



## Homeowners' Manual



**Dear Great Southern Homeowner,**

Congratulations on your decision to purchase a new home from Great Southern Homes!

We share your excitement about your new residence and look forward to having you work with us as your home is built. Great Southern Homes designed this *Homeowners' Manual* to assist you after the purchase of your home. The information presented herein will answer many questions.

This manual provides you with maintenance guidelines and a description of our limited warranty program, component by component. Please take time to thoroughly review this material and note the amount of detail we have provided.

If you need clarification or additional details about any topic discussed, please give us a call. We are delighted to welcome you as part of the Great Southern Homes' family and are always ready to serve you.

With warmest regards,

*Great Southern Homes*



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# SECTION 1

## INTRODUCTION

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It is our mission to create the most rewarding homeownership experience by providing quality-built, well-designed homes at an affordable price with superior customer service.

Our philosophy is simple: **We build homes that we would like to live in.**

This philosophy is the guiding light for each phase of our home-building process. We begin with convenient neighborhood locations, close to schools, shopping, recreation and places of worship. Our family-friendly designs are the result of a team of designers committed to keeping their focus on the pulse of the rapidly changing family.

With the location and design in place, the Great Southern Homes team of builders begins to make the dream a reality. Building each home as if it were their own, our team keeps a watchful eye for details and workmanship in every home we build.

Great Southern Homes takes pride in building communities where families can grow together, play together and discover life together.

**Who's Who?**  
*Information You Should Have*

**Property Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subdivision:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Lot #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sales Agent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Owners' Association Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Great Southern Homes Warranty Office**

To obtain warranty services on your home, all requests must be submitted in writing via email, FAX or U.S. Mail. *Please use the contact information below.*

In an emergency and/or after hours, refer to your Builder's Decal (located underneath your kitchen sink) and call the appropriate subcontractor directly. After contacting the subcontractor, please alert Great Southern Homes via email so we can include this in your house file.

**Email Address:**   warranty@greatsouthernhomes.com

**FAX:**               803-699-4735

**Mail requests to:** GREAT SOUTHERN HOMES  
ATT: WARRANTY DEPARTMENT  
90 NORTH ROYAL TOWER DRIVE  
IRMO SC 29063

## SECTION 2

# CONSTRUCTION OF YOUR HOME

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### Safety

We understand that you may want to visit your new home between construction reviews. A new home construction site is exciting, but it can also be dangerous. Your safety is of prime importance to us. **Therefore, we require that you contact Great Southern Homes before visiting your site.** We reserve the right to require that you wear a hard hat and that a member of our staff accompany you during your visit. Please observe commonsense safety procedures at all times when visiting, including:

- Keep older children within view and younger children within reach, or make other arrangements for their supervision when you visit the site.
- Do not walk backward — even one step. Look in the direction you are moving at all times.
- Watch for boards, cords, tools, nails or construction materials that might cause tripping, puncture wounds or other injury.
- Do not enter any level of a home that is not equipped with stairs and rails.
- Stay a minimum of six feet from all excavations.
- Give large, noisy grading equipment or delivery vehicles plenty of room. Assume that the driver can neither see nor hear you.

In addition to safety considerations, be aware of the possibility that mud, paint, drywall compound and other construction materials are in use and can get onto your clothing.

### Locks and Keys

Company policy prohibits staff members from loaning keys to customers. When you take possession, using your permanent key in the locks for the first time will reposition the lock tumblers and the construction master keys will no longer open your home.

## **Plans and Specifications**

The building department of the city or county where your home is to be located must review and approve the plans and specifications for your home. We construct each home to comply with the plans and specifications approved by the applicable building department. Your specifications become part of our agreements with trade contractors and suppliers. Only written instructions from Great Southern Homes can change these contracts. Many factors can cause variations between the model home you viewed and the home we deliver to you.

### **Regulatory Changes**

From time to time, city or county agencies adopt new codes or regulations that can affect your home. Such changes are usually adopted in the interest of safety and are legal requirements with which Great Southern Homes must comply. Therefore, builders may construct the same floor plan slightly differently in two different jurisdictions, or at two different times within the same jurisdiction.

### **Topography and Homesite Conditions**

Because each home site is shaped differently, the position of your home on the site may vary from others in the community.

In addition, the exterior elevations of each home are affected by the topography, or surface, contours of your home site. For instance, slope on the site may affect the configuration of the driveway and walks, as well as the number of steps and rails. Exterior finishes vary in accordance with the slope on the site; occasionally retaining walls are needed for extreme conditions. Great Southern Homes identifies existing trees on your home site that must be removed to create room for your home, drive and so on. Our construction practices include steps intended to preserve other trees in a healthy condition; however, because the reaction of trees to construction activities and your new home are outside our control, we cannot guarantee the health or survival of any existing trees.

### **Individual Foundation Designs**

Another area where variations among homes can appear is in the foundation system. The foundation design is specific to each lot. Based on the results of a soil test, an engineer determines which foundation system to use. Because of variations in soil conditions among lots, your foundation may differ from your neighbors' foundations or that of the same home in another neighborhood.

### **Utilities and Mailboxes**

The location of meters, phone and electrical junction boxes, and mailboxes are examples of items outside the control of Great Southern Homes. The authority of the utility companies and the U.S. Postal Service to designate the placement of these items is well-established.

## **Models**

Mature landscaping, extra walks, fences, lighting, fountains, signs and flags are other examples of items which are not part of the home we will be building for you. Please carefully review your home's specifications as well as information Great Southern Homes provides about optional items displayed in the models to avoid misunderstandings. Contact your sales counselor with any questions.

Because finish sizes can vary somewhat, you should measure for window coverings in your home rather than in any model.

## **Television and the Internet**

You may be aware of various home construction methods and materials from watching television programs or exploring the Internet. Great Southern Homes routinely reviews new approaches with a focus on building homes with materials and methods that perform predictably and to our standards. In addition, what is appropriate for a home in one area may not be appropriate for your home because of soil, climate and other conditions.

# Quality

Our company has built your new home to the quality standards described in our documents and demonstrated in our model homes. Each new home is a handcrafted product — combining art, science and raw labor. The efforts of many people with varying degrees of knowledge, experience and skill come together in a well-designed home of which they can be proud.

## **Natural Variations**

Dozens of trade contractors have assembled your home. The same individuals rarely work on every home and, even if they did, each one would still be unique. The exact placement of switches, outlets, registers and so on will vary slightly from the model and other homes of the same floor plan.

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

The new-home industry, building trades and product manufacturers are continually working to improve methods and products. In addition, manufacturers sometimes make model changes that can impact the final product. As an example, appliance manufacturers generally make design changes every year. The model homes will show the appliances that were current when the models were built; your home may have a more recent version.

In all instances as required by your purchase agreement, any substitution of method or product that we make will have equal or better quality than that shown in our models. Since such substitutions or changes may become necessary because of matters outside our control, we reserve the right to make them without notification.

## **Errors and Omissions**

From time to time during a process that takes several months and involves dozens of people, an error or omission may occur. We have systems and procedures for inspecting our homes to ensure that the level of quality meets our requirements. We inspect every step of construction and are responsible for quality control. In addition, the county, city or an engineer conducts a number of inspections at different stages of construction. Your home must pass each inspection before construction continues.

## **“Ugly Duckling” Stages**

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

### **Single-Source Company**

Great Southern Homes is a single-source company. That means that we select all personnel and companies who will contribute to your home. We order all materials and products from suppliers with whom we have established relationships. Although “sweat equity” arrangements are not available as a part of our purchase agreement, you are welcome to add your personal touches to the home after you close and take possession of it.

### **Trade Contractors**

Your home was built through the combined efforts of specialists in many trades — from excavation and foundation, through framing, mechanicals and insulation, to drywall, trim and finish work.

Each trade contractor worked on a limited portion of the home; they may not be aware of all the details that affect the home and are, therefore, not in a position to offer judgments.

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

# Your Questions

We also respect your interest and appreciate your attachment to your new home. Therefore, your input into our system is always welcome; however, to avoid duplication of efforts, the possibility of confusion or misunderstandings, or compounding any error, we ask that you first check your purchase documents to review what you've ordered and the specifications for construction of your home. If you still believe there has been an error, do one of two things:

## Pre-Closing

- Please contact your Sales Agent for any questions during the construction process.
- Please note: work may simply be incomplete — an early stage can look wrong to you, but be exactly right when finished.
- Methods and materials vary from region to region and change over time. When you are familiar with one method, you naturally question a different one. That does not make the new method wrong. Ask questions until you are comfortable.

## After Closing

- After closing on your house, contact our warranty department, in writing, with your questions. We will reply upon receipt.
- Additionally, please keep the following points in mind once you have notified us of a concern. Your concern may involve a detail that Great Southern Homes has already noticed or appreciates you pointing out. Still, corrections may not occur immediately. Trades and suppliers often impose trip charges for extra visits to the homesite so, to be efficient, we may schedule the correction for the next routine visit in the area. Also, a particular trade may be unavailable on short notice.

## **SECTION 3**

# **HOMEOWNER ORIENTATION**

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Our Homeowner Orientation is an introduction to your new finished home and its many features. We follow a preplanned agenda and a set route through the home to ensure that we cover everything. Feel free to bring your real estate agent to the Homeowner Orientation; however, if you plan to hire an outside inspector, the inspection must take place prior to your Orientation and needs to be scheduled accordingly.

Our Homeowner Orientation provides you with a:

- Demonstration of your new home.
- Review of key points about maintenance and limited warranty coverage.
- Confirmation that Great Southern Homes installed selections and options as you ordered them.

### **Our Commitment**

The overall quality of your home should equal that shown in our models and meet the description in your purchase documents. During the Homeowner Orientation, we list items that we agree need further attention and arrange appropriate work. Orientation items fall into several categories:

- Incomplete or missing (example: cabinet knob not installed).
- Incorrect (example: black-colored appliance should be stainless).
- Dysfunctional (example: bath fan does not come on).

Whatever the problem, our commitment to you is that we will deliver what we promised in the purchase documents and to the standards and levels of finish that we build into our model homes.

### **Final Walk Through**

Prior to closing at a time mutually acceptable to you and us, any items identified at the Homeowner Orientation that are the responsibility of Great Southern Homes will be reviewed with the homeowner during a Final Walk Through of the home to confirm completion.

## **Cosmetic Surfaces**

There may be cosmetic surface damage such as a chip in your granite, a nick in your tub, etc., caused during construction that is noticeable during the Homeowner Orientation. Therefore, during the Orientation, we will inspect these surfaces with you to confirm their condition and you will sign a form once you approve that all surfaces are in good and acceptable condition.

Any details that need attention will be listed on your Orientation forms. If you have an outside home inspection report, you must bring a copy to the Orientation to be included as part of the Orientation inspection.

Cosmetic surface damage may occur during your move-in process or daily living once you take possession of the home. Our Limited Warranty specifically excludes repairs for damage caused by the process of moving in or while living in the home. If your movers scratch the marble entry floor bringing the piano in, notify the moving company. If you splinter some wood trim and break a taillight backing out of your new garage, repairs to the garage and the car are your responsibilities.

Great Southern Homes is always available to assist you with information about cosmetic repairs you may need to make.

## Extraordinary Items

Great Southern Homes takes responsibility for resolving any items noted. If work needs to be performed in your new home after you move in, construction personnel are available for appointments **Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.**

We will inform you of any delays caused by back-ordered materials. Please note that we will correct only those items listed on the Orientation forms. No verbal commitments of any kind will be honored by Great Southern Homes.

Gaining access to occupied homes to complete Orientation items is a concern to homeowners and builders alike. Great Southern Homes asks that you make appointments so that someone over 18 years old is present for any repairs. Your cooperation is essential so that working around your busy schedule does not result in repairs taking any longer than necessary.

Great Southern Homes will confirm that any items listed during your Orientation have been resolved to meet our standards and policies.

### *An Important Note to Our Homeowners*

At the end of your Homeowner Orientation, you will receive:

- **A Builder's Decal** — a list of emergency phone numbers for critical trade contractors such as HVAC experts and plumbers who might be needed after hours or on weekends — will be located inside your cabinet panel underneath your kitchen sink. Your Homeowner Orientation Manager will review the Builder's Decal with you. If it is not present at that time, this item will be noted on your Orientation form to correct and add.
- **Appliance Manuals** — If the manuals are not present at this time, they will be noted on your Orientation form to correct and add.

## SECTION 4

# MOVING TIPS

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

Take precautions to protect vulnerable surfaces such as hardwood or resilient floors. Cover rails with moving pads or blankets. You can protect carpet with ribbed, plastic runners.

Whatever else is going on, when you assemble the family for your first meal together in your new home, sit across the card table from each other, smile and say “We made it!”

## Moving Checklist

### Moving Preparation

- ❑ Compare proposals of professional movers:
  - Costs for services such as packing and unpacking.
  - Costs of packing materials and boxes.
  - Distance and weight charges.
  - Insurance.
  - Availability and notice needed.
- ❑ Plan a self-move well in advance:
  - Make truck reservation early (6–8 weeks, or more).
  - Include a reservation for a dolly and moving pads.
  - Reconfirm one week prior.
- ❑ If you have children, involve them in planning and preparing for the move.
- ❑ Create a file for storing documents about your home and manufacturer/warranty literature.
- ❑ Retain all receipts for tax purposes. Moving costs may be tax-deductible.
- ❑ Send change-of-address cards to magazines and book clubs six weeks prior to your move.
- ❑ Give the forwarding order to the post office one month prior to ensure uninterrupted service.
- ❑ Register children in their new schools.
- ❑ Transfer medical and dental records, if necessary.
- ❑ Arrange for homeowner’s insurance and obtain the certificate you need for closing.
- ❑ Update your financial records and online payment methods with your new address.
- ❑ Update your driver’s license, car and voter registration, and any other pertinent I.D.
- ❑ Properly dispose of flammable or hazardous materials that should not be included in your move.

## **Packing Materials**

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

## **Moving Day Necessities**

- ❑ Children’s toys and games
- ❑ Toilet tissue
- ❑ Beverages and snacks
- ❑ Paper towels
- ❑ Soap and hand towels
- ❑ Trash bags
- ❑ First aid kit
- ❑ Prescription medication
- ❑ Medical supplies for special needs
- ❑ Pad and pen
- ❑ Shelf liners
- ❑ Small tools: Tape measure, scissors, screwdrivers, hammer, flashlight
- ❑ Ice maker hook-up kit
- ❑ Dryer vent flex hose
- ❑ New hoses for washing machine
- ❑ Picture hangers
- ❑ Plant hooks
- ❑ Scratch cover
- ❑ Phone and phone book
- ❑ Cooler

## SECTION 5

### QUICK REFERENCE:

# TROUBLESHOOTING, HOME CARE AND MAINTENANCE

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There is nothing like the excitement of moving into a brand new home! As you do with other major investments, you will want to take excellent care of your new home so that all its working parts operate smoothly. As a way of helping you, we have compiled this quick reference section on home maintenance and care. We hope you will find it helpful.

### **Air Conditioning and Heating (HVAC)**

- At the first sign of cold weather, check your heating system, even if heat is not yet needed. The unit may blow smoke for a minute because of oil used on the furnace to prevent rusting during shipment.
- The same holds true for the air conditioning system. At the first sign of warm weather, turn on your air conditioning and make sure everything is functioning correctly.
- If any room in your home is not being used, close the vents or the register in that room. This way you won't waste energy and it can help increase the airflow in other areas of the house.
- The air filter should be changed every 30 days for optimal air flow, or every 90 days if a 90-day filter is purchased.
- Window treatments such as blinds or drapes not only add to the beauty and value of your home, they also help keep outside air from coming in.

#### ***Important! Your HVAC warranty does not include:***

- Cleaning or changing filters.
- Adjusting thermostats.
- Cleaning condenser coils.
- Problems caused by insects or debris in the equipment.
- Tripped breakers.

#### **Before calling for service, please check:**

- Filters to ensure that they are clean.
- Breakers or fuses; confirm that they are in the "on" position.
- Switches; confirm that they are in the "on" position.
- The thermostat to see that it is set properly.

## Appliances

Please refer to the manuals provided by the manufacturers. These will be provided to you as part of your Homeowner Orientation. If they are not present at that time, any missing manuals will be noted on your Orientation list and we will arrange for them to be provided.

## Electrical Systems

- The electrical wiring in your home is of adequate size and material to handle most appliances or electrical accessories used in your home.
- Be careful not to overload any one circuit with too many appliances.
- Your breaker box is usually located near the rear of your home. Each breaker is labeled as to which circuit it controls. To stop the flow of electricity to any given breaker, just flip it to the “off” position.
- Should you find an electrical device in your home is not working, check the breaker box and make sure the appropriate breaker is in the “on” position.

## Exterior Upkeep

- Your home has two to four exterior locks. Most are designed to fit one key, so we suggest you keep a spare in case you lose your original key.
- **Bricks:** Dirt or sand should be washed off your home’s bricks periodically with a low-pressure water hose.
  - Also, when adding flower beds or other landscaping, be careful not to block the weep holes, generally located within 2 feet of the ground.
  - These weep holes should be cleaned out from time to time, as they are essential for draining moisture absorbed by the brick.
  - Do not spray the water hose directly into the weep hole, as it may cause unwanted moisture/mildew.
- **Concrete:** With time, you may notice cracks appearing in your concrete driveway and sidewalks. These cracks are the result of expansion and contraction due to temperature changes as well as the natural shrinkage of the concrete as it “sets” to full strength. Settlement cracks cannot be prevented and DO NOT AFFECT the structural integrity of the concrete. Settlement cracks are not warrantable. For more information, refer to page 43 in this Homeowners’ Manual or refer to your Warranty Manual under “Exclusions.”
- **Crawlspace:** The crawlspace should be inspected annually for excess moisture. Problems caused by lack of attention are not warrantable.

- **Foundation Walls:** Foundation walls are subject to a wide variety of stress or strain. Combined stress and temperature variations may cause cracks in foundation walls. These cracks DO NOT AFFECT the strength of the structure. They are considered cosmetic and do not require corrective actions.
- **Freezing Pipes:** To help prevent freezing pipes from bursting during 32° and below temperatures, you may want to take the following precautions, unless otherwise directed by your local authorities and water company:
  - Turn off water heater at the breaker box.
  - Turn off the cold-water valve at the top of the water heater.
  - Shut off the water supply to your home at the main water cut-off valve or water meter.
  - Completely drain all inside and outside water lines.
  - Open sink cabinets, allowing air to warm plumbing.

**Freeze damage is not warrantable.**

- **Hose Bib (Spigot):** The hose bibs are usually located on opposite sides of your home. Care should be taken when pulling a garden hose; do not apply too much pressure on the water bib itself.
- **Landscaping:** When you complete your Final Walk Through, you will be asked to sign off on your landscaping. This tells us that you as the homeowner have taken over the responsibility of any further maintenance of your yard, including erosion control. Your yard is designed to drain, so please make sure that when you are creating your flower beds and planting trees you keep this in mind. Water should not stand for more than 48 hours.
- **Main Water Supply Cut-Off Valve:** The main valve to cut off your home's water supply is usually located inside the garage or outside your home on the same side as the water meter in your front or side yard. This valve will shut off your water supply. You should cut off the main valve to the home.
- **Termite Protection:** Termite protection is guaranteed for a period of one year from the date of the original treatment. It is the homeowner's responsibility to continue the termite bond which ensures protection after the first year. **Important note:** There is no warranty for pest control, which is a homeowner's maintenance responsibility.
- **Vinyl Siding:** Siding should be cleaned annually with mild detergent and a pressure washer. Make sure that your lawn sprinklers do not spray up toward the house.
- **Water Meter:** The water meter is usually located in the front yard. If a water leak occurs at a meter, it should be determined at which side of the meter it is leaking. To do this, you should cut off the main valve to the home (refer to main water supply cut-off valve paragraph below). If the indicator on the meter continues to turn, the leak is on the "house side" of the meter. If this is the case, notify your plumbing contractor immediately. If the indicator on the meter does not turn, the leak is on the "city side" of the meter. If this is the case, notify your city water department immediately.

## Interior Upkeep

- **Cabinets:** Use a soft cloth with a mild solution of warm water and soap for regular cleaning (dry off completely).
- **Carpet:** Care for your carpet with regular vacuuming using a vacuum cleaner equipped with a beater bar and adjusted to the proper height. New carpets do shed a good bit in the beginning. Your carpet can easily be spot cleaned with commercial rug cleaners. Test a small area first.
- **Caulking:** Time and weather will shrink caulking and dry it out so that it no longer provides a good seal against air filtration. As a matter of routine maintenance, you should check your caulking inside and outside of your home, and make repairs as needed. These areas would include:
  - Window frames.
  - Wood trim around doors and the perimeter of the floors.
  - Shower and tub tile.
  - Countertops in kitchens and baths.
  - Exterior door frames.

There are a number of different types of caulk, but generally silicone or acrylic is used.

- **Condensation:** Gallons of water went into the construction of your new home, from the concrete foundation to the paint on the walls. As this water slowly evaporates, it takes the form of condensation. It is usually prevalent in the first year (the “settling” period). Proper ventilation is the best way to reduce indoor humidity and condensation.
- **Doors:** In time, doors can develop minor problems due to settling. Sticking is the most common problem with doors. If the sticking is caused by swelling due to damp weather, fold sandpaper around a wooden block and sand the edge that binds. If the hinge screws are tight and the door is still out of alignment, sand or plane the edge that binds. Paint areas that have been sanded. If a door warps, it’s generally because of excess moisture and can be dried in the sun. Regularly check weatherstripping around all exterior doors and replace/repair as needed.
- **Fireplace:** After long periods of non-use, you may need to turn the gas to your fireplace “on” and “off” several times to remove any air in the lines.
- **Garage Doors:** Refer to your garage door manual for maintenance tips.
- **Hardwood Floors:** Wood floors may expand or contract with changing weather. Normal maintenance should include regular vacuuming or dry mopping to remove surface dirt or dust. Do not use water to clean hardwood floors. Water may cause the grain to swell and prolonged water use may cause cracks.

- **Paint and Drywall:** You will receive a paint touch-up kit at your Homeowner Orientation. (If it is not present at that time, this item will be noted on your Orientation List to correct and add.) Over the first year of living in your home, the wood in the house (walls, ceilings, trim, doors, etc.) will dry out slightly. This is a natural and expected process. When wood dries, it shrinks. This can sometimes result in the following:
  - Separation at the joints in the trim (at corners of windows, etc.).
  - Cracks in drywall at corners or at the corner of windows.
  - Nail-pops: nails in drywall that back out slightly and become visible.
 All of these issues can be remedied with caulking, drywall mud and paint, which are easily available at any home improvement store.
- **Smoke Detectors:** Make sure to change the batteries in your smoke alarm every six months. If batteries become low, the detector will “chirp” to let you know to replace them.
- **Thermostat:** The thermostat controls the entire heating and cooling system. It also offers a fan switch which can be used to circulate air when neither heat nor cool air is needed.
- **Tile Surfaces:** Tile floors should be wiped with a damp cloth or an occasional wet mop. If necessary, a more thorough cleaning with a detergent or ceramic tile cleaner will remove grime. Sealing the tile and grout is a homeowner maintenance repair. Follow the manufacturer’s recommendations.
- **Vinyl:** Occasionally wipe resilient floors with a damp mop. For daily care, remove loose dirt with a broom, dust mop or vacuum. Some vinyl floors are designed to never need waxing. Follow the manufacturer’s recommendations according to the material provided to you at your Homeowner Orientation.
- **Walls and Ceilings:** Your house has two types of walls: bearing and non-bearing. All exterior walls are bearing walls. Only non-bearing walls may be altered without possible structural damage. Ceiling imperfections or cracks can be remedied just as you would your walls, as mentioned above. You are welcome to use your paint touch-up kit (trim and wall paint) given to you at the Homeowner Orientation.
- **Windows:** If a window becomes difficult to open and close, spray an aerosol lubricant in the tracks on either side or at the top or bottom of the window. Whenever a windowpane cracks or breaks, it should be replaced both for appearances and safety. There are a number of local companies that can repair windows; most can be found online. Windows may be cleaned with commercial window cleaners or a solution of vinegar and water. Crumpled newspaper is commonly used with either solution.

## Plumbing Fixtures and Systems

- **Clogged Drainage Lines:** Most of the time, clogged lines can be opened with a plunger. To ensure that lines do not become clogged, never dispose of hair, grease, fish scales, lint, diapers, sanitary napkins, rubbish or any solid matter in your plumbing system.
- **Dripping Faucets:** Dripping faucets are usually caused by worn or damaged washers. To prolong the life of the washers, turn the faucet only hard enough to stop the flow of water. If your washer does need replacing, you can find them at any local hardware store.
- **Running Toilets:** Running toilets are usually caused by a worn or sticking shut-off valve or a float level that is too high. The water level in the tank can also be adjusted downward. Just unscrew the float itself and adjust its position, causing it to move further out on the arm.

## SECTION 6

# MAINTAINING YOUR HOME

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Great Southern Homes has constructed your home with carefully selected materials and the effort of experienced craftspeople and laborers under the supervision of our field personnel and with the administrative support of our office personnel. Although this group works from detailed plans and specifications, no two homes are exactly alike. Every home is unique — a home is one of the last hand-built products left in the world and, over time, each behaves differently.

Although quality materials and careful workmanship have been used in creating your home, it requires care from the first day. Regular homeowner maintenance is essential to providing a quality home for a lifetime.

### Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

We are proud of the homes we build and the neighborhoods in which we build them. We strive to create lasting value. This is best achieved when you, as the homeowner, know and perform appropriate maintenance tasks. Periodic maintenance is necessary because of normal wear-and-tear, the inherent characteristics of the materials used in your home and normal service required by the mechanical systems. Natural fluctuations in temperature and humidity also affect your home, resulting in homeowner's maintenance items. The components of natural and manufactured materials interact with each other and the environment.

We recognize that it is impossible to anticipate and describe every attention needed for good home care. This manual focuses on items that homeowners commonly ask about. The subjects are listed in alphabetical order to make finding answers to your questions convenient. Because we offer home buyers a variety of floor plans and optional features, this manual may discuss components that are not present in your home.

#### Checklists

You will find several checklists included in this manual, including fire prevention reminders, suggestions for extended absences from your home, energy and water conservation tips and appliance service information. Again, we make no claim that we have included every detail. We believe that we have provided you with a good start, and we encourage you to add your own notes to our checklists.

#### Prompt Attention

In addition to routine care, often minor maintenance handled immediately saves you a more serious, time-consuming and sometimes costly repair later. **Note also that neglecting routine maintenance can void applicable limited warranty coverage on all or part of your home.**

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Caring for your new home attentively ensures uninterrupted warranty coverage as well as your enjoyment of it for years. The attention provided by each homeowner contributes significantly to the overall desirability of the community.

### **Manufacturer Literature**

Please take time to read the literature (registrations, warranties, use and care guides) provided by the manufacturers of consumer products and other items in your home. The information contained in that material is not repeated here. Although much of the information may be familiar to you, some points may differ significantly from homes you have had in the past.

We make every effort to keep the information in this manual current. If any detail in this manual conflicts with the manufacturer's recommendations, however, you should follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

Activate specific manufacturer's warranties by completing and mailing any registration cards (i.e., for appliances) included with their materials. In some cases, manufacturer's warranties may extend beyond the first year and it is in your best interests to know about such coverages.

## **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines**

While we strive to build a defect-free home, we are realistic enough to know that, with repeated use, an item in the home may fail to perform as it should. When this occurs, we will make necessary corrections so the item meets our warranty guidelines. In support of this commitment, Great Southern Homes provides you with a limited warranty.

### **Corrective Actions**

In addition to the information contained in the limited warranty itself, this manual includes details about the criteria we will use to evaluate concerns that you report. The purpose is to let you know what our warranty commitment is for the typical concerns that can come up in a new home. The manual describes the corrective actions we will take in many common situations.

### **We Sometimes Break Our Own Rules — In Your Favor**

Our criteria for qualifying warranty repairs are based on typical industry practices in our region, and we take pride in meeting or even exceeding those practices. Please note that we reserve the right, at our discretion, to exceed these guidelines if common sense or individual circumstances make that appropriate, without being obligated to exceed all guidelines to a similar degree for other homeowners whose circumstances are different.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

### We Sometimes Say “No”

With a product as complex as a home, different viewpoints regarding which tasks are homeowner's maintenance responsibilities and which are Great Southern Homes' warranty responsibilities are possible. If your warranty request is determined to be a homeowner's maintenance item, please refer to the maintenance tips in this manual.

### Warranty Reporting Procedures

Providing warranty service for a new home is more complicated than for other products. When you purchased your home, you actually purchased hundreds of items and the work of 35 to 50 independent trade contractors. With so many details and people involved, a planned system is essential.

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

Please put all non-emergency service requests in writing. We require you to mail, FAX, email or drop off your list in person at our main office. Keep a copy for your records. This written system permits Great Southern Homes' personnel to focus their time in producing results for you and following up. Experience has taught us that accuracy and efficiency suffer when we work outside this system and sacrifice careful documentation.

### Emergency Service

While emergency warranty situations are rare, when they occur, prompt response is essential. Begin by checking items that you can check. Troubleshooting tips appear in this manual for several of your home's components:

- Air conditioning
- Electrical
- Heat system
- Plumbing
- Roof leak
- Water heater

Please refer to the individual categories to review these tips; you will find them at the end of the corresponding sections. Often the appropriate action by you can solve a problem immediately or mitigate the situation until a technician arrives.

If your review of the troubleshooting tips fails to solve the problem, during business hours, call Great Southern Homes' warranty office at **(803) 699-8372**.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

After hours, or on weekends or holidays, call the necessary trade contractor listed on your **Builder's Decal** located beneath your kitchen sink. In an emergency which requires contacting your local utility companies, a contact sheet is provided with your closing documents and we recommend that you store the numbers handily inside a kitchen cabinet as well.

Our trade contractors or local utility companies provide emergency responses to the following conditions:

- Total loss of heat when the outside temperature is below 50°F.
- Total loss of electricity.
- Total loss of water.
- Plumbing leak that requires the entire water supply to be shut off.
- Gas leak.

Please note that if a service (gas, electricity, water) is out in an entire area, attention from the local utility company is needed. Trade contractors are unable to help with such outages.

### **Air Conditioning**

Understandably, if your air conditioner is not working, you want it fixed quickly. Typically, many other homeowners across our region will discover that they too need service on their air conditioners on the same hot day that you do. The trades who address these needs generally respond to calls on a first-come, first-served basis. If your call for service comes during this time period, you may wait several days for a technician to arrive. For this reason, we recommend that you operate your air conditioner as soon as warm temperatures begin. In this way, if service is needed, you can avoid the rush and get a more satisfactory response. Routine maintenance is required and necessary. Unfortunately, not having air conditioning is not considered an emergency.

### **Roof Leak**

While we agree with homeowners that a roof leak is indeed an emergency, the reality is that repairs cannot safely or effectively be performed while the roof is wet. During business hours, contact our office with the information, take appropriate steps to mitigate damage and we will follow up when conditions make repairs possible. (See **Roof** for more details.)

### **Other Emergencies**

In addition to emergency situations covered by our limited warranty, be prepared for other types of emergencies. Post phone numbers for the fire department, police, paramedics and poison control near any phones in your home. Have companies in mind in the event that you need a locksmith, water extraction, glass breakage repair or sewer router service. If you are new to the area, neighbors may be able to recommend good service providers. Introduce your children to neighbors who might be available to help in an emergency if you are not home.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

### Other Warranty Service

If you wish to initiate non-emergency warranty service, please submit a service request form (a copy of this form is in the Appendices section at the back of this manual) or simply write a letter that includes your name, address, phone numbers and a list of your concerns.

We schedule appointments for miscellaneous requests on a first-come, first-served basis. As a result, service on miscellaneous requests may take a bit longer to address than emergency requests.

### Kitchen Appliance Warranties

Manufacturers of kitchen appliances work directly with homeowners if any repairs are needed for their products. Customer service phone numbers are listed in the use and care materials for each appliance. Be prepared to provide the model and serial number of the item, and the closing date on your home. For your convenience, we have included an Appliance Service Information sheet on page 34 in this manual.

Appliance warranties are generally for one year; refer to the literature provided by the manufacturer for complete information. Remember to mail in any registration cards you receive with the manufacturer's materials. Being in the manufacturer's system assures that, in the event of a recall, the company can contact you and arrange to provide the needed correction.

## Warranty Item Processing Procedures

When we receive a warranty service request, we may contact you for an inspection appointment. Warranty inspection appointments are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We inspect the items listed in your written request to confirm warranty coverage and determine appropriate action. Generally, reported items fall into one of three categories:

- Trade contractor item
- In-house item (Great Southern Homes)
- Home maintenance item

If a trade contractor or an in-house employee is required to perform repairs, we issue a warranty work order describing the situation to be addressed. If the item is home maintenance, we will review the maintenance steps with you and offer whatever informational assistance we can. Occasionally the inspection step is unnecessary. In that case, we issue the needed work order(s) and notify you that we have done so.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

### Help Us to Serve You

We can provide service faster and more accurately if we have all the necessary information. With your warranty request, please include:

- Your name, address and the phone number(s) where you can be reached during business hours.
- A complete description of the problem; for example, “guest bath — cold water line leaks under sink,” rather than “plumbing problem.”
- Information about your availability or the best days or times to reach you. For instance, if calling you at work is acceptable, let us know. Otherwise, we will use your home phone number. If you are usually home on, for example, Thursday, mention that.

### Access to Your Home

Great Southern Homes conducts inspections of interior warranty items only when an adult is available to accompany our representative and point out the items that you have listed. Both our in-house service technicians and those of our trades contractors will perform repairs only when an adult is available to admit them to your home. An adult is a person 18 or older who has your authorization to admit service personnel and sign completed work orders.

We do not accept keys nor will we permit our trade contractors to accept your key and work in your home without an adult present. While we recognize that this means processing warranty service items may take longer, we believe your peace of mind and security should be our first concern.

### Exterior Items

Exterior items can usually be inspected and repaired without an adult present, provided access is available (for instance, no locked gate or pets). We will contact you the day prior to any visit, however, and let you know we will have someone on your property. If you prefer to meet with us and discuss the item(s) in question, we are happy to arrange an appointment to do that.

### Repair Appointments

Depending on the work needed, at the conclusion of the inspection appointment, the warranty manager will most likely ask you to designate a *work date* — a date a minimum of 14 days from the inspection date — for approved repairs to be made. This 14-day time frame allows us to notify appropriate tradespeople and arrange for any situations requiring multiple repairs to occur on the same day.

Although on occasion work must occur in sequence and more than one work date might be needed, this system works well in the majority of situations. Once work date appointments are set, we confirm them the day before and our warranty manager follows up to confirm repairs are completed.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

### Inspection and Work Hours

Many homeowners ask whether evening and weekend appointment times are available. Great Southern Homes understands the desire for appointments outside normal business hours. We recognize the trend to services being available “24/7” in many businesses. In investigating how such appointments could be arranged, however, we discovered many factors that make extended service hours impractical, including:

- A significant portion of repairs require daylight for proper execution. This applies to drywall, paint and exterior work of almost any type.
- Most of the 35 to 50 independent trade contractors who helped us build your home — many of whom operate as small companies — were unable to work all week and also be available for extended hours. Therefore, the few repairs that could be performed during off-hours failed to eliminate the need for repair appointments during normal hours.
- Administrative staff and supervisors would need to be available to answer questions. Having some personnel work extended hours meant being short-staffed during normal business hours.
- When we calculated the impact on wages and salaries for adding more personnel or compensating existing personnel for working non-traditional hours, we found that this affected overhead and, consequently, the prices for our homes.

We are still looking for a workable long-term answer to this recognized dilemma. Meanwhile, our warranty hours are as follows:

Administrative staff:	Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
Inspection appointments:	Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.
Work appointments:	Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Evening and weekend appointments are reserved for emergency situations. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation with these policies.

### Pets

Great Southern Homes respects the pets that many homeowners count as members of their households. To prevent the possibility of an animal getting injured or lost, or giving in to its natural curiosity about tools and materials used for repairs, we ask that you restrict all animals to a comfortable location during any warranty visit, whether inspection or warranty work. This policy is also for the protection of our employees and trades personnel. We have instructed Great Southern Homes and trades personnel to reschedule the appointment if pets have access to the work area.

### Your Belongings

In all work that we perform for our homeowners we are concerned that personal belongings be protected. When warranty work is needed in your home, we ask that you remove vulnerable items or items that might make performing the repair difficult. Great Southern Homes and trades personnel will reschedule the repair appointment rather than risk damaging your belongings.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

### **Surfaces**

We expect all personnel who work in your home to arrive with appropriate materials to cover the work area, protecting it from damage and catching any dust or scraps from the work being performed. Similarly, all personnel should clean up the work area, removing whatever excess materials they brought in.

Repair personnel will routinely check the work area for any existing damage to surfaces. They will document any scratches, chips or other cosmetic damage prior to beginning repairs to avoid any later disagreement about how and when such damage occurred.

### **Signatures on Work Orders**

Signing a work order acknowledges that a technician worked in your home on the date shown and with regard to the items listed. It does not negate any of your rights under the warranty nor does it release us from any confirmed warranty obligation. If you prefer not to sign the work order, the technician will note that, sign the work order and return it to us for our records.

If you are dissatisfied with any service we provide, you can note that on the work order or call the warranty office with your feedback. We will review your concerns and determine whether your requirements have been met.

### **Completion Time**

Regular review of outstanding work orders is part of our office routine. Checking with trades and homeowners alike, we strive to identify the cause for any delay and get all warranty work completed within an appropriate and reasonable amount of time.

We intend to complete warranty work orders within 15 work days of the inspection unless you are unavailable for access. If a back-ordered part or similar circumstance causes a delay, we will let you know. Likewise, when weather conditions prevent the timely completion of exterior items, we track those items and follow up to ensure that they are addressed when conditions are right. This could mean a longer wait.

### **Missed Appointments**

Good communication is one key to successful completion of warranty items. We strive to keep homeowners informed and to protect them from inconvenience. One of our challenges in this regard is when unexpected events sometimes result in missed appointments.

If a Great Southern Homes employee or a tradesperson will be late, he or she should contact you as soon as the delay is recognized, offering you the choice of a later time the same day or a completely different appointment. If you must miss an appointment, we appreciate being alerted as soon as you realize your schedule has changed. We can put work orders on “hold” for 10 to 30 days and re-activate them when your schedule offers a better opportunity to arrange access to the home.

## Warranty Service Summary

The many details of warranty coverage can be confusing. We hope this summary of key points will help. If you do not know whom to contact, call our warranty office and we will guide you.

### Warranty Hours

Administrative staff:	Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
Inspection appointments:	Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.
Work appointments:	Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

### Appliances

Contact the manufacturer directly with model and serial number, closing date and description of the problem. Refer to your Appliance Service Information sheet.

### Emergency

First, check the troubleshooting tips under the appropriate heading in this manual. If those tips do not solve the problem, please call our warranty office during our business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.):

**(803) 699-8372**

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

### Non-Emergency

Mail, FAX, email or drop off your list of item(s) at our warranty office. You will find a copy of the Warranty Service Request Form at the end of this manual or you can request copies by calling our office.

Great Southern Homes  
90 North Royal Tower Drive  
Irmo, SC 29063  
FAX (803) 454-1846  
warranty@greatsouthernhomes.com

### Storm Damage or Other Natural Disaster

Contact your homeowner's insurance agent immediately. Contain damage as much as possible without endangering yourself. In extreme situations, photograph the damage.

## Fire Prevention

Fire safety should be practiced by all family members. Awareness of potential dangers and preventive actions are preferable to even the fastest response. Keep these hints in mind and add your own reminders in the space provided on the next page.

### Train Family Members

- Ensure that all family members know what escape routes exist in your home.
- Conduct a fire drill with family members.
- Test the smoke detectors to ensure they function and so that everyone recognizes the sound. Follow the manufacturer's directions for cleaning and servicing all of your smoke detectors.
- As soon as possible, teach young children how and why to dial 911.
- Have a general use fire extinguisher and instruct all family members in its location and use.
- Teach children the safe use of appliances such as irons and toasters.

### Practice Prevention

- Store matches away from children and heat sources.
- Avoid smoking in bed.
- Avoid leaving small children home alone, even for a short time.
- Maintain appliances in clean and safe working condition.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets.
- Ensure that all electrical cords are in good repair.
- Use correctly sized fuses.
- Avoid having any flammable objects or materials near the stove.
- Keep the range hood filter clean to prevent a build up of grease.
- Allow space for cooling around electrical equipment.
- Unplug the iron when it is not in use. Do not leave an iron that is "on" unattended.
- Use electric blankets with care, following manufacturer directions.
- Store volatile materials (paint, gasoline for the lawn mower, etc.) in appropriate containers, away from flames (such as pilot lights) or heat sources. Many trash collection services offer disposal of hazardous items. Check with your service provider for details.
- Keep the barbecue clear of flammable objects and materials.



## Extended Absences

Whether for a vacation, business travel or other reasons, nearly all of us occasionally leave our homes for days or weeks at a time. With some preparation, such absences can be managed uneventfully. Keep these guidelines in mind and add additional reminders that are appropriate to your situation.

### Plan in Advance

- Ask a neighbor to keep an eye on the property. If possible, provide them with a way to reach you while you are away.
- If you will be gone an especially long time (more than two weeks), consider arranging for a house sitter.
- Arrange for someone to mow the lawn or de-ice the driveway or any walkways if necessary.
- Notify local security personnel or police of the dates you will be away.
- Stop mail, newspapers and other deliveries.
- Use lighting timers (available at hardware stores for \$10 to \$20).
- Confirm that all insurance policies that cover your property and belongings are current and provide sufficient coverage.
- Mark valuable items with identifying information. Consider whether you have irreplaceable items that should be stored in a bank vault or security box.

### As You Leave

- Forward phone calls to a relative or close friend.
- Unplug computers and other electronic devices that might be harmed in an electrical storm.
- Confirm that all doors and windows are locked and the deadbolts are engaged.
- Store items such as your lawn mower, bicycles or ladders in the garage.
- Leave a second car in the drive.
- Summer: Turn your air conditioner to auto. Set the thermostat to 78°F.
- Winter: Set the thermostat to a minimum of 60°F. Leave doors on cabinets that contain plumbing lines open. Leave room doors open as well. This allows heat to circulate.
- Arm your security system, if applicable.

### Additional Reminders and Notes

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## Energy and Water Conservation

Good planning and thoughtful everyday habits can save significant amounts of energy and water. In the process of conserving, you also save money as an additional benefit. Keep these hints in mind as you select and use your home's features:

### Appliances

- In selecting your home's appliances, compare the information on the (yellow and black) EnergyGuide sticker. Sometimes spending a bit more upfront can reduce operating costs over the life of the appliance, conserving energy at the same time.
- Use cold water when operating your disposal. This not only saves hot water you pay to heat, it preserves the disposal motor.
- Microwave rather than using the range when possible, especially during hot weather.
- Run the dishwasher when it has a full load and use the air-dry cycle. Avoid regular use of the rinse and hold cycle.
- Refrigerators with the freezer on top generally use significantly less energy than side-by-side models. Select an appropriate size for your needs; two small refrigerators use more energy than one large one.

### Electrical

- Use compact fluorescent bulbs or fluorescent tubes where possible. Incandescent bulbs are the least-efficient source of light.
- Turn lights and other electric items off when you finish using them or leave the room.

### General Maintenance

- Caulk in dry weather when temperatures are moderate. Check all locations, such as:
  - Foundation penetrations (electrical, phone, water, cable TV and gas line entrances).
  - Around fans and vents.
  - Joints between door or window frames and siding.
- Check weatherstripping on all exterior doors and adjust as needed. Ensure that door thresholds are a good fit — most are adjustable.
- After any activity in the attic, check that the insulation is evenly distributed.

### Heating and Cooling

- Maintain all your home's systems in clean and good working order to prevent inconvenience and maximize efficiency. Arrange for a professional to service heat and air conditioning systems a minimum of once every two years.
- Keep filters clean or replace them regularly (recommended every 30 to 90 days, depending on filter instructions).

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

- If you have a zoned system (more than one furnace and separate controls), think through operating schedules and temperature settings to maximize comfort and minimize energy consumption.
- During cold days, open window coverings to allow the sun to warm your home. Close them when the sun begins to set.
- Limit use of your fireplace in extremely cold or windy weather when the chimney draft will draw room air out at an extreme rate.
- During the winter, humidifying the air in your home allows the air to retain more heat and is a general health benefit. **Note:** If condensation develops on your windows, you have taken a good thing too far and need to lower the setting on the humidifier. Avoid use of the humidifier when you are using your air conditioner.
- Ceiling fans cost little to operate and the moving air allows you to feel comfortable at temperatures several degrees higher.
- On hot days, close all windows and the window coverings on windows facing the sun to minimize solar heating and reduce demands on your air conditioner.
- Whole house fans draw cool outside air into the home through open windows, often effectively creating a comfortable temperature. Avoid running a whole house fan at the same time as air conditioning.
- Plan landscaping elements that support efficient energy use:
  - Deciduous trees provide shade during the summer and allow solar warming in winter.
  - Evergreen trees and shrubs can create a windbreak and reduce heating costs.
  - Position trees to shade the roof and still allow good air flow around the home.
  - Plant shrubs and trees to shade the air conditioner without obstructing air flow around the unit.
- Keep the garage overhead doors closed.

### Water and Water Heater

- Water heaters are set at a recommended manufacturer setting of 120°. Burned-out thermostats are not covered under warranty.
- Follow the steps outlined in the manufacturer's directions for draining water from your water heater in order to remove accumulated hard-water scale that builds up inside the tank. Timing will depend on the nature of your water supply.
- Correct plumbing leaks, running toilets or dripping faucets ASAP.
- Keep aerators clean.
- If you have a swimming pool, consider using solar heating power.

**HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

**Appliance Service Information**

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

Closing Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Appliance</b>	<b>Manufacturer</b>	<b>Model #</b>	<b>Serial #</b>	<b>Service Phone #</b>
Range				
Range Hood				
Cooktop				
Oven				
Microwave				
Dishwasher				
Disposal				
Compacter				
Washer				
Dryer				
Refrigerator				
Freezer				

## Air Conditioning

Air conditioning can greatly enhance the comfort of your home, but if 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 difficult. 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.

As an example, if you come home at 6:00 p.m. when the temperature has reached 90°F and you then set your thermostat to 75°, 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° 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.

To ensure your system is working at the optimal efficiency for your home, Manual Js and RE-Schecks that measure load values are performed to ensure proper sizing.

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

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

*See also Grading and Drainage.*

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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

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

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

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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.
- Blower panel cover is installed correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. Similar to the way a clothes dryer door operates, this panel pushes in a button that lets the fan motor know it is safe to come on. If that button is not pushed in, the furnace will not operate.
- Air conditioner and furnace breakers on the main electrical panel are on. **Remember:** if a breaker trips, you must turn it from the tripped position to the “off” position before you can turn it back on.
- 220 switch on the outside wall near the air conditioner is on.
- Switch on the side of the furnace is on.
- Fuse in furnace is good. (See manufacturer literature for size and location.)
- Filter is clean to allow air flow.
- Vents in individual rooms are open.
- Air returns are unobstructed.
- Air conditioner has not frozen from overuse.

#### Leaking Air Conditioner (Inside House)

- Check your overflow pan under the air handler unit, which is generally located in the attic or mechanical room. Extract water from pan with cups or turkey baster.
- Clear drain line in overflow pan with a shop vac for possible obstruction of line (i.e., insulation, paper, plastic, etc.).
- Check for functional electrical overflow switch.

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

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## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Air Conditioning**

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

**Compressor** — The air conditioning compressor must be in a level position to operate correctly.

**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.

For any concerns, questions or issues, please refer to your air conditioner's warranty manual for warranty coverage details.

## **Alarm System**

If your home selections included having it pre-wired for an alarm system, you should 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.

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Alarm System**

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

## **Appliances**

Appliance manuals are left in your home. Please contact the appliance vendor for any appliance service you may need.

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Appliances**

We confirm that all appliances and their surfaces are in acceptable condition during your Orientation. We assign all appliance warranties to you, effective on the date of closing. The appliance manufacturers warrant their products directly to you according to the terms and conditions of these written warranties. The warranty period of the appliances starts the day you close on your house and lasts for one year, unless the manufacturer expressly advises otherwise.

## Attic Access

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

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Attic Access

Great Southern Homes and the local building department inspect the attic before your closing to confirm the installation and R-value of the insulation is correct.

## Blinds

Please refer to the manufacturer's recommendations for cleaning.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Blinds

Great Southern Homes will warrant blinds for the first 30 days after closing — only defects in installation or materials will be covered. Misuse of blinds is a non-covered item.

## Brick

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

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

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

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

**Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Brick**

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

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

**Cabinets**

Your selection sheets are your record of the brand, style and color of cabinets in your home. If you selected wood or wood veneer cabinets, expect differences in grain and color between and within the cabinet components due to natural variations in wood and the way it takes stain.

**Cleaning** — Products such as lemon oil or polishes that include scratch cover are suggested for wood cabinet care. Follow container directions. Use such products a maximum of once every three to six months to avoid excessive build-up. Avoid paraffin-based spray waxes and washing cabinets with water, as both will damage the luster of the finish. (Refer to manufacturer's recommendations.)

**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 crock-pots, coffee pots, deep fryers or vegetable steamers) too near the cabinet. When operating such appliances, place them in a location that is not directly under a cabinet.

**Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Cabinets**

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

**Alignment** — Doors, drawer fronts and handles should be level and even.

**Operation** — Cabinets should operate properly under normal use.

**Separations** — We will correct gaps between cabinets and the ceiling or cabinets and the walls by caulking or other means if the gap exceeds 1/8 inch (locations behind appliances are exempted from this repair).

**Warping** — If doors or drawer fronts warp in excess of 1/4 inch within a 24-inch segment, we will correct this by adjustment or replacement if not caused by lack of homeowner maintenance.

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

## Carpet/Floor Coverings

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

**Burns** — Take care of any kind of burn immediately. First, snip off the darkened fibers. Then use a soap-less cleaner and sponge with water. If the burn is extensive, talk with a professional about replacing the damaged area. (Refer to manufacturer's recommendations.)

**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 and avoid prolonged barefoot traffic on your carpet.

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

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

Have your carpet professionally cleaned regularly, usually after 18 months in your home, 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, act as a filter, catching particulate pollution. Over time, a noticeable stain develops at the threshold.

*See also **Ghosting**.*

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

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**Seams** — Carpet usually comes in 12-foot widths, making seams necessary in most rooms. Visible seams are not a defect unless they have been improperly made or the material has a defect which makes the seam appear more pronounced than normal. The more dense and uniform the carpet texture, the more visible the seams will be. Carpet styles with low, tight naps result in the most visible seams. Seams are never more visible than when the carpet is first installed. Usually with time, use and vacuuming, the seams become less visible. You can see examples in the model homes of how carpet seams diminish after they have been vacuumed repeatedly and have experienced traffic.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Carpet

During your Homeowner Orientation, we will confirm that your carpet is in acceptable condition. We will correct stains or spots noted at this time by cleaning, patching or replacing the carpet. Great Southern Homes is not responsible for dye lot variations if replacements are made.

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

**Seams** — Carpet seams may be visible.

## 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.

**Silicone Caulk** — Caulking that contains silicone will not accept paint; it works best where water is present, such as a seal needed where tub meets tile or a sink meets a countertop.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Caulking

During the Homeowner Orientation, we confirm that appropriate areas are adequately caulked.

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

## Ceramic Tile

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

**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. (Refer to manufacturer's recommendation.) 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. 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 direc-

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tions on the container. This maintenance is important to protect the underlying surface from water damage.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Ceramic Tile

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

**One-Time Repair** — Cracks appearing in grouting of ceramic tiles at joints or junctions with other materials are commonly due to shrinkage. Great Southern Homes will repair grouting, if necessary, one time during the first year. We are not responsible for color variations in grout or discontinued colored grout. Any grouting, caulking or tile that is needed after that time is the homeowner's responsibility.

## 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.

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

We install a flexible collar around the top of the furnace plenum. Gas and water lines include flexible connections, and drain lines have slip joints. The basement stairs do not rest on the floor and the support posts under the I-beam are separated from the floor slab. Great Southern Homes incorporates all of these details in the construction of the basement floor because we know the floor will move in response to the soils. Movement of the basement slab or any concrete slab results in cracking. Minimize this movement by following landscaping recommendations (*see Landscaping section and refer to experts*), 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 to keep 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 of an 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.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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. As the concrete shrinks during the curing process, however, 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, etc.

**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, pressure washing or de-icing agents such as road salt that can drip from vehicles. All of these items can cause spalling (chipping of the surface) of concrete.

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

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

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Concrete Flatwork**

Concrete slabs are floating — they are not attached to the home's foundation walls. Because these slabs are not a structural (load-bearing) element of the home, they are excluded from coverage under the structural warranty. The limited warranty coverage is for one year unless the requirements of your loan state otherwise.

**Color** — Concrete slabs vary in color. Great Southern Homes provides no correction for this condition.

**Cracks** — If concrete cracks reach 5/16 of an inch in width or vertical displacement, Great Southern Homes will patch or repair them one time during the warranty year. Subsequently, concrete slab maintenance is your responsibility. Cracks in patios, stoops and driveways are not a covered item.

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

**Separation** — Great Southern Homes will correct separation of concrete slabs from the home if separation exceeds one inch.

**Settling or Heaving** — Great Southern Homes will repair slabs that settle or heave in excess of 2 inches or if such movement results in negative drainage (toward the house) or hazardous vertical displacement.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**Spalling (Surface Chips)** — Causes of spalling include repeated hosing of concrete or pressure washing for cleaning, animal urine, radiator overflow, fertilizer, uncleared snow and ice, ice-melting agents and road salts from vehicles. Repair of spalling is a home maintenance task.

**Standing Water** — Water may stand on exterior concrete slabs for several hours after precipitation or from roof run-off. Great Southern Homes will correct conditions that cause water to remain longer than 48 hours unless it is from roof run-off due to melting snow or ice.

## Condensation

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

**Humidifier Operation** — If your home includes a humidifier, closely observe the manufacturer's directions for its use. Instructions to turn the humidifier off during air conditioning season are typical. Moderate settings in winter can maintain desired comfort levels without contributing too much moisture to your home. You may need to experiment to find the correct level for your family's lifestyle.

**New Construction** — Some experts have estimated that a typical new home contains 50 gallons of water. Water is part of lumber, concrete, drywall texture, paint, caulk and other materials used in building. Wet weather during construction adds more. This moisture evaporates into the air as you live in your home, adding to the moisture generated by normal living activities. Over time, this source of moisture will diminish.

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

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

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

*See also Ventilation.*

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Condensation

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

## Countertops

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

**Cleaning** — Avoid abrasive cleaners that will damage the luster of the surface.

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

**Wax** — Wax is not necessary, but it can be used to make counters gleam. (Refer to manufacturer's recommendations.)

*See also Ceramic Tile.*

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Countertops

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

**Laminates** — Laminated countertops will have one or more discernible seams. Great Southern Homes will repair gaps or differential at the seams that exceed 1/16 of an inch. Laminated side pieces are not a warrantable item unless noted on the walk through at Homeowner Orientation.

**Granite** — Granite is a natural stone and color variations can be expected. A fissure is a naturally occurring characteristic of stone, which *can* be weak points and *can* crack open, but usually do not. The stone is still contiguous along a fissure. In other words, there is no separation within a fissure. At your walk through, granite should be inspected. No cracks that are noted after walk through will be covered. Do not stand or sit on granite tops.

**Manufactured Marble** — Edges should be smooth and even. Where backsplash joints occur at corners, the top edges should be even within 1/16 of an inch.

**Separation from Wall** — Separation of countertops from walls, backsplash and around sinks results from normal shrinkage of materials. Caulking will be your home maintenance responsibility.

## Crawl Space

The crawl space is not intended as a storage area for items that could be damaged by moisture. Wood stored in a crawl space can attract termites.

You may notice slight dampness in the crawl space. Landscaping that is correctly installed helps prevent excessive amounts of water from entering crawl spaces. Report standing water to Great Southern Homes for inspection.

*See also Ventilation.*

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Crawl Space

During the Homeowner Orientation, we will check the condition of soils in the crawl space. Soils in the crawl space may be damp, but should not have standing water. Provided that you have not altered the drainage nor caused excessive moisture to accumulate and remain in this area with incorrect landscaping, Great Southern Homes will correct the conditions that result in persistent standing water.

## Decks

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 is 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. Great Southern Homes recommends that you treat or re-stain your decks annually to keep them looking their best. (Refer to manufacturer's recommendations.)

**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** — The surface of the decking can be damaged by moving grills, furniture or other items. Use caution when moving such items to prevent scratches, gouges, etc.

**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 the manufacturer's 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.

**Stain** — Exposed wood decks have been stained with a semi-transparent oil stain to protect and beautify the wood. Each board takes the same stain differently and variations in color will be readily noticeable. Over time, with exposure to weather and use, further variations in color may occur.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Decks

Exposed wood decks are constructed to meet structural and functional design. During the Homeowner Orientation, we will confirm that the wood decks are in satisfactory condition.

**Color Variation** — Color variations are a natural result of the way in which wood accepts stain. As such, color variations are excluded from limited warranty coverage.

**Replacement Boards or Rails** — Shrinkage, cracking, splitting, cupping and twisting are natural occurrences in wood decks, and are therefore excluded from limited warranty coverage. In extreme situations where personal safety is involved, if Great Southern Homes provides replacement of boards or rails, the new material will not match existing pieces that have been exposed to elements and wear-and-tear. Great Southern Homes does not provide corrections when problems occur due to lack of normal maintenance.

## Doors and Locks

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

**Bifold Doors** — Interior bifolds sometimes stick or warp because of weather conditions. Apply a silicone lubricant to the tracks to minimize this inconvenience. The homeowner is responsible for maintenance and hardware replacement. *NOTE: Builder will do a door adjustment one time during the first year.*

**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 (remortising) and raising or lowering the plate accordingly.

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

**Keys** — Keep a duplicate privacy lock key where children cannot reach it in the event that 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.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**Locks** — Lubricate door locks with graphite or another waterproof lubricant. Avoid oil, as it will gum up.

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

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

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

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

**Warping** — If a door warps slightly, keeping it closed as much as possible often returns it to normal. Warping of exterior doors should be expected.

**Weatherstripping** — Weatherstripping and exterior door thresholds occasionally require adjustment or replacement.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Doors and Locks

During the Homeowner Orientation, we confirm that all doors are in acceptable condition and correctly adjusted. Great Southern Homes will repair construction damage to doors noted on the Orientation List.

**Adjustments** — Because of normal settling of the home, doors may require adjustment for proper fit. The builder will do door adjustments one time during the first year.

**Panel Shrinkage** — Panels of wood doors shrink and expand in response to changes in temperature and humidity. Although touching up the paint or stain on unfinished exposed areas is the homeowner's maintenance responsibility, Great Southern Homes will repair split panels that allow light to be visible.

**Warping** — Great Southern Homes will repair doors that warp in excess of 1/4 of an inch.

## Drywall

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

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

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**Repairs** — As a homeowner, care of drywall is your maintenance responsibility. Most drywall repairs can be easily made. This work is best done when you redecorate a room.

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

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Drywall**

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

**Lighting Conditions** — Great Southern Homes does not repair drywall flaws that are only visible under particular lighting conditions.

**Related Warranty Repairs** — If a drywall repair is needed as a result of poor workmanship (such as blisters in tape) or other warranty-based repair (such as a plumbing leak), Great Southern Homes completes the repair by touching up the repaired area with the same paint that was on the surface when the home was delivered. You are responsible for custom paint colors or wallpaper that has been applied subsequent to closing. The effects of time on paint and wallpaper, as well as possible dye lot variations, mean that the touch up may not match the surrounding area.

## **Easements**

Easements are areas where such things as utility supply lines 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 gas, electric or phone utility companies — need access to lines for repairs or to connect service to nearby homesites.

Utility companies, the United States Postal Service and others have the right to install equipment in easements. These might include streetlights, mailboxes or junction boxes, to name a few. Neither Great Southern 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 Great Southern Homes informed of such changes, we are unable to predict specific sites that may include such equipment.

We encourage you to order a final survey of your lot which will define any easements on your lot so you will be aware of them and their specific locations.

*See also **Property Boundaries**.*

## Electrical Systems

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

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

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

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

**Buzzing** — Fluorescent fixtures use transformer action to operate. This action sometimes causes a buzzing sound.

**Fixture Location** — We install light fixtures in the locations indicated on the plans. Moving fixtures to accommodate specific furniture arrangements or room use is your responsibility. Fixtures may not be centered based on mounting availability.

**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. Some bathrooms are tied into a GFCI receptacle located in another room of the house.

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

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

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

**Light Bulbs** — You are responsible for replacing burned-out bulbs other than those noted during your Homeowner Orientation. Always ensure you have the proper wattage light bulbs.

**Luminous Light Panels** — Translucent panels covering ceiling lights are made of polystyrene plastic. To clean, gently push up, tilting the panel slightly, and remove it from the fixture frame.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Wash with a diluted (1 to 2 percent) solution of mild detergent and warm water. Do not rinse; the soap film that remains reduces static electricity that attracts dust.

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

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

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

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

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

**Underground Cables** — Before digging, check the location of buried service lines by calling the local utility locating service. In most cases, wires run in a straight line from the service panel to the nearest public utility pad. Maintain positive drainage around the foundation to protect electrical service connections. **Always call 811 PUPS before digging.**

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

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### Troubleshooting Tips

#### No Electrical Service Anywhere in the Home

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

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

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

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

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

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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

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### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Electrical Systems**

During the Homeowner Orientation, we confirm that light fixtures are in acceptable condition and that all bulbs are working. Great Southern Homes' limited warranty excludes any fixture you supplied.

**Designed Load** — Great Southern Homes will repair any electrical wiring that fails to carry its designed load to meet specifications. If electrical outlets, switches or fixtures do not function as intended, Great Southern Homes will repair or replace them.

**GFCI (Ground-Fault Circuit-Interrupters)** — Great Southern Homes is not responsible for food spoilage that results from the homeowner plugging in refrigerators or freezers to a GFCI outlet.

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

For any concerns, questions or issues, please refer to the home warranty manuals for your electrical systems for warranty coverage details.

## **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. While this can alarm an uninformed homeowner, it is normal and should be expected.

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 the homeowner's responsibility.

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty — Expansion and Contraction**

See individual categories such as *Drywall* and *Caulk* for details.

## Fencing

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

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

**Home Owners' Association Design Review** — If you choose to add fencing after moving into your new home, keep in mind the need to obtain approval from the Design Review Committee of your Home Owners' Association. Specific requirements about style, height and/or position on the lot are described in the current Design Review guidelines which you can obtain from a committee member. Special requirements apply to homes on corner lots where drivers must have adequate visibility. Additionally, in some communities, zoning laws may affect private fencing. Your responsibilities include checking on such details.

Great Southern Homes recommends that you engage the services of professionals to install your fence. Be certain to inform a fence installer of all Design Review guidelines and requirements.

**Variation** — Height and location of Great Southern Homes-installed fences will vary with lot size, topography and shape. Great Southern 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.

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

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

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty — Fencing

If fencing is part of your home purchase, we will confirm the acceptable condition of the fence during your Homeowner Orientation.

**Color Variation** — Color variations are a natural result of the way in which wood accepts stain and are excluded from limited warranty coverage.

**Replacement Boards or Rails** — Shrinkage, cracking, splitting, cupping and twisting are natural occurrences in fencing and are excluded from limited warranty coverage. In extreme situations where personal safety is involved, if Great Southern Homes provides replacement of boards or rails, the new material will not match existing pieces that have been exposed to elements and use. Great Southern Homes does not provide corrections when problems occur due to lack of normal maintenance.

## Fireplace

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

Look upon burning a fire as a luxury that adds much to the atmosphere, but just a little to the heat in a home. About 10 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. Your home is constructed so tightly, however, 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.

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

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

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**Chimney Cleaning** — Creosote and other wood-burning byproducts 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.

**Gas Fireplace** — Great Southern Homes offers direct-vent gas fireplaces. If you ordered this type of fireplace, it is demonstrated during the Homeowner Orientation. Read and follow all manufacturer's 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 utility company.

Excessive winds can cause a downdraft, which can blow out the pilot, requiring you to relight it before using the fireplace.

**Spark Arrester** — If the spark arrester becomes clogged, the diminished air flow will affect the performance of the fireplace and may be a fire hazard. Have the arrester cleaned professionally when needed.

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

See also *Fire Prevention*.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Fireplaces

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

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

**Glass Doors** — During the Homeowner Orientation, we confirm that glass fireplace doors, when included with the home, are in acceptable condition.

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

## Foundation

We install the foundation of your home according to the codes provided by our local authority. The walls of the foundation are poured concrete with steel reinforcing rods. To protect your home's foundation, follow guidelines for installation and maintenance of landscaping and drainage 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.

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

**Future Construction in Basement** — If you decide to perform additional construction in the basement, obtain guidelines from a licensed engineer, obtain a building permit, and comply with all codes and safety requirements. Great Southern Homes does not warrant that you will be able to obtain such a permit because of the possibility that building codes may change.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Foundation

The foundation of your home has been designed and installed according to local building codes.

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

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

**Leaks** — Great Southern Homes will correct conditions that permit water to enter the basement, provided you have complied with the drainage, landscaping and maintenance guidelines.

## Garage Overhead Door

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

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

**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.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**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 opener. 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 ensure uninterrupted warranty coverage. Be familiar with the steps for manual operation of the door in the event of a power failure.

If Great Southern Homes installed a door opener as one of your selections, during Homeowner Orientation we demonstrate the electric eye that provides a safety stop in the event someone crosses through the opening while the overhead door is in motion. Use care not to place tools or other stored items where they interfere with the function of the electric eye. Expect to replace the battery in the garage opener remote controls about once a year. The battery is usually a 9 volt.

**Safety** — Follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe and reliable operation. Do not allow anyone except the operator near the door when it is in motion. Keep hands and fingers away from all parts of the door except the handle. Do not allow children to play with or around the door. For your safety, after the expiration of the one-year warranty, have any needed adjustments made by a qualified specialist. The door springs are under a considerable amount of tension and require special tools and knowledge for accurate and safe servicing. Have the door inspected by a professional garage door technician after any significant impact to the door.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Garage Overhead Door

The garage door should operate smoothly and with reasonable ease. The door can become misaligned and require adjustment. Great Southern Homes will warrant the operation of your garage door for 12 months after closing unless the problem has been determined to result from homeowner abuse or negligence, or is caused by the installation of an alternative garage door opener/programming device.

## 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 Homeowner Orientation.

**Gas Leak** — If you suspect a gas leak, leave the home and call the gas utility company immediately for emergency service.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Gas Shut-Offs

The utility company is responsible for leaks up to the meter. Great Southern Homes will correct leaks from the meter into the home.

## 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.*

## Grading and Drainage

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

**Drainage** — You should maintain the slopes around your home to permit the water to drain away from the home as rapidly as possible. This is essential to protect your foundation. Failure to do so can result in major structural damage and will void your warranty.

**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.

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

**Settling** — The area we excavated for your home’s foundation was larger than the home to allow room to work. In addition, some trenching is necessary for installation of utility lines. Although we replaced and compacted the soil, it does not return to its original density. Some settling will occur, especially after prolonged or heavy rainfall, or melting of 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.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**Subsurface Drains** — Occasionally Great Southern Homes installs a subsurface drain to ensure that surface water drains from a yard adequately. It is the homeowner's responsibility to keep this area and especially the drain cover clear of debris so that the drain can function as intended.

*See also Landscaping.*

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Grading and Drainage

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

**Backfill Settlement** — Ground foundation, sewer or septic trenches, utility and irrigation lines, etc., that require backfill operations can settle and create sinkholes or trenches. These excavated areas around the foundation should not interfere with the drainage away from your home. If these areas experience normal settling during the first year, it is the homeowner's responsibility to fill the areas with dirt to maintain positive drainage. In some instances, you may experience excessive settling, which Great Southern Homes will assess and correct during the first year.

**Drainage** — In the immediate areas around your home (within 10' from foundation or to the property line, whichever is closest) standing or ponding water should not remain for periods in excess of 24 hours after a rain, except 1) after an unusually heavy rainfall in which standing or ponding water may occur for a longer period and this should not be considered a deficiency, 2) in swales which drain to other areas, or 3) in areas where sump pumps discharge and longer periods can be anticipated. Once you have closed on your home, it is your responsibility to maintain proper drainage of your property. If there is a concern of improper drainage within 10 feet of your home's foundation, Great Southern Homes will correct it within your 12-month warranty period.

**Erosion** — Great Southern Homes is not responsible for weather-caused damage to yards after the final grade has been established or the closing date, whichever occurs last. Your yard may contain unlandscaped areas and it is your responsibility as a homeowner to care for and maintain your yard and unlandscaped areas, and offset the impacts of erosion.

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

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

**Soil Information** — Landscaping recommendations are designed based on soils and engineering reports and thus may vary slightly.

**Swales** — Swales may be installed around your home and lot to divert water. Typically, a swale receives water from an adjacent lot and passes water on to other lots, so changes in grade often affect adjacent or nearby lots. In some conditions, water may stand in swales up to 48 hours or longer. The homeowner is responsible for maintaining grades and swales once they have been established.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**Under Concrete** — Great Southern Homes will fill visible sunken areas under concrete during the first year. Where there is evidence of a lack of landscaping and/or proper erosion control maintenance, this will be excluded from the limited warranty.

### 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.

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

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

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

**Paint** — Gutters and downspouts are painted to match your home. You should repaint them when you repaint your home.

**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; such damage is not covered by the limited warranty.

*See reference to “Ice Dam” under Roof.*

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Gutters and Downspouts

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

**Leaks** — We correct leaks that occur during the warranty period.

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

**Standing Water** — Small amounts of water (up to one inch) will stand for short periods of time in gutters immediately after rain. No correction is required for this condition.

It is your responsibility as a homeowner to remove leaves and other debris from the gutter system to maintain proper operations.

## 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 apply lubrication.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Hardware

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

Great Southern Homes will repair hardware items that do not function as intended within 30 days from closing date.

## Hardwood Floors

In daily care of hardwood floors, 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. Check with the hardwood company if your floor has a water-based finish. Follow manufacturer recommendations for cleaning.

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

**Filmy Appearance** — A white, filmy appearance can result from moisture, often from wet shoes or boots.

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

**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. Be aware, however, that rubber backing on area rugs or mats can cause yellowing and warping of the floor surface.

**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 more than 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.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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

**Traffic Paths** — A dulling of the finish in heavy traffic areas is likely.

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

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Hardwood Floors**

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

## **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 guidelines here include general information only.

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

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

**Blower Panel (Fan Cover)** — You need to position the blower panel cover correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. This panel compresses a button that tells the blower it is safe to operate. Similar to the way a clothes dryer door operates, this panel pushes in a button that lets the fan motor know it is safe to come on. If that button is not pushed in, the furnace will not operate.

**Combustion Air** — Furnaces we install in basements or in utility closets over crawl spaces include a combustion air duct. The outside end of this duct is covered with a screen to minimize insects or animals from entering the duct. Cold air coming in through this duct means it is functioning as it should.

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

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**Duct Cleaning** — Exercise caution before spending money on professional ductwork cleaning services. An EPA study found no proof that ductwork cleaning improves indoor air quality, nor was evidence found that it prevents health problems. For more information, contact EPA to request document EPA-402-K-97-002 or view this information on their website, [epa.gov/iaq/pubs/](http://epa.gov/iaq/pubs/).

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

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

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

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

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

**Gas Odor** — If you smell gas, call the gas utility 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, although young children have been known to turn the furnace off using this switch. (If your furnace is a high-efficiency model, it does not have a pilot or an on-off switch.)

**Registers** — Heat register covers are removable and adjustable. You are responsible for adjusting the dampers in these covers to regulate the heat flow within the home. Registers in the rooms farther away from the furnace 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° or more on extremely cold days. The furnace blower typically cycles on and off more frequently and for shorter periods during severe cold spells.

**Thermostat** — The furnace comes 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 ±5°.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**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.

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### 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.
- Blower panel cover is installed correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. This panel compresses a button that tells the blower it is safe to operate. Similar to the way a clothes dryer door operates, this panel pushes in a button that lets the fan motor know it is safe to come on. If that button is not pushed in, the furnace will not operate.
- 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’s 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 preceding troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.

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### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Heating System (Gas Forced Air)

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

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

**Ductwork** — Although the heat system is not a sealed system, the ductwork should remain attached and securely fastened. See your warranty manual for the HVAC/ductwork system for an explanation of the 2-year warranty coverage of the delivery portion of the system.

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

## Heating System: Heat Pump

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

**Air Circulation Across Coils** — Keep the outside unit clear of any materials that would interfere with air circulation. Snow, ice, landscaping materials, trash, leaves and other accumulating items can cause inefficiency or damage the unit.

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

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

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

**Defrost Cycle** — When the heat pump is operating in the heat mode, the coils outside may reach below freezing temperatures. Moisture in the air will condense into frost and accumulate on the coils under these circumstances. From time to time, the system will go into defrost mode to clear accumulated frost from the coils. This is a normal part of the operation of the system and will occur automatically.

During the defrost cycle, the outside fan will stop temporarily. The temperature of airflow into the home will be a bit lower during the defrost cycle. The defrost cycle can only occur once every 90 minutes and lasts no longer than 10 minutes.

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

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

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**Return Air Vents** — As with any heating system, return air vents must be clear so the air flows through the ducts unimpeded. Avoid placing furniture where it blocks the return air vents.

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### Troubleshooting Tips

#### No Heat or Auxiliary Heat Stays On When Outside Temperature is 30° or Above

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Thermostat is set to “heat” and the temperature is set above the room temperature.
- Breaker on the main electrical panel is on. **Remember:** if a breaker trips, you must turn it from the “tripped” position to the “off” position before you can turn it back on.
- Filter is clean to allow airflow.
- Vents in individual rooms are open.
- Air returns are unobstructed.
- Outside unit is not blocked by snow or other materials.
- Outside coil does not have excessive ice build-up.

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

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### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Heating System (Heat Pump)

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

## Insulation

The effectiveness of blown insulation is diminished if it is uneven. 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.

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

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Insulation

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

## 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 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 Home Owners' 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 home and voiding of the structural 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 non-woven 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 seeds with erosion matting or reseed to establish grass in swales. It can take several years to fully establish your lawn in such challenging areas.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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

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

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

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

*See also **Property Boundaries**.*

**Requirements** — Check with your local building department and Home Owners' Association before designing, installing or changing landscaping for any regulations that must be met.

**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 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 only requires normal watering.

**Sprinkler System** — 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.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**Stones** — The soil in your area may have stones and rocks. Removing these naturally occurring elements is a maintenance activity. You will need to provide continued attention to this condition as you care for your yard.

**Trees** — Great Southern 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 may manifest months after the completion of construction.

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

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

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

Trees and other plant materials that exist on the lot when construction begins and are not part of any landscaping installed by Great Southern 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, then re-lay the sod.

Before any significant digging, check the location of buried service lines by calling the local utility locating service. **Always call 811 PUPS before digging.** In most cases, wires and pipes run in a straight line from the main service to the public supply.

*See also Easements.*

**Waiting to Landscape** — If you leave ground unlandscaped, it erodes. Correcting erosion that occurs after closing is your responsibility.

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

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty — Landscaping**

We will confirm the healthy condition of all plant materials during the Homeowner Orientation and test all the zones of your sprinkler system.

Maintaining the landscaping and sprinkler systems is your responsibility; we do not warrant your sod, landscaping, irrigation systems, etc. It is your responsibility to maintain and adjust the heads of your sprinkler system and adjust the timer's calendar and flow rates as well. The electric timer for your sprinkler system has a manufacturer's warranty with which you should familiarize yourself and the manual will provide you instructions on how to set, launch, edit or shutoff a program that runs the overall sprinkler system.

Most communities we build within have different landscaping requirements. Every lot is unique in size and shape, so every yard has a unique configuration. Please refer to your Standard Features Sales Sheet and, in some communities, your Landscape Standards in your Architectural Restrictive Bylaws & Covenants to determine the minimum required for your landscaping. Great Southern Homes is not responsible for any unlandscaped areas of your yard.

## **Mildew**

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

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

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Mildew**

We will remove any mildew noted during the Homeowner Orientation. Great Southern Homes' warranty excludes mildew.

## 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.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Mirrors

We will confirm that all mirrors are in acceptable condition during the Homeowner Orientation. Great Southern Homes will correct scratches, chips or other damage to mirrors noted during the Orientation.

## Paint and Stain

Because of changes in the formula for paint (such as the elimination of lead to make paints safer), painted surfaces must be washed gently using mild soap and as little water as possible. Avoid abrasive cleaners, scouring pads or scrub brushes. Flat paints show washing marks more easily than gloss paints do. Often better results come from touching up rather than washing the paint.

**Colors** — Your 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, then paint the entire area. Use a quality exterior paint formulated for local climate conditions.

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

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

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

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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

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

*See also Drywall.*

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Paint and Stain

During your Homeowner Orientation, we will confirm that all painted or stained surfaces are in acceptable condition. Great Southern Homes will touch up paint as indicated on the Orientation List. You are responsible for all subsequent touch up, except painting we perform as part of another warranty repair.

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

**Fading** — Expect fading of exterior paint or stain caused by the effects of sun and weather. Great Southern Homes' limited warranty excludes this occurrence.

**Touch Up Visible** — Paint touch up is visible under certain lighting conditions.

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

## 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 the public library. **EXCESSIVE RAINFALL WILL ATTRACT PESTS.** This is not a covered item under the builder's warranty.

## Phone Jacks

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Phone Jacks

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

## Plumbing

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

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

*See also “Dripping Faucet” below.*

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

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

You can usually clear clogged traps with a plumber’s helper (plunger). If you use chemical agents, follow directions carefully to avoid personal injury or damage to the fixtures.

Clean and return the mechanism to its original position. Great Southern Homes will correct clogged drains and toilets that occur during the first 30 days after closing. If a household item is removed from a clogged drain or toilet during this time, we will bill you for the service. After the first 30 days, you are responsible for correcting clogged drains and toilets.

**Dripping Faucet** — You can repair a dripping faucet by shutting off the water at the valve directly under the sink, removing the faucet stem, changing the washer and reinstalling the faucet stem. The shower head is repaired the same way. Replace the washer with another of the same type and size.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

You can minimize the frequency of this repair by remembering not to turn faucets off with excessive force. (Please note that some manufacturers do not use rubber washers.)

*See also **Extended Absences** in this section.*

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

**Freezing Pipes** — Provided the home is heated at a normal level, pipes should not freeze at temperatures above 0°F. Set the heat at a minimum of 60°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. You can also drip faucets that are on outside walls to try and prevent freezing pipes. This is not a covered item under the warranty.

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

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

**Laundry Tub** — If you have a laundry room 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. After doing so, contact the appropriate contractor.

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

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

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

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**Main Shut-Off** — The water supply to your home can be shut-off entirely in two locations. The first is at the street or home, and the second is at the meter. We will point both of these out during your Homeowner Orientation.

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

**Outside Faucets (Sillcocks)** — 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. Great Southern Homes does not warrant sillcocks against freezing. Hose bibb covers can be purchased at nearby home improvement stores.

**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 surface during redecorating, wipe it up immediately. If a spot dries before you notice it, use a recommended solvent.

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

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

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

*See also “Sprinkler System,” under Landscaping.*

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

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

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

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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

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

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

*See also **Septic System**.*

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### Troubleshooting Tips

#### No Water Anywhere in the Home

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Main shut-off on the meter inside your home is open.
- Main shut-off at the street is open.
- Individual shut-offs for each water-using item are open.

#### No Hot Water

*See **Water Heater: Gas** or **Water Heater: Tankless Gas**.*

#### 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 next business day.

#### Leak Involving a Main Line

- Turn water off at the meter in your home.
- Call water utility 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 the plumber listed on your Emergency Phone Numbers sheet.
- If you've been in your home more than 30 days, contact the plumber listed on your decal.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

### Sewer Back Up Affecting Entire Home

- If you've been in your home fewer than 30 days, contact the plumber listed on your Emergency Phone Numbers sheet.
- If you've been in your home more than 30 days, contact the plumber listed on your decal.
- Remove personal belongings to a safe location. If items are soiled, contact your homeowner's insurance company.

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

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### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Plumbing

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

**Clogged Drains and Toilets** — Great Southern Homes will correct clogged drains and toilets caused as a result of construction should such occur during the first 30 days after closing. If a household item is removed from a clogged drain or toilet during this time, we will bill you for the service. After the first 30 days, you are responsible for correcting clogged drains and toilets.

**Cosmetic Damage** — Great Southern Homes will correct any fixture damage noted on the Orientation List. Repairing chips, scratches or other surface damage noted subsequent to the Orientation List is your responsibility (i.e., tub cracks, granite cracks, sink cracks etc.).

**Exterior Faucets** — Great Southern Homes will repair leaks at exterior faucets noted on the Orientation List. Subsequent to Homeowner Orientation, repair of a broken line to an exterior faucet is the homeowner's responsibility.

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

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

**Running Toilet** — Maintenance and replacement of tank parts is the responsibility of homeowner after 30 days from closing.

**Supply** — Great Southern Homes will correct construction conditions that disrupt the supply of water to your home if they involve service from the main water supply to your home, provided actions of yours have not caused the problem. Disruption of service due to failure of the water utility is the responsibility of the water utility to correct.

For any concerns, questions or issues, please refer to your home warranty manuals for your plumbing systems for warranty coverage details.

## Property Boundaries

Great Southern Homes encourages you to purchase a survey provided by a third-party surveyor that shows your lot and the location of your home on the lot. To construct the home, Great Southern 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 or 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 that you have found all corners.

Locating property pins is the homeowner's responsibility.

*See also Easements.*

## 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 join together to form the railing.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Railings

During the Homeowner Orientation, we will confirm that all railings are in good condition. Great Southern Homes installs railings in positions and locations to comply with applicable building codes. Railings should remain securely attached with normal use.

## Resilient Flooring

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

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

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

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

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

**No-Wax Flooring** — The resilient flooring installed in your home is the no-wax type. No-wax means a clear, tough coating that provides both a shiny appearance and a durable surface. Even this surface, however, will scuff or mark. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for maintaining the finish.

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

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

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Resilient Flooring**

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

**Adhesion** — Resilient floor covering should adhere. Great Southern Homes will repair lifting or bubbling and nail pops that appear on the surface only if they are noted at the Homeowner Orientation.

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

**Seams** — Seams will occur and are sealed at the time of installation. Great Southern Homes will correct gaps in excess of 1/16 of an inch where resilient flooring pieces meet or 1/8 of an inch where resilient flooring meets another material. Seams will be addressed during the first year of the warranty.

## Roof

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 leaking into your home through windows or ceilings.

If your home's 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 homeowner's insurance company if you find pieces of shingle in the yard or shingle edges lifted on the roof.

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### Troubleshooting Tips

#### Roof Leak

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

- Confirm the source of the water is the roof rather than from a:
  - Plumbing leak
  - Open window on a higher floor
  - Ice dam
  - Clogged gutter or downspout
  - Blowing rain or snow coming in through code-required roof vents
  - Gap in caulking
  - HVAC leak
- Where practical, place a container under any dripping water.
- If a ceiling is involved, use a screwdriver to poke a small hole in the drywall to release the water.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

- Remove personal belongings to prevent damage to them. If damage occurs, contact your homeowner's insurance company to submit a claim.
- Report the leak to Great Southern Homes during first available business hours.

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

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### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Roof

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

**Ice Dam** — An ice build-up (ice dam) may develop in the eaves during extended periods of cold and snow. Your homeowner's insurance may cover this damage, which is excluded from warranty.

**Inclement Weather** — Storm damage is excluded from warranty coverage. Notify your homeowner's insurance company if storm damage is discovered.

## Rough Carpentry

Framing or rough carpentry provides the skeletal structure of the house which includes fabrication of wood portions of the floor systems, exterior walls, interior partitions and roof, which are built on and supported by the foundation.

The exterior wall framing is designed to support the vertical load from the floors and roof, and to resist lateral loads resulting from winds. Interior partitions may or may not be load-bearing. The roof is designed to support its own weight plus that of anticipated loads from snow, ice and wind. Framing is quality controlled by building codes and subject to building inspections when the entire frame can be viewed.

As a natural product, wood will respond to humidity and temperature conditions, which can cause shrinking, twisting or warping of the framed material. In single-family construction, lumber, type and grade, span, spacing and load-bearing capacities are tightly controlled by code, while the carpentry foreperson uses their own judgment in determining the exact layout. Hence, the accumulation of tolerances of several inches in overall dimension is not unusual.

The following are some common problems with rough framing and the acceptable performance standard that is accepted by South Carolina Residential Construction Standards:

**Bowed Ceilings** — Ceilings which are bowed more than ½-inch within a 36-inch measurement running parallel with the ceiling joists will be repaired.

**Bowed Walls** — All interior and exterior walls have slight variances on their finished surfaces. Walls should not bow more than ¼-inch out of line within any 32-inch horizontal or vertical measurement.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**Floor Squeaks** — Floor squeaks are common to new construction and a squeak-proof floor cannot be guaranteed. The builder will try to minimize floor squeaks and will correct any if caused by a construction defect.

**Seams or Ridges Appear in Resilient Flooring** — With natural settling, some mismatch of the subfloor may exhibit ridges or depressions showing on the surface goods. This can be minimized by the buyer by choosing darker colors for surface goods. If a ridge or depression exceeds 1/8 of an inch and cannot be corrected from below, the resilient floor will be corrected.

**Uneven Floors** — Floors shall not be more than 1/4-inch out of plane in wood, vinyl and ceramic areas, or 1/2-inch out of plane in carpeted areas within any 32-inch measurement when measured parallel to the joists.

**Windows** — Windows should operate with reasonable ease as designed.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Rough Carpentry

Some floor and stair squeaks are unavoidable. Although Great Southern Homes does not warrant against floor squeaks, a reasonable effort will be made to correct them in extenuating circumstances.

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

## Septic System

A septic system consists of two basic parts: a septic tank; and 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. They 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 tissue through the system.
- Do not rely on yeast or chemical additives to digest sludge. They 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.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

- 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.

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 to determine whether the system you are considering will adversely affect your septic system.

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Septic System**

During the Homeowner Orientation, we confirm that the septic system is working properly and that you are familiar with the location of the tank and disposal field.

While we install the system in accordance with codes and plans based on your soil conditions, we do not warrant that the septic system will function indefinitely. Weather, groundwater, environmental conditions, topography as well as your family's habits can all generate unpredictable effects.

## **Shower Doors or 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.

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.

**Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines —  
Shower Doors or Tub Enclosures**

During your Homeowner Orientation, we will confirm the good condition of all shower doors and tub enclosures. Great Southern Homes warrants that shower doors and tub enclosures will function according to manufacturer's specifications within 30 days from the closing date.

## Siding

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

**Cement-based Products** — Cement-based siding will require repainting and caulking just as wood products do.

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

**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.

**Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Siding**

Great Southern Homes warrants all siding to be free of defects in material and workmanship. We will confirm the good condition of the siding during your Homeowner Orientation. Subsequent damage to the siding will be your responsibility to repair.

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

## 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 the signal that the battery needs to be replaced. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for installing a new battery. Most smoke detectors use a 9-volt battery. Common practice is to change all batteries at one time.

**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 that the alarm is working.

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

**Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Smoke Detectors**

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

**Stairs**

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

**Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Stairs**

Although Great Southern Homes does not warrant against stair vibration and squeaks, a reasonable effort will be made to correct them providing they are noted at the Homeowner Orientation.

**Sump Pump**

If conditions on your lot made it appropriate, the foundation design includes 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.

**Continuous Operation** — The pump may run often or even continuously during a heavy storm or long periods of rain. 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.

**Power Supply** — The sump pump runs on electricity. If the 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's 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 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 of water into the sump pump crock (hole). The pump should come on and pump the water out. Perform this procedure once a year.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**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.

### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Sump Pump

During your Homeowner Orientation, we will discuss the sump pump and confirm it is operational. The pump is classified as an appliance and is warranted by the manufacturer.

## Termites

We treat the foundation of your home for termites and provide you with a certificate confirming that treatment. Plan to renew this treatment annually or as directed by the literature that accompanies the certificate. **Treatment for other types of insect or animal infestations is the homeowner's responsibility.**

### Regular Inspections

Regularly inspect your home for signs of termites or conditions that would allow their attack.

- Check for wrinkles or waves in wood trim.
- Tap wood to see if it sounds or feels hollow.
- Watch for tubes of dirt, called mud tubes, that extend from the soil up to your home.
- Keep soil away from any wood parts of your home.
- Be certain all roof water and precipitation moves quickly away from your home's foundation.
- Avoid storing wood on the ground and against your home.
- Maintain a safe zone of at least two feet in width around the perimeter of your home. Avoid planting grass or shrubs, installing any sprinkler device or digging of any kind in this area. If you disturb this area, have it re-treated to restore protection.
- Before installing stepping stones, river rock, concrete or similar materials against the home, chemically treat the area that will be underneath the new material.
- If you add onto or change the exterior of your home, be sure to have the areas treated first.

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

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Termites**

We certify treatment of your foundation for termites at closing. This is our final action for termites. Great Southern Homes' warranty excludes treatment for any other insect (such as ants) or animal (such as mice) infestations.

## **Ventilation**

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

**Attic Vents** — Attic ventilation occurs through vents in the soffit (the underside of the overhangs) or on gable ends. Driving rain or snow sometimes enters the attic through these vents. Do not cover them to prevent this. Instead, cover the insulation in front of the vent. When you do this, precipitation that blows in safely evaporates and ventilation can still occur.

**Crawl Space Vents** — Homes with crawl spaces usually include two or more vents. Open crawl space vents for summer months and close them for winter months, pulling insulation over them. Failure to close these vents and replace insulation may result in plumbing lines freezing in the crawl space. This occurrence is not covered by your warranty.

**Daily Habits** — Your daily habits can help keep your home well ventilated:

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

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

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Ventilation**

Great Southern Homes' warranty guidelines for active components (for example, exhaust fans) are discussed under the appropriate headings (such as *Electrical Systems*, *Heating System*, etc.).

## Water Heater: Electric

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

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

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

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

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

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### Troubleshooting Tips

#### No Hot Water

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Water heater breaker on your main electric panel is in the "on" position. **Remember:** if a breaker trips, you must turn it from the "tripped" position to the "off" position before you can turn it back on.
- Temperature setting is not on "vacation" or too low.
- Water supply valve is open.

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

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

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#### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty — Water Heater: Electric

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

Great Southern Homes does not warrant against freezing pipes (including the water heater). It is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain and protect the system from the elements.

## Water Heater: Gas

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

**Temperature** — The recommended thermostat setting for normal everyday use is “normal.” 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.

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### Troubleshooting Tips

#### No Hot Water

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Pilot is lit. (Directions will be found on the side of the tank.)
- 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 possible other troubleshooting tips.

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

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### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Water Heater: Gas

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

Great Southern Homes does not warrant against freezing pipes (including the water heater). It is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain and protect the system from the elements.

*See also **Plumbing**.*

## Water Heater: Tankless Gas

Tankless units directly heat water without the use of a storage tank, saving energy and water, reducing both of your utility bills — gas and electric. The gas systems provide hot water on demand so you don't have to have a tank full of hot water that is being heated continuously for use. Tankless systems are a relatively new type of heater and there is a learning curve to effectively using your new heater. Carefully read and follow the manufacturer's literature for your specific model of water heater.

**Temperature** — The recommended thermostat setting for everyday use is “normal.” 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 the electric power, water and gas supply to the water heater.
- Check the circuit breaker to see if it is tripped.
- Check the GFCI outlet inside the garage that your unit is plugged into to see if it is tripped.
- Check the shut-off valve; it may be in a closed position.
- Check to see if the stand-by light is on, meaning there is power to the unit.
- Check to see if the red lights come on as water is flowing through the unit.
- If the stand-by light is not on, check the circuit breaker to see if it is tripped. Reset. Call for hot water.
- If you have power to the unit, the standby light is on and the red lights come on when calling for hot water, yet you have no hot water, then contact your service provider.

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

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

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### Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Water Heater: Tankless Gas

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

Great Southern Homes does not warrant against freezing pipes (including the water heater). It is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain and protect the system from the elements.

*See also **Plumbing**.*

## Well System

Proper maintenance of your well system can lead to a long life for this important part of your home's infrastructure. A well maintenance check-up along with a bacterial test should be performed by a service technician annually and will cover four topics:

1. **Flow Test** — determines the system output along with a check of the water level. Also, this test checks the pump motor performance, pressure tank and general water quality.
2. **Equipment Test** — checks the well equipment to see that it conforms to local codes.
3. **Bacterial Test** — tests for coliform bacteria, nitrates and anything of local concern.
4. **Report** — concise, clear written report following the checkup.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

### Simple Maintenance Steps for Your Well System

- Always use licensed or certified well drillers and pump installers when a system is serviced.
- Well water often contains naturally occurring minerals such as calcium, iron and sulphur. Although these minerals are not hazardous to human health, they can alter the hardness, taste, odor or color of the water when present in excess quantities. Any source of drinking water should be professionally checked any time there is a change of taste, odor or appearance.
- Well water should be regularly tested for bacteriological quality and should be tested immediately if there is a change in the clarity, color, odor, taste or if there has been a change in the surrounding land use.
- Keep hazardous chemicals, such as paint, fertilizer, pesticides and motor oil, away from your well. Periodically check the well cover or well cap on top of the well to ensure it is in good condition. Take care in working or mowing around your well. Don't pile leaves, snow or other materials around your well.
- Keep your records in a safe place. These include the construction report, as well as the annual inspection reports and water testing results. When your well comes to the end of its serviceable life (usually 20 years or more), have a professional properly seal your well after constructing a new system.

### Before Testing Your Water, Check to See if the Well System is Clean

- A common mistake homeowners make is to test their well water without first being sure the well system is clean. Periodic cleaning of your well's filter is necessary homeowner's maintenance.
- A qualified well water systems contractor can determine if your well water system needs cleaning by conducting an anaerobic bacteria test, coliform test or other tests. Other possible indicators of a dirty well may be cloudy water, low water flow, taste or color problems.
- Once your well system has been inspected and it has been determined that you have a problem, the contractor can treat the system, usually with chlorine, to disinfect the system.

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Well System**

Refer to the manufacturer's limited warranty for information regarding well system equipment such as well water pumps.

Great Southern Homes does not warrant against freezing pipes, including pipes connected to the well head and pumps. It is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain and protect the well system from the elements.

*See also **Plumbing**.*

## 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.

**Acrylic Block** — Clean during moderate temperatures with only a mild soap and warm water using a sponge or soft cloth, then dry with a towel. Avoid abrasive cleaners, commercial glass cleaner, razors, brushes or scrubbing devices of any kind. Minor scratches can often be minimized by rubbing them with a mild automotive polish.

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

**Condensation** — Condensation on interior surfaces of the window and frame is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures. Your family's lifestyle controls the humidity level within your home. 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** — Window sills in your home are made of wood, wood product, man-made marble or marble. The most common maintenance activity is dusting. Twice a year, check caulking and touch up as needed. Wax is not necessary, but can be used to make sills gleam. Protect wood and wood product sills from moisture. If you arrange plants on a sill, include a plastic tray under the pot.

**Sliding Glass Doors** — Sliding glass doors are made with tempered glass which 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 door frame. 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.

Sliding screen doors are NOT equipped with a locking device nor are sliding screen doors a warrantable item.

**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.

## HOMEOWNER USE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**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.

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Windows, Screens and Sliding Glass Doors**

We will confirm that all windows, screens and sliding glass doors are in acceptable condition during the Homeowner Orientation. Great Southern Homes will repair or replace broken windows or damaged screens noted on the Orientation List. Windows should operate with reasonable ease and locks should perform as designed. If they do not, Great Southern Homes will provide adjustments.

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

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

**Infiltration** — Some air and dust will infiltrate around windows, especially before the installation of landscaping in the general area. Great Southern Homes' warranty excludes this occurrence.

**Scratches** — Great Southern Homes will confirm that all window glass is in acceptable condition at the Homeowner Orientation. Minor scratches on windows can result from delivery, handling and other construction activities. Great Southern Homes will replace windows that have scratches readily visible from a distance of 4 feet. Great Southern Homes does not replace windows that have scratches visible only under certain lighting conditions.

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

*See also Ventilation.*

## Wood Trim

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

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

*See also **Expansion and Contraction.***

### **Great Southern Homes Limited Warranty Guidelines — Wood Trim**

During the Homeowner Orientation, we will confirm that wood trim is in acceptable condition. Minor imperfections in wood materials will be visible and will require no action. Caulking and painting is the Homeowner's responsibility.

**Exterior** — Great Southern Homes will caulk and apply touch-up paint to cracks in exterior trim components that exceed 3/16 of an inch. We provide this repair one time. Paint or stain touch up will not match. We will correct any separation at joints that allows water to enter the home.

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

## **APPENDICES**



90 North Royal Tower Drive, Irmo, SC 29063 • 803.699.8372  
 ATTN: WARRANTY DEPARTMENT  
 FAX: 803.699.4735 • Email: warranty@greatsouthernhomes.com

### Warranty Service Request Form

For your protection and to allow efficient operations, our warranty service system is based on your written report of non-emergency items. Please use this form to notify us of warranty items. Please FAX, email or mail to the address above. We will contact you to set an inspection appointment. Service appointments are available from 8:00 AM–4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. *Thank you for your cooperation.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address/Subdivision: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Lot#/Plan: \_\_\_\_\_ Closing Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location	Service Requested	Service Action*		
		Warranty	Courtesy	Maintenance
*Warranty or Courtesy indicates a Great Southern Homes' Responsibility. Maintenance refers to homeowner's responsibility. Please refer to your warranty manual for warrantable items.				

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



## Great Southern Homes

### Homeowners' Manual • Receipt •

Congratulations on your decision to buy a new home!

Great Southern Homes is proud to deliver this copy of our Homeowners' Manual to you as part of the purchase agreement materials for your new home. This acknowledgment must be signed, dated and submitted to Great Southern Homes prior to scheduling Home Orientation which is scheduled with you and Great Southern Homes prior to closing.

Please acknowledge for our records that you have received this manual:

Purchaser \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Purchaser \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_

**WARRANTY SERVICE ACKNOWLEDGMENT (Rev 08-01-25)**

Great Southern Homes (GSH) provides a **limited** warranty on the **original** installation of the materials and workmanship (as defined by the S.C. Residential Construction Standards) of your home for the **first year of occupancy from the date of closing**. Routine home maintenance (i.e., changing air filters, caulking), normal wear-and-tear (carpet wear), resident use/misuse/negligence (i.e., water leaks from shower curtains, improper use of toilets and garbage disposals, clogged and/or overflowing toilets, sinks and sewage lines), vandalism (i.e., broken windows and doors) and acts of God are NOT covered by the GSH warranty. **Like-wise, specific to any property that is used for rental purposes, the buyer acknowledges this warranty is NOT a maintenance agreement and only claims that meet the requirements as outlined in the 1-year materials and workmanship, 2-year delivery system portion and 10-year structural limited warranty agreement will be covered.**

**WARRANTY PROCEDURES**

All claims that require attention must be submitted *in writing* to the attention of the Great Southern Homes Warranty Department. You may **FAX** the request to: **(803) 699-4735** or **email** a request to **warranty@greatsouthernhomes.com** or **mail** to: **Great Southern Homes, Att: Warranty Department, 90 North Royal Tower Drive, Irmo, SC 29063**

A GSH representative will contact you within 7–10 business days after we receive your request to schedule an appointment. All warranty inspections and repair work will be scheduled between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. We will **not** schedule work on weekends or after 4:00 PM on weekdays. All work will be scheduled as soon as possible after the completion of the inspection. You must make your home accessible and have an adult (at least 18 years of age) present at the time any interior work is performed at your home. *We will not accept keys from homeowners nor be in your home at any time without an adult present.* If a claim is determined to be covered by the warranty, GSH will repair the defect as determined by the S.C. Residential Construction Standards. You are responsible to remove or repair any improvements you added after the construction of your home such as wallpaper, custom paints, fences and sprinklers. **Note:** for service on **appliances**, you will need to contact the subcontractor or manufacturer directly using their phone number printed on a decal located inside a cabinet door below the kitchen sink. If you do not have this list of phone numbers, please **notify our warranty department by email ([warranty@greatsouthernhomes.com](mailto:warranty@greatsouthernhomes.com))** and we will provide this information to you.

**EMERGENCY SERVICE**

A list of telephone numbers for **electric, plumbing and heating contractors** is located inside a lower cabinet in your kitchen. **Please call these subcontractors directly for any emergency repairs.** After contacting the subcontractor, please alert Great Southern Homes Warranty Department about the emergency via [warranty@greatsouthernhomes.com](mailto:warranty@greatsouthernhomes.com). Listed below are conditions that are considered to be emergency situations:

**Heating and air conditioning systems** — Loss of heat due to a malfunction of the furnace when the outside temperature is 40 degrees or below. Air conditioning malfunctions are treated as routine service and not an emergency.

**Electrical systems** — Circuit breaker to gas furnace or heat pump keeps kicking off.

**Plumbing systems** — Plumbing leaks that require the water to be shut off at the main valve or **all toilets are not functional**. An interruption of water supply service by the water utility is outside subcontractor and GSH control.

**TREE SERVICE, LANDSCAPE AND EROSION CONTROL**

GSH DOES NOT GUARANTEE THE CONTINUAL GROWTH OR LIFE OF ANY TREE, SHRUB OR GRASS. Prior to closing, all proper grading and landscaping will be completed, and it then becomes the responsibility of the homeowner to maintain all landscaping and grading. GSH will not replace or remove any landscaping or trees unless such is specifically stated on your pre-closing Orientation Form or on your conditional sales contract. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.** Any erosion of the property becomes the responsibility of the homeowner upon closing. Sprinkler systems are not covered under warranty and require maintenance by the homeowner on a regular basis.

**SEALANTS** — Items related to thermal expansion and contraction of building materials including nail pops and natural hair-line cracks require ongoing homeowner maintenance and are not covered under the materials and workmanship warranty. For example, all caulking throughout the home must be maintained by the homeowner.

**EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS** — Your home was designed to be free of leaks under normal conditions. For example, high-velocity wind-driven rain can cause damages that are not the result of normal conditions. Damages as a result of these conditions may be covered by your Homeowner’s Insurance Policy and are not the responsibility of GSH. You should also take necessary precautions whenever a freeze warning is in effect. This can include covering outside hose bibs, keeping cabinet doors open beneath the kitchen sink so warm air can circulate around water pipes, etc.

**I acknowledge that I have read the above information and agree to the policies stated in these sections.**

**Signature of Homeowner:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City, ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Closing:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone No.:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Material and Workmanship Warranty expires 1 year from closing date)**



## **Homeowners' Manual**

Ranked the 6th fastest-growing private builder and the 74th largest builder in the nation (*Builder Magazine*, 2016), Great Southern Homes knows the housing market of the Southeast better than anyone. Since our beginning, Great Southern Homes has built homes on the solid foundation of exceptional quality, industry-leading construction standards and brilliant energy-smart and cost-efficient features. Great Southern Homes currently builds great new homes throughout South Carolina with operations in the Midlands, Greenville/Spartanburg, Charleston, Myrtle Beach/Georgetown, Florence, Sumter and Aiken/Augusta, and has plans to expand into new markets throughout the Southeast.

*Published by*

**Great Southern Homes**

**90 North Royal Tower Drive**

**Irmo SC 29603**

**[www.greatsouthernhomes.com](http://www.greatsouthernhomes.com)**

**(803) 699-4734**

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