feet above the floor. Builder warrants during the one (1) year limited warranty period that the air conditioning system will meet this standard. Lower temperature settings are often possible, but neither the manufacturer nor Veridian Homes guarantees this.

### **Compressor**

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

### **Non-emergency**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Adjust Vents**

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

### **Annual Inspection**

Like any heating system, a central air-conditioning system should be checked and cleaned periodically by a professional. The instruction manual explains the frequency of care.

### **Compressor Level**

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

### **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.

### **Filters**

Most central air-conditioning systems have an air filter to help keep the air in your home clean. The instruction manual for your cooling system will tell you the location of the filter and how to clean or replace it (you may also reference "Heating Systems"). Construction creates a lot of dust. In newly constructed homes it is strongly recommended that the filters be changed frequently in order to minimize dust.

### **Manufacturer's Instructions**

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

### **Temperature Variations**

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

### **Trial Run**

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



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## Troubleshooting Tips

### No Air Conditioning

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Thermostat is set to "cool" and the temperature is set below the room temperature.
- Air conditioner and furnace breakers on the main electrical panel are on. (Remember if a breaker trips you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.)
- 220 switch on the outside wall near the air conditioner is on.
- Switch on the side of the furnace is on.
- Fuse in furnace is good. (See manufacturer literature for size and location.)
- Filter is clean to allow airflow.
- Vents in individual rooms are open.
- Air returns are unobstructed.
- Air conditioner has not frozen from overuse.

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

### **Heating System: Gas Forced Air**

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

### Adjust Vents

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

### Avoid Overheating

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

### Condensation Line

Inspect and clear any obstructions to allow for condensation to flow freely through line.

### Ductwork Noise

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

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## **Filter**

A clean filter will help to keep your home clean and reduce dusting chores. Remember to change the filter twice per year. A clogged filter can slow airflow and cause cold spots in your home. This is one of the most frequently overlooked details of normal furnace care. You will find the size and type printed on the cover of the filter system.

## **Furnace Fan**

Operating your furnace fan will help to control relative humidity in your home and possible window condensation.

## **Furnished Home**

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

## **Gas Odor**

If you smell gas, call the gas company immediately.

## **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 done only when maintenance service is being performed (changing the filter), although young children have been known to turn the furnace off using this switch.

## **Registers**

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

## **Return Air Vents**

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

## **Temperature**

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

### Thermostat

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

### Trial Run

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

### Troubleshooting Tips

#### No Heat

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Thermostat is set to "heat" and the temperature is set above the room temperature.
- Batteries in your thermostat, furnace will not run if batteries have expired.
- Condensation line is unobstructed
- Breaker on the main electrical panel is on. (Remember, if a breaker trips you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.)
- Switch on the side of the furnace is on.
- Fuse in furnace is good. (See manufacturer literature for size and location.)
- Gas line is open at the main meter and at the side of the furnace.
- Filter is clean to allow airflow.
- Vents in individual rooms are open.
- Air returns are unobstructed.

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

### Gas Shut-Offs

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 final new home inspection.

### Gas Leak

If you suspect a gas leak, shut off the gas at the meter, leave the home and call the gas company immediately for emergency service.

### Humidifiers and Dehumidifiers

A hygrometer is an electronic instrument that measures relative humidity (RH). For ideal comfort and indoor air quality, regularly monitor the relative humidity in your home with a hygrometer.

- **In winter**, operate your ventilation equipment to maintain an indoor RH between 30 percent and 40 percent at 70 degrees.
- **In late spring, summer and early fall**, higher indoor RH is normal and can be controlled using air conditioning and/or a dehumidifier.

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## INTERIOR AIR QUALITY

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### *Interior Air Quality*

Most people benefit from fresh air. Operate your ventilation equipment periodically when your house is occupied. Cooking, bathing, cleaning and using the bathroom, produces moisture and odors as well as other potential indoor air pollutants. Use your ventilation equipment located in those areas during and for about 20 minutes after each activity to help control the buildup of such contaminants.

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## ROOFING

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

### Clean Gutters

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

### Ice Dam

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

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

### Leaks

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

### Limit Walking

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

### Severe Weather

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

### Troubleshooting Tips

#### Roof Leak

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

- Confirm that the source of the water is from the roof rather than from a
- Plumbing leak
- Open window on a higher floor
- Ice dam
- Clogged gutter or downspout
- Blowing rain or snow coming in through code required roof vents
- Gap in caulking

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## ROOFING

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- Where practical, place a container under dripping water. If a ceiling is involved, use a screwdriver to poke a small hole in the drywall to release the water. Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call. Remove personal belongings to prevent damage to them. If damage occurs, contact your homeowner insurance company to submit a claim.

**Report covered roof leaks to Veridian Homes during first available business hours.**





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## MASONRY

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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.

### Coloration and Texture

Differences in masonry color and texture are normal due to the fact that masonry is a natural material. Even within the same lot, masonry products may vary in color. Since mortar is mixed with natural materials in small quantities, some color variations can be expected.

### Efflorescence

The white, powdery substance that sometimes accumulates on brick surfaces is called efflorescence. Remove it by scrubbing with a stiff brush and vinegar. Consult your home center or hardware store for commercial products to remove efflorescence.

### Tuck-Pointing

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

### Weep Holes

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

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## FIREPLACES

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*See also Fire Prevention.*

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.

### Gas Fireplace

Veridian Homes primarily uses direct-vent gas fireplaces due to the higher efficiency. If you ordered this type of fireplace, it is demonstrated during the final new home inspection. Read and follow all manufacturers' directions.

A slight delay between turning the switch on and flame ignition is normal. The flames should ignite gently and silently. If you notice any deviation from this and any gas smell, immediately shut off the switch and report it to the gas company.

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

### Wood Fireplace

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 percent 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 before starting the fire as you do the damper.

Close the damper and cold air vent when the fireplace is not in use. 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.

One caution on the use of glass doors: the doors should remain closed during burn time of the wood logs. The Wisconsin Energy Star certification requires wood fireplaces to achieve high-energy standards. By leaving the glass doors open during burn time you are decreasing the efficiency and operation of your fire/fireplace significantly.

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## FIREPLACES

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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 inches in diameter or larger should be split.

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

Remove old ashes and coals 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 determine the frequency of your chimney cleanings. For instance, burning soft woods or improperly seasoned woods necessitates more frequent cleaning. Hire a qualified chimney sweep for this cleaning.

### Troubleshooting Tips

#### Cold Air Drafts

- Air movement is necessary for proper function of fireplaces. Due to design or location of some fireplace units, it is normal to feel air movement around the fireplace.

#### Gas Fireplace

- It is not uncommon for your fireplace to give off an odor during the first few start-ups and again the first few times you run it for the season. The fireplace is shipped with many oils in the working component area, which will burn off causing the smell. Also, years into the home the fireplace will burn off settled dust and excess moisture coming into the fireplace.

#### Fan Use

- By nature of their function and location, the fan of the fireplace will make noise. Veridian Homes has found that typically a lower to medium setting has less noise yet will still produce a great amount of heat for the home.



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## WINDOWS AND EXTERIOR DOORS

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### Windows, Screens, and Sliding Glass Doors

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

#### **Glass or Acrylic Block**

Clean during moderate temperatures with only a mild soap and warm water using a sponge or soft cloth and dry with a towel. Avoid abrasive cleaners, commercial glass cleaner, razors, brushes, or scrubbing devices of any kind. Rubbing the scratches with a mild automotive polish can often minimize minor scratches.

#### **Condensation**

Condensation on interior surfaces of the window and frame is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures. Your family's lifestyle controls the humidity level within your home. If your home includes a humidifier, closely observe the manufacturer's directions for its use.

#### **Screen Storage and Maintenance**

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

#### **Sills**

Windowsills in your home are made of wood or a wood product. The most common maintenance activity is dusting. Protect wood and wood product sills from moisture. If you arrange plants on a sill, include a plastic tray under the pot.

#### **Sliding Glass Doors**

Sliding glass doors are made with tempered glass that is more difficult to break than ordinary glass. If broken, tempered glass breaks into small circular pieces rather than large splinters, which can easily cause injury.

Keep sliding door tracks clean for smooth operation and to prevent damage to the doorframe. Silicone lubricants work well for these tracks. Acquaint yourself with the operation of sliding door hardware for maximum security.

Under certain lighting conditions, door glass may be hard to see. If you keep the screen fully closed when the glass door is open, your family will be accustomed to opening something before going through. You may want to apply a decal to the glass door to make it readily visible.

### Sticking Windows

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

### Tinting

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

### Weep Holes

In heavy rains, water may collect in the bottom channel of window frames. Weep holes are provided to allow excess water to escape to the outside. Keep the bottom window channels and weep holes free of dirt and debris for proper operation.

### Doors and Locks Exterior

The doors installed in your home are wood products subject to such natural characteristics of wood as shrinkage and warping. Natural fluctuations caused by humidity and the use of forced air furnaces, showers, and dishwashers may occasionally require minor adjustments to the interior doors, which is the homeowner's responsibility.

### Exterior Finish

To ensure longer life for your exterior wood doors, plan to refinish them at least once a year. Stained exterior doors with clear finishes tend to weather faster than painted doors. Treat the finish with a wood preserver every three months to preserve the varnish and prevent the door from drying and cracking. Reseal stained exterior doors whenever the finish begins cracking or crazing.

### Failure to Latch

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

### Hinges

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

### Locks

Lubricate door locks with graphite or other waterproof lubricant. Avoid oil, as it will gum up. The tumblers within the deadbolt may work themselves loose causing a key not to operate. If this occurs, a locksmith should be contacted for inspection and repair.

### Slamming

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

### **Sticking**

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

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

### **Storm Doors**

A storm door may help in reducing your heating costs. Storm doors are usually made of aluminum, wood, vinyl-clad wood or solid vinyl. Houses with insulated steel exterior doors do not need separate storm doors. Note: If your front door faces a southerly direction and is painted in a dark color, do not leave the glass insert in the storm door during hot summer months. Warping may occur and this would not be covered in your warranty.

### **Weather Stripping**

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

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## INTERIOR MOISTURE

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Excessive or repeated condensation on your windows is a sign you may not be managing your house properly. Either there is too much moisture in the air, or the window surface is too cool.

- **Reduce moisture** in the house by using your ventilation equipment.
- **Run the furnace fan continuously** until the condensation disappears.

In some new homes, a little condensation along the bottom edge of a window may appear during the first and sometimes second heating seasons. This is due to the additional moisture from drying concrete and other building components. Don't worry. Just wipe off the moisture and protect the window, wood and finish. Then operate your ventilation equipment a little more frequently to eliminate the extra moisture.

Interior screens, blinds and other coverings block airflow to the window and significantly cool the glass surfaces. In winter, this increases the potential for condensation and associated problems. It's better to let air periodically circulate in front of the windows during the winter.

- **Remove interior screens** where and when possible.
- **Avoid leaving curtains or blinds drawn** for long periods of time.

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## INSULATION AND WEATHERIZATION

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### Insulation

The effectiveness of blown insulation is diminished if it is compressed. As the last step in any work done in your attic (for example, the installation of speaker wire), you should confirm that the insulation lays smooth and even. Do not step on drywall ceilings, because this can result in personal injury or damage to the drywall.

The homeowner will need to annually inspect the attic insulation for proper distribution. It is possible for strong winds to access the attic through roof vents and vented soffits. The homeowner will need to rake the insulation back into its normal location.

### Troubleshooting Tips

#### Spotting on Drywall

If spotting on drywall is noticed, check insulation in attic to ensure that insulation has not blown out of place. If insulation has blown out of place, rake the insulation back into its normal location. 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. Your limited warranty does not cover such injury or damage.

### Attic Access

The attic space is neither designed nor intended for storage. We provide access to this area for inspection and maintenance purposes. 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. Your limited warranty does not cover such injury or damage.

### Troubleshooting Tips

- **Insulation:** Your home has been constructed to meet the Wisconsin Energy Star™ standards. Occasionally, the insulation on the attic floor may become out of place and/or leave gaps or block the attic vents. If either situation occurs, it is the homeowner's responsibility to return the insulation to its proper location. The attic access cover should remain securely in place following any inspection or service so that heat loss does not rapidly penetrate into the attic. Any insulation compressed during an inspection should be fluffed to regain air pockets within the insulation.
- **Roof vents/Louvers:** The attic will have roof vent openings to allow warm, moist air to escape to the exterior. These openings should remain unobstructed at all times. It is the homeowner's responsibility to monitor attic space for excess moisture such as snow, rain and ice to prevent damage. Make sure that snow or ice does not lodge in your roof vents as the melting action may result in water damage to the home. If roof vents are closed, harmful quantities of moisture may occur.

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## **SIDING, SOFFITS, FASCIA AND CAULKING**

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### **Siding**

Siding expands and contracts in response to changes in temperature. Slight waves are visible in siding under high heat or sunlight. Shrinkage and separations will be more noticeable under cold weather conditions. These behaviors cannot be entirely eliminated.

### **Vinyl**

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

### **Cement Based Products**

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

See also Paint and Wood Trim.

### **Caulking**

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

### **Colored Caulk**

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

### **Latex Caulk**

Latex caulking is appropriate for an area that requires painting, such as along the stair stringer or where wood trim meets the wall around the windows. Caulking is a maintenance item. Veridian Homes does not caulk and it is homeowner's decision if they would like to apply latex caulk as a yearly maintenance item.

### **Silicone Caulk**

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

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## DECKS

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Wood decks add to the style and function of your home and are a high maintenance part of your home's exterior.

### Effects of Exposure

Wood decks are subject to shrinkage, cracking, splitting, cupping, and twisting. Nails or screws may work loose and will need routine maintenance. Plan to inspect your decks regularly, a minimum of once each year, and provide needed attention promptly to maintain an attractive appearance and forestall costly repairs. Veridian Homes recommends that you treat or re-stain your decks annually to keep them looking their best.

### Foot Traffic

As you use your decks, abrasives and grit on shoes can scratch or dent the wood surface. Regular sweeping and mats can mitigate this but will not completely prevent it.

### Outdoor Furniture

Moving furniture or other items can damage the surface of the decking. Use caution when moving such items to prevent scratches, gouges, and so on.

### Sealing or Water Repellent

To prolong the life and beauty of your deck, treat it periodically with a water repellent or wood preservative. Local home centers or hardware stores offer several products to consider for this purpose. Always follow manufacturer directions carefully.

### Snow and Ice

Heavy snow or ice that remains on the deck over long periods increases wear and tear on the deck. Prompt removal can reduce adverse effects. Use caution in shoveling to avoid needless scratching of the deck boards.

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## **DRYWALL/PLASTER**

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Keeping proper moisture in the house is extremely important. Temperature changes cause expansion and contraction in the drywall.

### **Nail/ Screw Pops:**

If you notice a nail or screw has appeared to pop out of the drywall, there are procedures to help repair this. If a nail or screw has popped out but is still secure in the wall, use a hammer or screwdriver and secure it into the wall. If the nail or screw is loose to the point of moving in and out under finger pressure you should remove the nail/screw.

1. To repair a loose nail/screw the surface must be dry, free of dust, dirt, grease, loose paint and plaster.
2. Following the manufacturer's application instructions of a vinyl spackling of choice. Cover the nail/screw using a flexible putty knife. Allow to dry at least a full 24 hours.
3. Sand repair up to 2 inches around actual patch with medium or course grit sand paper. Use a dry paintbrush to remove dust.
4. Apply texture paint to entire sanded area. Allow to dry 24 hours.
5. Paint entire textured area.

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## OVERHEAD GARAGE DOORS

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Since the garage door is a large, moving object, maintenance is necessary. Homeowner is responsible for insuring that power is available to the opener and that the batteries and the transmitter are operable. Homeowner is responsible for keeping photo eye sensors in proper alignment.

### Light Visible

Garage overhead doors cannot be airtight. Some light will be visible around the edges and across the top of the door. Weather conditions may result in some precipitation entering around the door as well as some dust especially until most homes in the community have landscaping installed.

### Lock

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

### Lubrication

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

### Opener

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

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

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

### Sensors

Electric garage door openers are equipped with photo eye sensors at the inside bottom edges of the door frame, which reverse the downward action of the electric opener if any person or object interrupts the sensor's beam.

### Painting

Repaint the garage door as needed to maintain a satisfactory appearance.

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## OVERHEAD GARAGE DOORS

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### 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, 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.



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## INTERIOR WOOD PRODUCTS

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### Doors and Locks Interior

The doors installed in your home are wood products subject to such natural characteristics of wood as shrinkage and warping. Natural fluctuations caused by humidity and the use of forced air furnaces, showers, and dishwashers, interior doors may occasionally require minor adjustments to interior doors, which is the responsibility of the homeowner..

Interior bi-folds sometimes stick or warp because of weather conditions. Apply a silicone lubricant to the tracks to minimize this occurrence.

### **Failure to Latch**

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

### **Hinges**

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

### **Keys**

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

### **Locks**

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

### **Shrinkage**

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

### **Slamming**

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

### **Sticking**

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

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

### **Warping**

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

### **Hardware**

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

### **Cabinets**

Your selections are your record of the 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 natural variations in wood and the way it takes stain.

### **Cleaning**

We recommend "Cabinet Magic" for care of your wood cabinets. Follow manufacturer directions. Avoid paraffin-based spray waxes and washing cabinets with water, as both will damage the luster of the finish.

### **Hinges**

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

### **Moisture**

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

### **Wood Trim**

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

Shrinkage may also cause a piece of trim to pull away from the wall. If this occurs, drive in another nail close to, but not exactly in, the existing nail hole. Fill the old nail hole with putty and touch up with paint or stain as needed. You may prefer to wait until after the first heating season to make any needed repairs at one time when redecorating.

*See also Expansion and Contraction.*

### **Stairs**

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

### **Railings**

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

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







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## CARPETING

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Our 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 wear down the fibers like sandpaper and dull the carpet. The most important thing you can do to protect your carpet is to vacuum it frequently.

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

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

Have your carpet professionally cleaned regularly, usually after 18 months in your home and then once a year after that.

### Crushing

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

### Fading

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

### Filtration

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

*See also Ghosting.*

### Pilling

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

### Seams

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

Carpet styles with low, tight naps result in the most visible seams. Seams are never more visible than when the carpet is first installed. Usually with time, use, and vacuuming the seams become less visible.

### Shading

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

### Shedding

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

### Snags/Pulls

Sharp-edged objects can grab or snag the carpet fiber. When this occurs, do not cut the snag as this promotes runs. Use a dab of super glue and push the loop back into place with a toothpick. If the snag is especially large, call a professional.

### Sprouting

Occasionally you may find small tufts of fiber sprouting above carpet surface. Simply use scissors to cut off the sprout in a cut pile carpet. If Berber or loop carpet, push it back in place using the technique described in Snags/Pulls. Do not attempt to pull it, because other fibers will come out in the process.

### Stains

No carpet is stain-proof. Your carpet manufacturer rates your carpet in various levels of stain-resistance, however some substances may still cause permanent staining. These include hair dyes, shoe polish, paints, pet urine, and India ink. Some substances destroy or change the color of carpets, including bleaches, acne medications, drain cleaners, plant food, insecticides, and food or beverages with strongly colored natural dyes as found in some brands of mustard and herbal tea.

Refer to your care and maintenance brochures for recommended cleaning procedures for your particular fiber. Pretest any spot-removal solution in an inconspicuous area before using it in a large area. Apply several drops of the solution, hold a white tissue on the area, and count to ten. Examine both tissue and carpet for dye transfer and check for carpet damage.

### Static

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

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## VINYL/LAMINATE FLOORING

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Although vinyl/laminate floors are designed for minimum care, they do have maintenance needs. Follow any manufacturer's specific recommendations for care and cleaning.

### Color and Pattern

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

### Fading

Science has yet to develop a color that will not fade with time. All vinyl/laminate flooring will slowly lose some color due to natural and artificial forces in the environment. You can delay this process by regularly changing air filters in heating and air conditioning systems, keeping humidity and room temperature from getting too high, and reducing sunlight exposure with window coverings. Flooring underneath carpeting will fade at a slower rate than exposed flooring.

### Flooring Discolors or yellows

Tracking substances such as oil, fertilizers, asphalt, some driveway sealers, carpet dyes, etc., onto vinyl/laminate flooring can cause permanent stains, as can the use of latex or rubber-backed throw rugs. Homeowner should also be aware that excessive moisture or heat can cause discoloration and should be avoided.

### Furniture Legs

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

### Limit Water

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

### Moving Furniture

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

### No-Wax Flooring

The vinyl/laminate flooring installed in your home is the no-wax type. No wax means a clear, tough coating that provides both a shiny appearance and a durable surface. However, even this surface will scuff or mark. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for maintaining the finish.

### Seams

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



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## WOOD FLOORING

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

### **Cleaning**

Sweep on a daily basis or as needed. Never wet mop a hardwood floor. Excessive water causes wood to expand and can possibly damage the floor. When hardwood floor finishes become soiled, apply manufacturer's recommended cleaning solution and dry mop.

### **Color Variations**

Trees are our only renewable source. From this product of nature come the beautiful wood products we use for the exterior and interior of our homes. As a tree grows, growth rings form, which tells us the age of the tree. The summer wood is light in color; the winter wood is dark in color. This causes natural variations in color, texture, and grain of wood, which is a natural occurrence unique to wood. Therefore, wood color, grain, and texture may vary from one piece to another. Many times, what appears to be a defect is a natural variation, which is accepted as an industry standard. When choosing a stain color, you should be aware that the lighter the color, the more pronounced these variations will be. Because color, grain, and texture matching is almost impossible, grain and color matching is NOT the industry standard.

### **Dimples**

Placing heavy furniture or dropping heavy or sharp objects on hardwood floors can result in dimples. Protect hardwood floors when moving furniture or appliances.

### **Filmy Appearance**

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

### **Furniture Legs**

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

### **Humidity**

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

### **Mats and Area Rugs**

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

### **Pets**

Excessive wear from pet nails will become apparent on hardwood floor surfaces.

### **Separation**

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

*See also Warping.*

### **Shoes**

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

### **Spills**

Clean up food spills immediately with a dry cloth. Follow the manual specifications for tough food spills.

### **Splinters**

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

### **Sun Exposure**

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

### **Traffic Paths**

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

### **Warping and Cupping**

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

### **Wax**

Waxing and the use of products like oil soap are neither necessary nor recommended. Once you wax a polyurethane finish floor, recoating is difficult because the new finish will not bond to the wax. The preferred maintenance is preventive cleaning and recoating annually or as needed to maintain the desired luster.





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## **CERAMIC FLOORING/TILE**

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

### **Cleaning**

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

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

### **Grout Discoloration**

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

### **Sealing Grout**

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

### **Separations**

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

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

### **Slate**

Because slate is a natural material, it is very low maintenance. Sweep, dust mop or vacuum as needed. Clean, as needed with warm water or use a stone cleaner available from your local flooring distributor. Care should be taken when using cleaning materials to avoid using acidic or non-Ph-balanced cleaners, which can remove the sealer.

Slate is sealed at installation. Expected wear could be up to three years, but extreme weather conditions, harsh cleaning methods and excessive traffic will affect wear. To re-seal use a slate sealer available from your local flooring distributor. Follow the directions on the label.

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## LIGHT FIXTURES

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### Cleaning

Initial care for fixtures requires only periodic cleaning with mild, non-abrasive soap and light buffing with a soft cloth. Products such as lacquer thinner, solvents, cleaners and cleaning solutions, etc., should not be used to clean fixtures.

### **Brass Fixtures**

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

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

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

### Light Bulbs

You are responsible for replacing burned-out bulbs other than those noted during your final new home inspection.

### Polish

### **Brass Fixtures**

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.

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

### **Troubleshooting Tips: Lighting**

#### **Bulbs Burning Out Quickly**

- Look for a source of vibration that could rattle the bulbs. Such items could be a loud stereo or a washing machine.
- Verify that the bulbs are the correct wattage for the fixture

#### **Buzzing**

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

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## LIGHT FIXTURES

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### Lights Flickering

- Fluorescent lighting often flickers upon start up. This is normal. Flickering can be caused by a large appliance running; a washer, dryer, iron or stove. This is a normal occurrence.



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## COUNTERTOPS/APPLIANCES

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### Countertops

To prevent your warranty coverage from becoming void, please review and adhere to the following. Use a cutting board to protect your counters when you cut or chop. Protect the counter from heat and from extremely hot pans. If you cannot put your hand on it, do not put it on the counter. Do not use countertops as ironing boards and do not set lit cigarettes on the edge of the counter.

### **Caulking**

Separation of countertops from walls, backsplashes, and around sinks results from normal shrinkage of materials. Veridian Homes caulks the sink to the countertop to ensure a tight seal and prevent water damage. Maintaining a good seal in these locations is important to keep moisture from reaching the wood under the laminates and to prevent warping. It is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain this caulking throughout the life of the home.

In addition, the homeowner may choose to caulk the countertops to the walls. Caulking is part of your home maintenance responsibility.

### **Cleaning**

Avoid abrasive cleaners that will damage the luster of the surface. Everyday care should consist of cleaning with a soft cloth using a mild dishwasher soap and water. Rinse with warm water and dry with a soft, dry cloth.

### **Mats**

Rubber drain mats can trap moisture beneath them, causing the laminated plastic to warp and blister which will result in the warranty becoming void.

### **Seams**

Most countertops will have at least one seam. De-lamination or separating of the laminate from the substrate can occur if water is left on the seam or if warm pots or pans are set directly on the seam.

### Appliances

- Refer to all appliance warranty and maintenance manuals for proper care, additional maintenance tips and specific warranty information.
- Microwaves and Hood Fans: All fan units have a filtering system that needs to be cleaned. There may be a metal screen filter, which may be cleaned in the dishwasher or a carbon type filter, which needs to be replaced as directed by the product literature.
- Dryer: After every run check the interior lint tray and clear it from any debris. The exterior dryer vent needs to be inspected on a regular basis to avoid lint build-up at this location. Remove any build-up by lifting the louvers and pulling the build-up away from the face of the vent, failure to do so could cause a fire.

### Troubleshooting Tips

- If electrical appliance fails to operate, check to verify that the appliance is plugged in and that the circuit breaker has not tripped before you call in for service.
- If you suspect a gas leak from a gas appliance, turn off the main gas valve near the meter on the outside of your home and call the gas company immediately. **DO NOT LIGHT MATCHES OR SMOKE IN THE VICINITY OF A SUSPECTED GAS LEAK.**



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## MIRRORS/SHOWER DOORS

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### **Mirrors**

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

### **Shower Doors and Tub Enclosures**

Shower doors and tub enclosures require minimal care. Using a squeegee to remove water after a bath or shower will keep mineral residue and soap film to a minimum. A coating of wax can also help prevent build up of minerals and soap.

Use cleaning products suggested by the manufacturer to avoid any damage to the trim and hardware.

Avoid hanging wet towels on corners of doors; the weight can pull the door out of alignment and cause it to leak.

Check and touch-up caulking on an as needed basis.







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## PAINTING/WOOD FINISHING

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### Paint and Stain

Veridian Homes' standard paint is a non-washable paint. If you selected a washable paint, painted surfaces must be washed gently using mild soap and as little water as possible. Avoid abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, or scrub brushes. Flat paints show washing marks more easily than gloss paints do. Often better results come from touching up or using a Mr. Clean Magic Eraser.

### 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 and stained surfaces of your home's exterior annually. Repaint before much chipping or wearing away of the original finish occurs; this will save the cost of extensive surface preparation.

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

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

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

### Panel Shrinkage

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

### Stain

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

### Touch-Up

When doing paint touch-ups, use a foam small brush, applying paint only to the damaged spot and blending it into the surrounding area. Touch-up may not match the surrounding area exactly, even if the same paint mix is used.

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

### **Wall Cracks**

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

*See also Drywall.*

### **Ghosting**

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

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

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

*See also Carpet/Filtration.*



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## GUTTERS

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### Gutters and Downspouts

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

### **Ladders**

Use caution when leaning ladders against gutters, as this may cause dents. It is the homeowner's responsibility to make necessary repairs to damaged material following closing/occupancy.

### **Leaks**

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

### **Snow and Ice**

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

**See also Roof/Ice Dam.**

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## LANDSCAPING

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### Landscaping

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

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

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

### **Additions**

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

### **Backfill**

We construct the foundation of your home beginning with an excavation into the earth. When the foundation 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.

Backfill areas will settle and require prompt attention to avoid damage to your house and voiding of the Veridian Homes one (1) year limited warranty.

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

*See also Grading and Drainage.*

### **Bark or Rock Beds**

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

### Erosion

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

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

### Hired Contractors

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

### Natural Areas

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

### Plant Selection

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

*See also Property Lines.*

### Requirements

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

### Retaining Walls

To maintain soil within rock retaining wall, plantings should be installed by homeowner that will prevent erosion.

### Seeded Lawns

If lawn seeding is part of your home purchase, consider this just the first step in establishing your yard. Remember that the forces of nature are far stronger than grass seed. You will need to overseed at some point, perhaps more than once. Heavy storms can cause washouts and erosion that you will need to correct. It generally takes at least three growing seasons to establish a good lawn, longer if weather conditions are difficult or if you do not have the time to devote to lawn care.

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

### Sod

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

### Soil Mix

Provide good soil mixes with sufficient organic material. Use mulch at least 3 inches deep to hold soil moisture and to help prevent weeds and soil compaction.

In areas with high clay content, prepare the soil before installing your grass. First cover the soil with 2 inches of sand and 1 inch of manure that is treated and odorless. Rototill this into the soil to a depth of 6 inches (rototill parallel to the swales). Whether you use seed or sod, this preparation helps your lawn to retain moisture and require less water. Installing a lawn over hard soil permits water to run off with little or no penetration and your lawn will derive minimal benefit from watering or rain.

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

### Sprinkler System

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

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

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

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

### Stones

The soil in your area may have stones and rocks. Removing these naturally occurring elements is a maintenance activity. When Veridian Homes installs seed or sod, rocks larger than 1" will be picked up and surface raking performed. You will need to provide continued attention to this condition as you care for your yard. Rains as well as freeze/thaw periods will work rock to the surface.

### Trees

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

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## LANDSCAPING

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

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

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

### **Utility Lines**

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

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

*See also Easements.*

### **Weeds**

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

### **Trees and Shrubs**

Avoid planting trees or shrubs with aggressive root growth patterns near your home’s foundation. The roots can make their way into the perimeter drain and eventually clog the system.

### **Fencing**

Depending on your home’s contract, fencing may be included with your home, or it may be an item you consider adding after your move-in. When Veridian Homes installs fencing as part of your new home, we confirm it is in good condition during your final new home inspection.

### **Drainage**

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



### **Homeowner Association/Architectural Committee**

If you choose to add fencing after moving into your new home, keep in mind the need to obtain design review approval from your **Homeowner Association/Architectural Committee**. Specific requirements about style, height, and position on the lot are described in the covenants recorded for your neighborhood. Special requirements apply to homes on corner lots where drivers must have adequate visibility. Additionally, in some communities, zoning laws may impact private fencing. Your responsibilities include checking on such details.

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

*See also Property Boundaries.*

### **Variation**

Height and location of Veridian Homes installed fences will vary with lot size, topography, and shape. Veridian Homes must meet the requirements of the Design Review process just as any homeowner would.

### **Wood Fences**

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

### **Pests and Wildlife**

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