

Congratulations on the purchase of your new home!



San Joaquin Valley
HOMES

Dear San Joaquin Valley Homes Homebuyer:

All of us at San Joaquin Valley Homes welcome you as a new homeowner. Your satisfaction is our number one priority and we are committed to providing quality and value in your new home.

The *San Joaquin Valley Homes Homeowner Manual* has been designed to guide you step by step through the maintenance of your home. The information presented here will answer many questions you may have regarding the care and maintenance of your new home. You will find homeowner guidelines and a detailed description of the Customer Service Program in this Manual. Your new home is a product of our commitment to excellence in design, materials, construction and community planning.

Our commitment is easy to understand and is based on common sense. We believe the Homeowner has a right to expect a clean home complete and free of defects at the time of closing. Components should work. If there are problems because of construction defects, we will arrange for repair or replacement. If a problem results from actions by occupants of the home or others, or from ordinary wear and tear, we are not responsible for the resulting repair or replacement.

We view your Fit and Finish Customer Service Warranty in terms of what you, as our customer, have a right to expect. We view the issue of preventative maintenance in terms of what your home has a right to expect from you. None of the materials used in the construction of your home will last forever. However, most will last for a long time if properly maintained. It is our desire to help you understand how to prolong the life of your home through regular maintenance that is appropriate for the types of material used in your home.

Please take time to review this material thoroughly. It will be a useful record of information about your home.

If you have questions, need clarification or additional details about any topic discussed, please contact us. Your continued satisfaction is important to us and we are always ready to serve you. **When you move in, your first contact for questions will be your Customer Service Representative.**

Thank you for selecting San Joaquin Valley Homes to build your new home, and welcome to our family.

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1. HOMEOWNER ORIENTATION

Your homeowner orientation is an introduction to your new home and its many features – a meeting that goes beyond the traditional walk-through to include a detailed explanation of your home and review of information regarding its maintenance. The orientation occurs in two meetings. The first is to review the quality of construction and to orient you to your new home. The second walk is to ensure most, if not all, of the items found on the first walk are resolved and to answer any questions you may have about the Warranty and this manual. The two walks are scheduled approximately 5 business days apart.

Scheduling

We will schedule the orientation with you as your home nears completion. Appointments are scheduled Monday through Friday, during normal business hours. We will meet at your new home. The first orientation occurs 5 days prior to closing. The second orientation usually happens on the same day you close and receive the keys to your new home. Expect your orientation to take approximately two to three hours.

Preparation

The following suggestions will help you get the greatest benefit from your Orientation:

Allow enough time. We expect the orientation to take two to three hours. By arranging your schedule so you can use the full amount of time allotted, you will derive maximum benefit from the orientation. If you have questions about home maintenance or the Fit & Finish Warranty coverage, make note of them to bring up at the orientation. If you have not already done so, please read *Caring for Your Home*, Chapter 3 of this manual, before the orientation. This was provided at the time you signed your contract.

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

Acceptance

In addition to introducing you to your new home, the orientation is also an opportunity for both you and San Joaquin Valley Homes to confirm that the home meets the quality standards shown in our model homes and that we have completed all selections and upgrades. We will note details that need attention on the orientation forms.

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

- Sinks, tubs, and plumbing fixtures
- Countertops and cabinet doors
- Light fixtures, mirrors, and glass
- Windows and screens
- Tile, carpet, hardwood, and resilient flooring

- Doors, trim, and hardware
- Paint and drywall

- Finish on appliances

Completion of Items

San Joaquin Valley Homes takes responsibility for resolving any warranted items noted. We will complete most, if not all, of the items before your move-in. If work needs to be performed in your new home after your move-in, construction personnel will schedule appointments Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Under normal circumstances, you can expect us to resolve all items within a few weeks. We will inform you of any delays caused by back-ordered materials. Please note that we will correct only those items listed. No verbal commitments of any kind will be honored.

Future Service

San Joaquin Homes responds to warranty items according to the terms and conditions of its Fit & Finish Warranty Program. For more details, please review Chapter 2, Customer Service.

Note to Home Buyer:

At your Homeowner Orientation, you will receive:

- A list of emergency phone numbers for critical trade contractors, such as heating and plumbing, who might be needed after hours or on weekends. These are for emergencies only.
- The manufacturer's literature for the furnace, water heater, appliances, air conditioner, and other consumer products.
- Copies of completed Orientation Forms.
- At your close of escrow, a 2-Hour Paint Certificate will be issued to you. It is valid up to 60 days from your close of escrow date. It is to be redeemed directly through the painter shown in your subcontractor list.

2. CUSTOMER SERVICE

San Joaquin Valley Homes is committed to building high quality homes. However, we know that sometimes products in the home may not perform as intended. To help insure your satisfaction and to affirm our professional commitment to you, San Joaquin Valley Homes provides you with a One (1) Year Fit & Finish Customer Service Program.

The process for submitting customer service requests under the Fit & Finish Customer Service Program is described under the section titled Customer Service Requests.

Fit & Finish Warranty

San Joaquin Valley Homes will provide you with a Fit & Finish Warranty, which warrants the fit and finish of certain components of your home for a period of one year after the close of escrow, subject to certain exclusions defined herein. These components include cabinets, mirrors, flooring, interior and exterior walls, countertops, paint finishes and trim.

Under the Fit & Finish Warranty, the workmanship on all covered components shall conform to generally accepted industry guidelines and specifications. If you have any questions regarding the standards or procedures, contact our office.

Exclusions:

Buyer recognizes that the Fit and Finish Warranty does NOT cover the following:

1. Damage to the home due to ordinary wear and tear or lack of Buyer maintenance. Occasionally, Seller may perform a maintenance task for the benefit of Buyer at no charge; however, performing a task on one or more occasions does not imply or require that Seller will perform a similar task at a later date, nor shall such performance be deemed to extend the Warranty time periods described herein.
2. Damage to the home caused by casualties normally covered by standard homeowner's insurance or damage resulting from natural catastrophes, i.e., fire, smoke, explosion, water escape, flood, wind, hail, lightning, earthquake, insects, pests, rodents, falling trees, etc.
3. Damage caused either by the abuse of the home or the use of the home in such a manner for which it is not intended.
4. Damage resulting from or made worse by the Buyer's failure to take appropriate action to prevent further damage, including notifying San Joaquin Valley Homes of any defect within a reasonable time.
5. Damage to the home caused by the Buyer, or any agent of Buyer (including accidental damage and damage during move-in) or damage by animals or pets or by any invitee, lessee, tenant or renter of the home.
6. Damage resulting from any changes, after the close of escrow, to the grading or drainage of the property on which the home is located.
7. Defects in or defects caused by materials furnished or work done at request of Buyer by anyone other than Seller or its employees, agents or subcontractors expressly selected by Seller.

Inclusions:

The following services are provided under the Customer Service Program:

Brick and Exterior Masonry

Cracks: San Joaquin Valley Homes will repair masonry cracks that exceed 3/16th of an inch one time during the Customer Service period. We cannot guarantee exact color and texture matches in mortar and concrete due to the variations in materials, sun exposure and other factors.

Cabinets

Separations: San Joaquin Valley Homes will correct gaps between cabinets and the ceiling or cabinets and the walls by caulking or other means during the Customer Service period if the gap exceeds 1/8th of an inch.

Caulking

One-Time Repair: At the homeowner's request, San Joaquin Valley Homes Customer Service will touch up caulking one time near the end of the Customer Service period.

Ceramic Tile

One-Time Repair: Cracks appearing in grouting of ceramic tiles at joints or junctions with other materials are commonly due to shrinkage. San Joaquin Valley Homes will repair grouting, if necessary, one time during the Customer Service period. We are not responsible for color variations in grout or discontinued colored grout. Any grouting or caulking that is needed after that time is your responsibility.

Countertops

Separation from Wall: Separation of countertops from walls, backsplash, and around sinks results from normal shrinkage of materials. San Joaquin Valley Homes will recaulk these areas **one time** during the Customer Service period. Subsequent caulking will be your home maintenance responsibility.

Doors

Adjustments: Due to normal settling of the home, doors may require adjustment for proper fit. San Joaquin Valley Homes will make such adjustments during the Customer Service period.

Driveways and Walkways

Cracks: If concrete cracks reach 1/8th of an inch in width or vertical displacement, San Joaquin Valley Homes will patch or repair driveways **one time** during the Customer Service period. Subsequent concrete slab maintenance is your responsibility.

Separation: San Joaquin Valley Homes will correct separation of concrete slabs from the home if separation exceeds one inch during the Customer Service period.

Settling or Heaving: San Joaquin Valley Homes will repair flatwork (sidewalks and patios) that settle or heave in excess of 1/2 of an inch or if such movement results in negative drainage (toward the house) or trip hazard during the Customer Service period.

Standing Water: Water may stand on exterior concrete slabs for several hours after precipitation or from roof run-off. San Joaquin Valley Homes will correct conditions that cause water 1/8th inch deep to remain longer than 24 hours during the Customer Service period.

Drywall

One-Time Repair: One time during the Customer Service period, San Joaquin Valley Homes will repair drywall shrinkage cracks and nail pops and touch up the repaired area using the same paint color that was on the surface when the home was delivered. **Touch-ups may be visible.**

Expansion and Contraction

One-Time Repair: San Joaquin Valley Homes provides one-time repairs to many of the results of expansion and contraction. See individual categories for details.

Foundation and Slab

Cracks: The foundation of your home has been designed and installed according to the recommendations of an engineer. Cracks: Shrinkage or backfill cracks are not unusual in foundations. San Joaquin Valley Homes will seal cracks that exceed 1/8th of an inch in width during the Customer Service period.

Garage Doors

Adjustments: In accordance with the Customer Service Program, San Joaquin Valley Homes will provide required adjustments to ensure door operates smoothly and with reasonable ease. It should be noted that this service will not be provided if problems occur, when garage door openers have been installed independently after close of escrow.

Drainage and Grading

Backfill Settlement: Backfilled or excavated areas around the foundation and at utility trenches should not interfere with the drainage away from your home. If these areas settle during the Customer Service period, San Joaquin Valley Homes will fill the areas one time.

Under Concrete: San Joaquin Valley Homes will fill visible sunken areas under concrete during the Customer Service period.

Gutters

Leaks: San Joaquin Valley Homes will correct leaks that occur during the Customer Service period.

Hardwood Floors

Separations: Shrinkage will result in separations between the members of hardwood floors. If these exceed 1/8th of an inch, San Joaquin Valley Homes will fill them **one time** during the Customer Service period.

Heating

Ductwork: Although the heat system may not be a sealed system, the ductwork should remain attached and securely fastened. If it becomes unattached, San Joaquin Valley Homes will repair as needed during the Customer Service period.

Furnace Sounds: Expansion or contraction of metal ductwork results in ticking or popping sounds. While eliminating all these sounds is impossible, San Joaquin Valley

Homes will correct “oil canning” during the Customer Service period. (“Oil canning” occurs when a large area of sheet metal like those found in air ducts makes a loud noise as it moves up and down in response to temperature changes.)

Plumbing

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

Siding and Wood Trim

One-Time Repair: San Joaquin Valley Homes will caulk and apply paint to cracks that exceed 3/16th of an inch one time only near the end of the Customer Service period. ***Paint or stain touch-up may not match.***

Water Infiltration: We will correct any separation at joints or where siding meets another material if the separation allows water to enter the home during the Customer Service period.

Stucco

One-Time Repair: One time during the Customer Service period, San Joaquin Valley Homes will repair stucco cracks over 1/16th of an inch using proper repair techniques. We cannot guarantee that the repair will not show or that the crack will not reappear.

Customer Service Requests

Requests for service under the Fit & Finish Customer Service Program should be directed to San Joaquin Valley Homes' customer service representatives utilizing the procedures outlined below.

Our customer service system is designed to accept electronic reports 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 reports accepted by phone.

Emergency Service

In the event of an emergency (as defined below), you should immediately contact us by telephone to report the problem. "Emergency" situations include:

- Total loss of heat /AC when the outside temperature is below 45/above 95 degrees F.
- Total loss of electricity. (Check with your utility company before reporting this circumstance to San Joaquin Valley Homes or an electrician.)
- Total stoppage of sewer and/or plumbing system. This means none of your sinks, tubs or toilets will function properly. ***If one fixture is working, it is not an emergency.***
- Total loss of water. (Check with the water department to be certain the problem is not a general outage in the area.)
- Plumbing leak that requires the entire water supply to be shut off.
- Gas leak. (Contact your utility company **immediately** upon detection of a gas leak)
-

For emergency service during business hours, call the San Joaquin Valley Homes office:

- (559) 409-2389 or (559) 667-9400

For emergency service during non-business hours:

- (559) 667-9400

Non-Emergency Customer Service

In order to better serve you, we require that all non-emergency service requests be in writing. To initiate non-emergency customer service, you simply fill out a Customer Service Request Form by visiting our website at www.sjvhomes/warranty. The completed Customer Service Request Form is automatically transmitted to our Customer Service Department. You may also complete a Service Request Form and mail, email, or fax it to our Customer Service office as noted below:

San Joaquin Valley Homes, Customer Service
5607 Avenida De Los Robles
Visalia, CA 93291
Phone: (559) 409-2389
Fax: (559) 732-2999
Email: warranty@sjvhomes.com

Service Processing Procedures

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

- Name, address or lot number, phone numbers, and email where you can be reached during normal business hours.
- A complete description of the problem, for example, "guest bath—cold water line leaks under sink," rather than "plumbing problem."

When we receive a customer service request, we will contact you to schedule an inspection appointment. Inspection appointments are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. We review the items listed in your written request to confirm coverage under the Fit & Finish Customer Service Program. The selection of method and materials required in the repair of any issue, and/or the decision to replace will be made solely by San Joaquin Valley Homes. Generally, reported items fall into one of three categories:

- Trade Contractor Item
- San Joaquin Valley Homes Customer Service Item
- Home Maintenance Item

If a trade contractor or San Joaquin Valley Homes' employee is required to complete repairs, we issue a customer service work order and the repair technician contacts you to schedule the work. Work appointments are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. We intend to complete customer service work orders within 30 workdays 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. If the item is home maintenance, we will review the maintenance steps with you and offer whatever informational assistance we can. San Joaquin Valley Homes does not provide routine home maintenance.

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

Hours of Operation

Office: Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Inspection appointments: Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Work appointments: Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Questions? Call the office during normal business hours: 559-409-2389 or 559-667-9400

3. CARING FOR YOUR HOME

San Joaquin Valley Homes has constructed your home with quality materials and the labor of experienced craftsmen. Before using any material, it must meet our specifications for quality and durability. All work is done under our supervision to attain the best possible results for your investment. A home is one of the last hand-built products left in the world. Once we have assembled the natural and manufactured materials, the components interact with each other and the environment. Although quality materials and workmanship have been used in your home, it will require your care and maintenance to keep it at its best. A home, like an automobile, requires care and attention from the day you move in. General homeowner maintenance is essential to providing a quality home for a lifetime.

It is important to familiarize yourself with the Owner's Manuals that came with the products installed in your home. In the event of a conflict between the guidelines in this manual and those provided by the manufacturer of any component in your home, the manufacturer's guidelines prevail.

Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

Many times a minor adjustment or repair done immediately saves a more serious, time-consuming, and sometimes costly repair later. By caring for your new home attentively, you will enjoy it for years. The attention provided by each homeowner contributes significantly to the overall desirability of the community.

We recognize that it is impossible to anticipate and describe everything needed for good home care, but we have covered many important details. The subjects covered include components of homes we build, listed in alphabetical order. Suggestions for proper use and maintenance are listed under each component. Note that this manual may discuss some components that are not present in your home.

Please read the literature provided by the manufacturers of consumer products and other items in your home. The information in that literature 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 our information current and accurate. However, if any detail in our discussion conflicts with the manufacturer's recommendations, you should follow the manufacturer's recommendations. **Activate specific manufacturer's warranties by completing and mailing any registration cards included with their literature.** In some cases, manufacturer's warranties may extend beyond the first year and it is in your best interest to be aware of such coverage.

The Maintenance of Your New Home

Your new home will require regular preventative maintenance by you to preserve its beauty and value. Understanding how to care for each feature in your new home will prevent costly repairs and replacements later.

California experiences a wide range of temperatures each day. These temperature variations combined with expansive soils that are common in the area affect our building practices and your home. Natural building materials such as wood and concrete expand and contract from day to day because of the ranges in temperature. This can result in minor warping of wood materials and hairline cracking of drywall, stucco, concrete and mortar. These effects are particularly obvious within the first year after a new home is built.

You can minimize these effects by maintaining a constant temperature in your home, allowing the wood to dry at an even rate. This may eliminate larger settlement cracks. Minor cracks and displacement of wood are normal to the aging process of your home and do not affect its structural integrity.

In the following pages we have provided an overview of the features and material in your new home. Please study each section carefully so that you become familiar with the routine maintenance that your home requires.

The preferred method of maintaining a certain item in your home may change over time as either new products are available, Building Code changes, or practices simply change. We recommend that you stay current and informed about the preferred methods of home maintenance. As a homeowner, you are also obligated to follow all commonly accepted maintenance practices for your home.

Before you perform maintenance such as painting and replacing exterior items, please consult your **Homeowners Association or your CC&R's** to be sure that the work you plan meets the guidelines that have been established for your neighborhood. Be especially careful when you repaint with a different color, erect new structures or fences, add to or change your landscaping or install window coverings that are visible from outside the home. Please refer to your CC&R documents for further information. If applicable, you may need prior approval from your Homeowners' Association and/or Architectural Control Committee.

AIR CONDITIONING and HEATING

➤ **Air Conditioning**

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

Your air conditioning system is a closed, whole-house system. The air conditioner unit is the mechanism that produces cooler air as it continually recycles and cools until the desired air temperature is reached. The air conditioning system involves everything inside your home including, for example, drapes, blinds, and windows.

Warm outside air disrupts the system. Therefore, you should keep windows closed while operating the system. 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. The air conditioning unit only begins a process when you set the thermostat. If you come home at 6 p.m. when the temperature has reached 90°F, set your thermostat to 75°F, the air conditioning unit will begin cooling. During the day, the sun has been heating not only the air in the house, but the walls, carpet, and furniture. At 6 p.m. the air conditioning unit starts cooling the air, but the walls, carpet, and furniture release heat and nullify this cooling. 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°F will not cool the home any faster and can result in the unit freezing up and not performing at all. Extended use under these conditions can damage the unit.

- **Adjust Vents:** Maximize airflow to occupied parts of your home by adjusting the vents. Likewise, when the seasons change, readjust them for comfortable heating.
- **Compressor Level:** Maintain the air conditioning compressor in a level position to prevent inefficient operation and damage to the equipment. Keep the area around the condenser neat and clean.
- **Manufacturer's Instructions:** Since the air conditioning system is combined with the heating system, follow the maintenance instructions for your furnace. The manufacturer's manual specifies maintenance for the condenser. Review and follow these instructions carefully.
- **Temperature Variations:** Temperatures may vary from room to room by several degrees. 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.
- **Thermostat:** Use effectively to maximize your comfort and minimize your utility costs.

➤ Heating System

Good maintenance of the 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.
- **Return Air:** Furnaces we install include return air vents. These are the large return air grates that circulate air from the home back into the furnace.

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.

- **Ductwork Noise:** Some popping or pinging sounds are the natural result of ductwork heating and cooling in response to air flow as the system operates.
- **Filter:** Remember to change or clean the filter monthly. A clogged filter can slow air flow and cause cold spots in your home. Although it takes less than one minute to change the filter,

this is one of the most frequently overlooked details of normal furnace care. Buy filters in large quantity for the sake of convenience. If you have a permanent, washable, removable filter, you need to clean this monthly. Use water only to clean the filter, tap to dry or air dry, and leave unit off for a brief period. Do not use soaps or detergents on the filter.

- ***Furnished Home:*** The heating system was designed with a furnished home in mind. If you move in during the cooler part of the year and have not yet acquired all of your draperies and furnishings, the home may seem cooler than you would expect.
- ***Gas Odor:*** If you smell gas, call the gas company immediately.
- ***Odor:*** A new heating system may emit an oily 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.
- ***Pilot:*** Review the manufacturer's specifications and instructions on the operation and lighting of the pilot or call the utility company for assistance.
- ***Registers:*** Heat register covers are removable and adjustable. You are responsible for adjusting the dampers in these covers to regulate the heat flow within the home. Registers in the rooms farther away from the furnace will usually need to be opened wider.
- ***Return Air Vents:*** For maximum comfort and efficient energy use, arrange furniture and draperies to allow unobstructed air flow from registers and to cold air returns.
- ***Temperature:*** Depending on the style of home, temperatures can normally vary from floor to floor as much as 10 degrees or more on extremely cold days. The furnace blower will typically cycle on and off more frequently and for shorter periods during severe cold spells.
- ***Thermostat:*** The furnace will come on automatically when the temperature at the thermostat registers below the setting you have selected. Once the furnace is on, setting the thermostat to a higher temperature will not heat the home faster. Thermostats are calibrated to within plus or minus 5 degrees.
- ***Trial Run:*** Have a trial run early in the fall to test the furnace. (The same applies to air conditioning in the spring.) If service is needed, it is much better to discover that before the heating season.

ALARM SYSTEM

If your home selections include an alarm system, you will arrange for the final connection after your move-in. The alarm company will demonstrate the system and instruct you in its use. We recommend that you test the system each month.

APPLIANCES

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

➤ Manufacturer's Service

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

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

appliance.

- Description of the problem.

Registration: Mail warranty registration cards directly to the manufacturer.

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

Closing Date: _____

Upon closing, please complete the boxes below for ease of reference should an issue arise.

➤ **Appliance Serial Numbers**

Appliance	Manufacturer	Model #	Serial #	Service Phone#
Range	Whirlpool			800-253-1301
Cooktop	Whirlpool			800-253-1301
Oven	Whirlpool			800-253-1301
Microwave	Whirlpool			800-253-1301
Dishwasher	Whirlpool			800-253-1301
Disposal	Whirlpool			800-253-1301
Range Hood	Whirlpool			800-253-1301
Refrigerator	Whirlpool			800-253-1301
Washer				
Dryer				

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 supports onto the drywall. This can result in personal injury and/or damage to the ceiling below.

BRICK and EXTERIOR MASONRY

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.

During the orientation we check the mason work to confirm correct installation of designated materials.

CABINETS

Your cabinets are made of finished hardwood and composite materials. With proper care, the beauty and utility of your cabinets will last for many years. You should follow the cabinet manufacturer's recommendations when cleaning the cabinet surfaces. Remove splashes and splatters promptly to avoid permanent stains. Polishing with an appropriate furniture polish (according to the cabinet manufacturer's recommendations) twice a year can preserve the beauty of the wood.

Most manufacturer's recommend that cleaning or "wiping down" of the cabinets during the First Thirty Days to be done with a clean, dry cloth only. Most finishes take 30 days for the finish to cure 100%.

The wood in your cabinets is a natural product. It is subject to drying and, in extreme cases, can warp slightly. This could cause drawers to stick and prevent doors from closing properly. If you notice sticking drawers and cabinet doors that do not close properly during the Fit and Finish Customer Service period, please notify the San Joaquin Valley Homes Customer Service Department in writing.

Minor scratches can be covered with a putty stick that matches the finish of your cabinets. Putty sticks can be purchased at paint or hardware stores.

The hinges on your cabinet doors can be lubricated, if necessary, with oil-free silicone-based lubricant. Apply a very small drop of oil to the top of the hinges and work the door back forth several times so the oil will penetrate into the hinge. Wipe the excess oil with a dry paper towel.

CAULKING

Caulking is the material applied in your showers, tubs, doors, and other areas to protect against moisture damage to other parts of your home. Over time, and particularly during warm, dry weather, caulking will dry and shrink. When this happens, it no longer provides a good seal against moisture. As a part of your routine maintenance, each month you should inspect the caulking around your sinks, tubs, exterior doors, door thresholds, and general exterior caulking, and make repairs as needed. Caulking should be reapplied at least annually. Caulking compounds are available at hardware stores and home centers.

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. **Caulking maintenance is critical to prevent water damages to your home.** Therefore, we have provided the following information:

➤ **Re-caulking Method**

In a shower or tub enclosure, caulk is used to keep water from creeping up under or around the tiles at joints...between the tile and the tub or shower pan, or on joints where walls meet. Caulk has the properties

of being flexible and glue-like, which are the necessary characteristics to seal a joint between dissimilar materials or a joint that has movement. Here are some step-by-step directions for replacing caulk when necessary:

- **Pre-clean the work area:** This is a vital step to a successful job. Use a good combination surface bathroom cleaner/soap scum remover before removing the caulk to avoid getting too much moisture around the tiles.
- **Remove the old caulk:** Try to determine the type of old caulk...it will help you to plan the removal. Get a sharp knife and try to cut it. If it is rubbery and somewhat soft, it is most likely pure silicone caulk. If it seems to be very hard, then it is probably one of the latex caulks. If you have a **silicone caulk**, remove it with a sharp, single-edged razor in a razor blade holder. Angle the razor low very carefully so that you don't scratch the tub or shower pan, especially if it is plastic or fiberglass. A utility knife can be useful to get in between the tiles and tub in deeper corners and pockets where the razor can't quite get to the caulk. Sometimes, with a porcelain tub, little black lines will appear as you work, even though you know you didn't scratch the tub—these can be removed with alcohol. If they don't come out with alcohol, use a minimum of water and a little scouring powder or *SoftScrub*® to remove them.

If you are struggling with a latex caulk, a heat gun can be a useful tool. The heated air will soften the caulk to make removal easier. Set the gun at a low temperature (under 300° or your gun's lowest setting), to protect the surfaces and your hands. Keep the heat gun moving to prevent overheating in any area...work your way around the enclosure, softening the caulk first and then removing with the utility knife or single-edged razor tool. This strategy is unnecessary with silicone caulk, as it is softer & easier to remove.

- **Thorough Cleaning:** Once the caulk is removed, the area needs to be thoroughly cleaned. Wipe the joint down with denatured alcohol and allow it to dry for a few minutes. The alcohol will remove the remaining soap scum and grease. Use a vacuum to remove bits and pieces of caulk that may be under the edge of the tile. Unfortunately, the alcohol will not kill mildew. If the area was heavily mildewed, you may want to spray it with a concentrated mildew killer after the alcohol wipe. Let it sit for a few minutes; wipe off the residue with a sponge, rinsing frequently in hot clear water (no soap). Wait for it to dry completely. For best results, let it dry overnight.

If you are replacing the caulk for cosmetic reasons, you may be able to recaulk immediately, as long as you are using latex caulk, and in your judgment there was no leaking into the wall. Latex will still adhere if the surface is slightly moist. If you are using silicone caulk, then there is no debate...the enclosure must be dry or the caulk will fail!

If you have a recurring mildew problem...reappearance in a few months or less...let the enclosure dry more thoroughly the next time you caulk, as long as a week in some cases. Also, see section on Mildew.

- **Choosing the new caulk:**
 - If you are working with a completely ceramic tile enclosure, you can use either silicone or latex caulks. If you have a fiberglass tub, ceramic tile walls or a completely fiberglass sectional enclosure, you may be better off using a 100% silicone product. Because it is relatively soft, pure silicone caulk is the choice of manufacturers of fiberglass enclosures. It is easy to work with and has good smoothing qualities. However, the silicone leaves residue on your hands that is difficult to remove.
- **Applying the new caulk:**

- The small plastic tubes are usually adequate to do an entire enclosure's vertical and horizontal seams, along the shower doors, and along the outside floor and walls, if necessary! The tube is more easily controlled than a dispenser gun.
- Don't cut too large an opening in the tube -- the larger the opening; the more likely you are to over caulk the joint. The trick to neat caulking is to apply it sparingly. You can always add more caulk in any spots that need a touch more.

➤ **Other Hints:**

- For *latex caulk*, have a small bucket with a damp sponge nearby. Use the sponge to wipe off your fingers as they accumulate caulk and to keep your fingers moistened so they slide on the caulk without sticking to it.
- For *pure silicone caulk*, have a roll of paper towels handy as well as a damp sponge. The towels are to wipe off any caulk that may get on your hands (**remember, silicone is not water-washable**), and the sponge is to keep your fingers moistened for smoothing without sticking as with the latex caulk.
- Do both *vertical seams* in an enclosure **first, then the back wall, then both sides**. The *outside* of the enclosure is done **last**. On a *sectional fiberglass enclosure, the pattern is the same*.
- **Apply a bead, no more than ¼ inch wide** right into one of the joints. Remember...not too thick...you are going to have to get the feel of this. Using a finger, moisten it on the sponge, and glide it along the joint, pressing the caulk evenly into the joint. If you have applied the right amount of caulk, the gap between the end of your finger and the joint will smooth the caulk to a neat even appearance. **If you over applied the caulk**, this is where it will get messy! You will have to try to remove the overage with your finger and the sponge. You may want to completely wipe the caulk out of the joint and try again, rather than fudge the job! **Latex will clean up easier than silicone, but don't over-apply either type so your clean up will go smoothly.**
- As you finish a section, if there are any spots that have too little caulk, add a little and smooth it with a finger. *Work quickly—you only have a few minutes before the caulk will "skin" over.*
- **Plan to do the whole job at once:** If you stop mid-job, the start-stop seam may not adhere...leaving an entry point for water and mildew. **Let the caulk dry at least overnight.**
- **All caulking:** Always read instructions and guidelines provided by the manufacturer.
- **Colored Caulk:** Colored caulking is available where larger selections are provided. As with any colored material, dye lots can vary.
- **Latex Caulk:** *Latex* caulking is **appropriate for an area that requires painting**, such as along the stair stringer or where wood trim meets the wall.
- **Silicone Caulk:** Caulking that contains **silicone will not accept paint**; it works best where water is present, for example, where tub meets tile or a sink meets a countertop.

During the homeowner's orientation, we confirm that appropriate areas are adequately caulked.

CEILINGS

The ceilings in your home are easy to maintain. They do not require special attention other than an occasional cleaning and periodic painting. Remove dust or cobwebs as part of your routine cleaning. When needed and as part of your regular maintenance, you may want to repaint your ceiling.

CONCRETE

Concrete is major structural material in your new home. It provides strength and durability for the foundation, driveway and walkways. While concrete requires minimal care, it should be kept free of accumulated dirt and debris. Oil and grease stains, as well as standing water, should be removed promptly. Concrete cleaners are available at home centers and hardware stores.

With variations of temperature and humidity, minor cracks and surface color variations in concrete are normal and unavoidable. Small cracks, which are the result of contraction and expansion of the concrete, do not affect the material's strength or durability.

The driveways and walkways in your new home are designed for residential use. Do not permit large trucks and delivery vans to use your driveway.

Remove plant growth from the expansion joints and cracks as soon as they appear. If left to grow, the roots of small plants expand and could crack or otherwise damage your concrete. If this happens, obtain patching cement from a hardware store or home center and follow the directions on the package for proper repair. Patches in concrete will vary in color from the original material. This is normal and cannot be avoided.

➤ **Driveways and Walkways**

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

- **Cleaning:** Avoid washing exterior concrete slabs with cold water from an outside faucet when temperatures are high and the sun has been shining on the concrete. The abrupt change in temperature can damage the surface bond of the concrete. We recommend sweeping for keeping exterior concrete clean. If washing is necessary, do this when temperatures are moderate. Repeated cleaning of the garage floor by hosing floor can increase soil movement and allow water to penetrate any existing cracks. We recommend sweeping to keep the garage floor clean.
 - **Cracks:** Since drying shrinkage is an inherent characteristic of Portland Cement concrete, it is normal to experience some curling and cracking on every project. Concrete shrinks approximately 5/8 inch per 100 feet 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. Due to the nature of concrete, cracking cannot be prevented. As cracks occur, seal them with a waterproof concrete caulk (available at hardware or home improvement stores) to prevent moisture from penetrating to the soil beneath.
 - **Expansion Joints:** We install expansion joints to help control expansion. However, as the concrete shrinks during the curing process, moisture can penetrate under the concrete and lift the expansion joint. When this occurs, fill the resulting gap with a gray silicone sealant, which you can purchase at most hardware stores.
 - **Heavy Vehicles:** Do not permit heavy vehicles such as moving vans or concrete trucks to drive on your concrete work. We design and install this concrete for residential use only.
 - **Chemicals:** Protect concrete from abuse by chemical agents such as pet urine, fertilizers, radiator overflow, repeated hosing. All of these items can cause spalling (chipping of the surface) of concrete.
 - **Sealer:** A concrete sealer, available at paint stores, will help you keep an unpainted concrete floor clean.
- **Exterior Concrete Care**

Since most of the damage that occurs to exterior concrete is caused by factors beyond the control of a builder, many aspects of exterior concrete are excluded from the One-Year Plan on your home.

The following concrete care guidelines will instruct you on the care of your concrete to enhance its useful life:

1. Newly poured concrete should be allowed to cure and harden before being put into use for vehicular traffic. This curing period varies with climate conditions.
2. Seal the surface of your concrete each autumn. Concrete sealers can be purchased from a building supply store. Be careful not to track sealers into your home while they are still wet.
3. Keep the surface of your concrete clean of water build-up. Maintain proper drainage and keep moisture from saturating the concrete during periods of freezing conditions. Dry concrete will not suffer winter damage due to freezer-thaw cycles
4. Keep run-off water away from concrete surfaces. Run-off water from sprinkler systems, rain, or other sources will undermine driveways, walkways, patios and other concrete surfaces causing settling, sinking and cracking problems.

CONDENSATION

See also Ventilation.

Condensation on interior surfaces of the windows and frames comes from high humidity within the home combined with low outside temperatures and inadequate ventilation. Family lifestyle significantly influences these conditions. If your home includes a humidifier, closely observe manufacturer's directions for its use, especially during periods of cooler temperatures.

COUNTERTOPS

The countertops in your kitchen or bathroom may be constructed of glazed ceramic tile, plastic laminate, cultured marble, acrylic, granite or other products. They are designed to provide years of use. Any flaws or damage to your countertops must be documented during the new home orientation in order to be addressed by San Joaquin Valley Homes. After you move in, the care of your countertops is your responsibility.

Countertops are connected to the cabinets and caulked to the wall of the home. As the homes expands and contracts with differing weather conditions, the walls of the home move. This movement may cause a crack to develop between the countertop and the wall. Adding additional caulking to this crack easily repairs this issue. DO NOT adjust the countertop closer to the wall. Adjusting the countertop placement may result in the countertop breaking when the wall contracts as weather conditions change.

We suggest that you follow these instructions to assure that your countertops remain beautiful and functional for years.

- Always use a cutting board to protect your countertops when you prepare food. While the minor scratches that result from cutting food may not be noticeable at first, in time they will dull and mar the finish.
- Wipe up spills immediately. Some liquids, particularly hot ones, can cause almost imperceptible stains on ceramic tile grout, plastic laminate and cultured marble. In time, the stains can accumulate and become unsightly.
- Be careful to avoid dropping pots and pans and other kitchen items on your countertops. This can break or chip the counter's surface.

Here are more suggestions for caring for your ceramic tile, cultured marble, plastic laminate, granite and Corian™ and similar countertops.

➤ **Ceramic Tile**

Ceramic tiles are purchased in lots that have the same texture and color. Because an exact replacement match of ceramic tile can be impossible, we urge you to take special care to avoid breaking or damaging the ceramic tile on your countertops. The best way to avoid broken tiles is to use a cutting board and other protection for your ceramic tiles when you are at work in your kitchen.

Ceramic tile is relatively brittle and can be broken by a sharp blow from a heavy object. Wipe spills away promptly to avoid staining the grout. Soapy warm water, a detergent, or a commercial tile cleaner can be used to keep your tile shiny and bright.

Because the grout between the tiles is porous, you may want to consider sealing the grout once a year. This will somewhat inhibit stubborn stains from penetrating the grout and becoming unsightly. Scrubbing of the grout with warm, soapy water will keep it clean and fresh. Strong cleaners such as Lysol can stain the grout. Sealers and cleaners can be found at your local hardware store.

➤ **Cultured Marble**

Proper maintenance of cultured marble is similar to the maintenance need of fine wood. Remove spills immediately to avoid stains. Do not use abrasive cleansers on your cultured marble countertops. Most foods and drinks are acidic and can etch the finish on the marble. Do not place any items that may scratch the surface directly on the countertop.

Routine care of cultured marble countertops requires warm water and a soft cloth or sponge. If the surface of your cultured marble countertops becomes dull, you might consider having the marble polished by a professional who specializes in marble polishing.

Cultured marble products provide homes with an easy care quality product that will last for years. Please use the following Care and Cleaning guidelines:

- Avoid gritty abrasive cleaners, such as dry powders
- Wipe or rinse with a soft cloth
- Clean often for best results and minimum effort
- Use a hot pad under curling irons
- Avoid using objects and toys with sharp edges which may scratch surfaces
- Scratches can be buffed out using a proper buffing compound

Shower and tub panels are caulked at the joints of the bottom and side panels. This caulking keeps water from penetrating the cultured marble and reaching the glues and drywall behind the marble. Periodic maintenance of this caulk is required to maintain the quality of the drywall and the cultured marble installation.

- These care and cleaning guidelines are provided by the manufacturer and should be used at the buyer's own risk

➤ **Granite**

- Granite creates a beautiful countertop. The proper care and maintenance of natural Granite is important to the look and lifespan of the product. Damage to Granite can be caused by the use of harsh chemicals, especially those that contain acids or strong alkaline cleaning agents of any type. NEVER use vinegars, powdered cleansers or abrasive pads as a cleaning agent. Even "soft scrub" types of cleaners contain pumice which can damage your stone.

- Granite should only be cleaned with warm soap and water (anti-bacterial cleaner is okay) unless you purchase a special formulated cleaner specifically made for “natural stone”.
- ***A penetrating sealer is strongly recommended!!*** Frequency of application is determined by individual product purchased.
- The quicker you blot up spills the easier it is to remove or prevent stains. Before applying any treatment, do a spot test first to make sure that the stone’s color and finish won’t be affected. Before applying the treatment examine the stain closely. If the mark is still there but is lighter or reduced, you know the treatment is working. Keep applying until the spot is gone.

➤ **Laminate**

Laminate countertops are very common in many areas. These tops will provide years of enjoyment when properly cared for. Laminate tops are especially susceptible to hot pots and pans. Always provide a hot pad or some form of insulator between pans and the laminate top.

Laminate tops will scar if cut with a knife or scraped in the process of cleaning. Clean laminate tops with a solution of liquid soap and hot water.

Laminate tops may, as your walls expand and contract due to varying weather conditions, show a crack between the countertop and the wall. This is easily repaired by caulking this crack with flexible caulk. DO NOT unscrew the countertop and push it toward the wall. If the wall returns to its previous position, it will crack your countertop.

All laminate tops have joints or seams. These joints or seams are susceptible to water intrusion which can cause expansion of the wood underneath. It is the homeowner’s responsibility to keep these joints or seams clean and dry. It may be necessary to replace the seam sealer or countertop caulk to keep water from causing damage to the seam.

➤ **Solid Surface Countertops**

The solid surface countertop (i.e., Corian™ and other brands) provides a high quality, luxurious surface that will provide many years of service with minimal care. Solid surface gets its name from its characteristics. It is a solid, acrylic-based product free of voids or porosity and because it is solid, it can be manufactured to include a variety of edge treatments, inlays and special shapes. Incidental damage may be repaired easily to maintain a new appearance indefinitely. Although naturally tough, the product can be damaged by abuse or misuse. Please review the manufacturer’s care and cleaning instructions so that you can prevent damage that may require professional repair.

DOORS, HARDWARE, and LOCKS

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

- ***Bi-fold Doors:*** Interior bi-fold doors sometimes stick or warp due to weather conditions. Apply a silicone lubricant to the tracks to minimize this inconvenience.
- ***Exterior Finish:*** Ensure longer life for your exterior wood doors by refinishing them at least once a year. Stained exterior doors with clear finishes tend to weather faster than painted doors. Treat 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.

- **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.
- **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.
- **Keys:** Keep a duplicate privacy lock key where children cannot reach it in the event a youngster locks themselves in a room. The top edge of the door casing is often used as a place to keep the key. A small screwdriver or similarly shaped device can open some types of privacy locks.
- **Locks:** Lubricate door locks with graphite or waterproof lubricant. Avoid oil, it will gum up.
- **Slamming:** Slamming doors can damage both doors and jambs and can cause cracking in walls. Teach children not to hang on the doorknob and swing back and forth; this works the hardware loose and causes the door to sag.
- **Shrinkage:** Use putty, filler, or latex caulk to fill any minor separations that develop at mitered joints in door trim. Follow with painting. Panels of wood doors shrink and expand in response to changes in temperature and humidity. Touching up the paint or stain on exposed areas is your home maintenance responsibility.
- **Sticking:** The most common cause of a sticking door is the natural expansion of lumber due to changes in humidity. When sticking is due to swelling during a damp season, do not plane the door unless it continues to stick after the weather changes.
- **Before planing a door because of sticking, try two other steps:** apply either a paste wax, light coat of paraffin, or candle wax to the sticking surface; or tighten the screws that hold the door jamb or door frame. If planing is necessary after these measures, use sandpaper to smooth the door and paint the sanded area to seal against moisture.
- **Warping:** If a door warps slightly, keeping it closed as much as possible often returns it to normal.
- **Weather Stripping:** Weather stripping and exterior door thresholds occasionally require adjustment or replacement.

During the orientation we confirm that all doors and hardware are in acceptable condition and correctly adjusted. San Joaquin Valley Homes will repair construction damage to doors noted on the Orientation List.

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.

In the first year or two after your home has been completed, normal shrinking and expansion will occur. This is due to the natural curing of wood components and settling of the foundation and major structural components. This is normal.

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

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

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

ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

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

- **Breakers:** Circuit breakers have three positions: on, off, and tripped. When a circuit breaker trips, it must first be turned off before it can be turned back on. Switching the breaker directly from tripped to on will not restore service.
- **Breaker Tripping:** Breakers trip due to overloads caused by plugging too many appliances into the circuit, a worn cord or defective 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 that sometimes causes a buzzing.
- **Fixture Location:** We install light fixtures in the locations indicated on the plans. Moving fixtures to accommodate specific furniture arrangements or room use is your responsibility.
- **GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters):** GFCI receptacles have a built-in element that senses fluctuations in power. Quite simply, the GFCI is a circuit breaker. Building codes require installation of these receptacles in bathrooms, the kitchen, outside, and the garage (areas where an individual can come into contact with water while holding an electric appliance or tool). Heavy appliances such as freezers or power tools will trip the GFCI breaker.

Do not plug a refrigerator or food freezer into a GFCI-controlled outlet. The likelihood of the contents being ruined is high. Be careful of this if you have a second appliance in the garage.

Each GFCI receptacle has a test and reset button. Once each month, press the test button. This will trip the circuit. To return service, press the reset button. If a 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 Homeowners Orientation.
- **Outlets:** If an outlet is not working, check first to see if it is controlled by a wall switch or GFCI that needs to be reset. Next, check the breaker.

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

- ***Underground Cables:*** Before digging, check the location of buried service leads by calling the local utility locating service. In most cases, wires run in a straight line from the service panel to the nearest public utility pad. Maintain positive drainage around the foundation to protect this service. Breaking or disrupting an underground utility can be a violation of the law, incurring fines and/or expense reimbursement as a result. Check your telephone directory or call your utility company for the number of Underground Service Alert (USA), a cooperative service for local utilities. Underground Service Alert (USA) can identify the location and type of underground utilities.

During the orientation we confirm that light fixtures are in acceptable condition and that all bulbs are working.

EXPANSION and CONTRACTIONS

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

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

FIREPLACE

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

One caution on the use of glass doors: do not close them over a roaring fire, 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.

- ***Gas Fireplace:*** San Joaquin Valley Homes offers direct-vent gas fireplaces. If you ordered this type of fireplace, it is demonstrated during the Homeowners Orientation. Read and follow all manufacturers' directions.

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

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

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

FLOORING

The flooring in your new home will last longer if you provide routine maintenance and care. Our

obligations under the Fit and Finish Customer Service Program extend only to flooring materials that were provided and installed by San Joaquin Valley Homes. If you choose flooring from another source, all warranty and service claims must be directed to that vendor.

Squeaky floors are usually caused by a change in the weather or settlement of your home. This is normal and may correct itself over time. We will attempt to eliminate any floor squeaks in your home, on a one-time basis, and only during the first year.

Please inspect your flooring carefully during your new home orientation. Subsequent damages including broken tiles, cracked grout, scratched or damaged wood flooring, torn carpeting and scuffed or torn vinyl are your responsibility after the orientation.

Accumulated dirt and grime are the most common causes of damaged flooring. We suggest the following routine maintenance for the flooring in your new home:

➤ Carpet

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

Cleaning: You can add years to the life of your carpet with regular care. Carpet wears out because of foot traffic and dirt particles that get trampled deep into the pile beyond the suction of the vacuum. The dirt particles wear down the fibers like sandpaper and dull the carpet. The most important thing you can do to protect your carpet is to vacuum it frequently. Vacuum twice each week lightly and once a week thoroughly. Heavy traffic areas may require more frequent cleaning. A light vacuuming is three passes; a thorough job may need seven passes. A vacuum cleaner with a beater-bar agitates the pile and is more effective in bringing dirt to the surface for easy removal. Vacuuming high-traffic areas daily helps keep them clean and maintains the upright position of the nap. Wipe spills and clean stains immediately. For best results, blot or dab any spill or stain; avoid rubbing. Test stain remover 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 once a year.

Some problem conditions that may occur with your new carpet and our suggested remedies are presented below.

- **Burns:** Take care of any kind of burn immediately. First snip off the darkened fibers. Then use a soapless cleaner and sponge with water. If the burn is extensive, talk with a professional about replacing the damaged area.
- **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.
- **Fuzzing:** In loop carpets, fibers may break. Simply clip the excess fibers. If it continues, call a professional.
- **Pilling:** Pilling or small balls of fiber can appear on your carpet, depending on the type of carpet fiber and the type of traffic. If this occurs, clip off the pills. If they cover a large area, seek professional advice.
- **Rippling:** With wall-to-wall carpeting, high humidity may cause rippling. If the carpet remains rippled after the humidity has left, have a professional restretch the carpeting using a power stretcher, not a knee-kicker.
- **Seams:** Carpet usually comes in 12-foot widths, making seams necessary in most rooms. Visible seams are not a defect unless they have been improperly made or unless the material has a defect, making the seam appear more pronounced than normal. The more dense and uniform the carpet texture, the more visible the seams will be. Carpet styles with low, tight naps result in the most visible seams. Seams are never more visible than when the carpet is first installed. Usually with time, use, and vacuuming the seams become less visible. You can see examples of how carpet seams diminish after they have been vacuumed and have experienced traffic in the model homes.
- **Shading:** Shading is an inherent quality of fine-cut pile carpets. Household traffic causes pile fibers to assume different angles. As a result, the carpet appears darker and lighter in these areas. Good vacuuming, which makes the pile all go in the same direction, provides a temporary remedy.
- **Shedding:** New carpeting, especially pile, sheds bits of fiber for a period of time. Eventually these loose fibers are removed by vacuuming. Shedding usually occurs more with wool carpeting than with nylon or other synthetics.
- **Snags:** Sharp-edged objects can grab or snag the carpet fiber. When this occurs, cut off the snag. If the snag is especially large, call a professional.
- **Sprouting:** Occasionally you may find small tufts of fiber sprouting above 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. You can also install a humidifier to help control static build-up.

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

➤ **Ceramic Tile**

Please refer to the section of Ceramic Tile found in Countertops

➤ **Hardwood Floors**

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

- **Cleaning:** Sweep on a daily basis or as needed. Never wet mop a hardwood floor. Excessive water causes wood to expand and can possibly damage the floor. When polyurethane finishes become soiled, damp-mop with a mixture of one cup vinegar to one gallon of warm water. When damp mopping, remove all excess water from the mop. Check with the hardwood company if your floor has a water-based finish.
- **Dimples:** Placing heavy furniture or dropping heavy or sharp objects on hardwood floors can result in dimples.
- **Filmy Appearance:** A white, filmy appearance can result from moisture, often from wet shoes or boots.
- **Furniture Legs:** Install proper floor protectors on furniture placed on hardwood floors. Protectors will allow chairs to move easily over the floor without scuffing. Regularly clean the protectors to remove any grit that may have accumulated.
- **Humidity:** Wood floors respond noticeably to changes in humidity in your home. Especially during winter months the individual planks or pieces expand and contract as water content changes. A humidifier helps but does not eliminate this reaction.
- **Mats and Area Rugs:** Use protective mats at the exterior doors to help prevent sand and grit from getting on the floor. Gritty sand is wood flooring's worst enemy. However, be aware that rubber backing on area rugs or mats can cause yellowing and warping of the floor surface.
- **Recoat:** If your floors have a polyurethane finish, you may want to have an extra coat of polyurethane applied by a qualified contractor within six months to one year. The exact timing will depend on your particular lifestyle. If another finish was used, refer to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- **Separation:** Expect some shrinkage around heat vents or any heat-producing appliances, or during seasonal weather changes. *See also Warping in this section.*
- **Shoes:** Keep high heels in good repair. Heels that have lost their protective cap (thus exposing the fastening nail) will exert over 8,000 pounds of pressure per square inch on the floor. This will mark your wood floor.
- **Spills:** Clean up food spills immediately with a dry cloth. Use a vinegar-and-warm-water solution for tough food spills.
- **Splinters:** When floors are new, small splinters of wood can appear.
- **Sun Exposure:** Exposure to direct sunlight can cause irreparable damage to hardwood floors. To preserve the beauty of your hardwood floors, install and use window coverings in these areas. ***Areas under rugs will age or fade differently from the rest of the floor.***
- **Traffic Paths:** A dulling of the finish in heavy traffic areas is likely.

- **Warping:** Warping will occur if the floor repeatedly becomes wet or is thoroughly soaked, even once. Slight warping in the area of heat vents or heat-producing appliances is also typical.
- **Wax:** Waxing and the use of products like oil soap are neither necessary nor recommended. Once you wax a polyurethane finish floor, recoating is difficult because the new finish will not bond to the wax. The preferred maintenance is preventive cleaning and recoating annually or as needed to maintain the desired luster.

During the orientation we will confirm that hardwood floors are in acceptable condition.

➤ **Resilient Flooring (Vinyl)**

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

- **Color and Pattern:** Your color selection sheets provide a record of the brand, style, and color of floor coverings in your home. Please retain this information for future reference.
- **Limit Water:** Wipe up spills and vacuum crumbs instead of washing resilient floors frequently with water. Limit mopping or washing with water; excessive amounts of water on resilient floors can penetrate seams and get under edges, causing the material to lift and curl.
- **Moving Furniture:** Moving furniture or 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. We leave any remnants of floor covering materials in your home, for this reason.
- **No Wax:** The resilient flooring installed in your home is the no-wax type. No wax means a clear, tough coating that provides both a shiny appearance and a durable surface. However, even this surface will scuff or mark. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for maintaining the finish.
- **Raised Nail Heads:** Raised nail heads are the result of movements of the floor joist caused by natural shrinkage and deflection. We have used special nails and glued the underlayment to help minimize this movement. If a nail head becomes visible through resilient flooring, place a block of wood over it and hit the block with a hammer to reset the nail.
- **Scrubbing and Buffing:** Frequent scrubbing or electric buffing is harder on floors than regular foot traffic. Use acrylic finishes if you scrub or buff.
- **Seams:** Any brand or type of resilient flooring may separate slightly due to shrinkage. Seams can lift or curl if excessive moisture is allowed to penetrate them. You can use a special caulking at tub or floor joints to seal seams at those locations. Avoid getting large amounts of water on the floor from baths and showers.

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

GARAGE OVERHEAD DOOR and OPENER

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

- **Lubricating Garage Door:** Every six months, apply manufacturer-approved garage door lubricant to all moving parts: track, rollers, hinges, pulleys, and springs. At the same time, check to see that all hardware is tight and operating as intended without binding or scraping.

Avoid over lubricating to prevent drips on vehicles or the concrete floor.

- **Lock:** If the lock becomes stiff, apply a silicone or graphite lubricant. Do not use oil on a lock, as it will stiffen in winter and make the lock difficult to operate.
- **Opener:** To prevent damage to a garage door opener, be sure the door is completely unlocked and the rope-pull has been removed before using the operator. If you have an opener installed after closing on your home, we suggest that you order it from the company that provided and installed the garage door. Be familiar with the steps for manual operation of the door in the event of a power failure.

If San Joaquin Valley Homes installed a door opener as one of your selections, during the 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. Take care not to place tools or other stored items where they interfere with the function of the electric eye.

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

For your safety, have any needed adjustments made by a qualified specialist. The door requires 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.

GAS SHUT-OFFS

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

GAS WATER HEATER

See also Plumbing.

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

- **Condensation:** Condensation inside your new water heater may drip onto the burner flame. This causes no harm and in most cases will disappear in a short period of time.
- **Drain Tank:** Review and follow manufacturer's timetable and instructions for draining several gallons of water from the bottom of the water heater. This reduces the build-up of chemical deposits from the water, prolonging the life of the tank and saving energy dollars.
- **Lighting the Pilot:** Follow the instructions provided by your appliance manufacture or call the utility company for assistance.
- **Safety:** Vacuum the area around a gas-fired water heater to prevent dust from interfering with proper flame combustion. Avoid using the top of the water heater as a storage shelf.
- **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.
- **No Hot Water:** If you discover that you have no hot water, check the pilot, temperature setting, and water supply valve before calling for service. Refer to the manufacturer's literature for specific locations of these items and other troubleshooting information.

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

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 Splash blocks:*** Extensions should discharge outside of rock or bark beds so that water is not dammed behind the edging materials that might be used.
- ***Ladders:*** Use caution when leaning ladders against gutters, as this may cause dents.
- ***Leaks:*** If a joint between sections of gutter drips, caulk the inside joint using a commercial gutter caulking compound available at hardware stores.

INTERIOR WALLS

The walls in your new home are constructed of wood and other materials which are subject to normal expansion and contraction. Molding and trim can shrink and warp in some cases. It is your responsibility to perform routine maintenance on molding, trim, and wall boards. Replace badly warped molding and trim. Reset nails that have popped out of position.

Use care when you hang pictures and other decorative items. The wallboard is brittle and will break if hit with a hammer. Costly repairs can be avoided by using picture hooks and other supplies from a home center or hardware store. Always repair nail holes with spackle or putty.

Some or all of the walls in your home may be textured for beauty and style. The texturing material is relatively soft and can be damaged by scrubbing with abrasive cleaners and rough brushes or cloths. Small finger smudges may be removed from walls with a solution of warm water and a mild soap. Wash gently with a soft sponge or cloth. Rinse and dry the excess water carefully. Do not permit the wallboard to become soaked with water. Large spots that are not easily removed by cleaning will require paint touch up.

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 a TV satellite dish), 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.

LANDSCAPING, GRADING and DRAINAGE

The final grades around your home have been inspected and approved for proper drainage of your lot by the local building authorities. San Joaquin Valley Homes completes a drainage certification and then the local building authorities as well as San Joaquin Valley Homes inspect the site.

Maintenance of landscaping is your responsibility after escrow closes. If landscaping has been provided with your new home, it was designed in conjunction with the grading and drainage to provide proper water flow over your lot. You become responsible for this maintenance immediately after you close escrow. **Your lawn and other plants could be damaged very quickly if not properly watered.**

If your home has a sod lawn, you should water it daily. Allow the water to run until the ground becomes spongy. Be careful not to over water which may erode other parts of your yard. You will soon be confident as to the right amount of water. A newly sodded yard may require water several times a day until it becomes established. Watering early in the morning and late in the evening will minimize water loss to evaporation. If your new lawn seems extra dry in the middle of a hot day, do not hesitate to water.

Your lot was graded to provide proper drainage. Any changes to the grading of your lot can result in

substantial water damage to your property and to nearby property. Natural settling can change the original grading. It is your responsibility to maintain the original grading of your lot and to preserve good drainage. Any damage to your home or neighboring property that is a result of changes to the grading or drainage features is entirely the homeowner's responsibility.

The goal of the grading plan is to provide a proper setting for your home and to give the maximum protection from water erosion and damage. The grading plan may use small hills and valleys called "berms" and "swales" to direct the water away from your home and from adjacent properties. These contours must be maintained to avoid severe water damage during heavy rains.

Landscaping can change the grading of your lot. We suggest that you consult a professional landscaper when the time comes to landscape your lot. Provide ample room for growth between plants and your home. The ground next to your home should always slope away to prevent standing water. If water is allowed to stand or pool next to your home, damage to the foundation will result and plantings may be ruined. The water could also seep into your home.

Irrigation lines and sprinkler heads should be installed a minimum of 36 inches away from the foundation of the home. For any vegetation closer to the home than 36 inches, only a drip irrigation system should be considered.

Observe the flow of irrigation water after each planting. If you notice pooling water of excessive levels in one area, construct drainage features to redirect the flow of water. Consult with a landscape gardener before such drainage features are begun. Always keep drains free of debris leaves and lawn clippings.

To reduce the waste of water, consider a drip irrigation system. These systems provide water directly to the root of the plant where it provides the most nourishment. In most cases, the amount of water used is significantly less than regular sprinkler systems. You may also conserve water by using drought resistant or drought tolerant plants. Your landscape professional can provide advice on plant selection, watering needs, and proper placement in your yard.

If your landscaping projects require that additional soil be added to your lot, be especially careful that the drainage is not altered significantly. In no case should the level of the soil be less than six inches below the level of the foundation. This will assist in preventing wood rot and termite infestation.

In addition other changes and additions can alter the drainage of your lot and cause water damage. These changes may include walkways, patios, spas, pools, fences, walls, planters, and play structures. Before you make any changes or additions to your lot, give careful consideration to the effect on water drainage. If you have any questions, consult a professional before you begin the project.

Please consider that any changes you make in the grading and drainage of your lot could affect neighboring properties. Damage to other property will be your responsibility.

Plan to install the basic components of your landscaping as soon after closing as weather permits. In addition to meeting your homeowner's 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. Also check with your Homeowners' Association and/or local building department to be sure of meeting their requirements.
- **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 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.

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.

- **Bark or Rock Beds:** Do not allow edgings around decorative rock or bark beds to dam the free flow of water away from the home. You can use a nonwoven landscape fabric between the soil and rock or bark to restrict weed growth while still permitting normal evaporation of ground moisture.
- **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 San Joaquin Valley Homes.**
- **Planting Near Your Home:** If you intend to place plantings adjacent to your home, determine the mature size of the plants before planting. It is important that the mature plants are no closer than 18 inches to your home. Therefore, if the mature plant will be 36 inches in diameter, plant 36 or more inches away from your home. The formula is $\frac{1}{2}$ the diameter of the mature plant plus the 18 inch buffer zone.
- **Irrigation:** 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 the structure.
- **Planning:** Locate plants and irrigation heads out of the way of pedestrian or bicycle traffic and car bumpers. Space groves of trees or single trees to allow for efficient mowing and growth. Group plants with similar water, sun, and space requirements together.
- **Plant Selection:** Plant with regard to your local climate. Favor native over exotic species. Consider ultimate size, shape, and growth of the species.
- **Requirements:** Check with your local building department and Homeowners Association before designing, installing, or changing landscaping for any regulations that they require you to follow.
- **Soil Mix:** Provide good soil mixes with sufficient organic material. Use mulch at least 3 inches deep to hold soil moisture and to help prevent weeds and soil compaction. Before installing your grass you may need soil amendments. Rototill this into the soil to a depth of 6 inches (rototill parallel to the swales). Whether you use seed or sod, this preparation helps your lawn to retain moisture and require less water. Installing a lawn over hard soil permits water to run off with little or no penetration and your lawn will derive minimal benefit from watering or rain. Apply appropriate fertilizer and weed and pest controls as needed for optimal growth. Investigate organic compounds for additional protection of the environment.
- **Utility Lines:** A slight depression may develop in the front lawn along the line of the utility trench. To correct this, roll back the sod, spread topsoil underneath to level the area, and then relay the sod.
- **Waiting to Landscape:** If you leave ground unlandscaped, it erodes. Correcting erosion that occurs after closing is your responsibility.

We will confirm the healthy condition of all landscape materials during the homeowner's orientation.

MILDEW

Mildew is a fungus that spreads through the air in microscopic spores. These microorganisms prefer damp, dark locations with poor air circulation for growth. In most homes, mold and mildew will grow under sinks, on shower walls and in other places that are repeatedly wet and in a poor air circulation area. Keep areas under sinks dry. The signs of mold or mildew range from dark or black staining to a raised area of mold growth and a musty smell.

- ***When you notice mildew and mold signs:*** scrub the area with 10% dilution of household laundry bleach and wipe down with a phenol based home product such as Lysol. ***Always keep an area well ventilated while using strong cleaners or bleach and do not use them together, as some are lethal in combination.***
- ***When you notice a leak or water spill on an area of drywall:*** remove the water immediately and dry with a fan. If the drywall has become soaked, it is highly advisable to cut out the wet drywall, plus an area at least twelve inches around the wet area. Thoroughly dry the space between the walls and wipe down with bleach to kill mold spores that might be present. Then wipe down with a Lysol-like disinfectant to prevent further growth. Replace the drywall with new material and paint.
- ***Shower area:*** If you notice that your shower walls are subject to mildew or other growth, wipe down the walls after use. It is a good idea to prop the shower door open to let air circulate and dry the area.
- ***Cleaning mildew from your home is the homeowners' 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.

MIRROR

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. Avoid getting glass cleaners on plumbing fixtures as some formulas can deteriorate the finish.

We will confirm that all mirrors are in acceptable condition during the Homeowners Orientation. San Joaquin Valley Homes will correct scratches, chips, or other damage to mirrors noted on the Orientation List.

PAINT and STAIN

See also Drywall.

Due to changes in the formula for paint (such as the elimination of lead to make paints safer), enamel 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.

- ***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.

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

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

- **Severe Weather:** Hail and wind can cause a great deal of damage in a severe storm, so inspect the house after such weather. Promptly report damage caused by severe weather to your insurance company.
- **Stain:** For minor interior stain touch-ups, a furniture-polish-and-stain treatment is inexpensive, easy to use, and will blend in with the wood grain. Follow directions on the bottle.
- **Touch-Up:** When doing paint touch-ups, use a small brush, applying paint only to the damaged spot. Touch-up may not match the surrounding area exactly, even if the same paint mix is used. When it is time to repaint a room, prepare the wall surfaces first by cleaning with a mild soap and water mixture or a reliable cleaning product.
- **Wall Cracks:** We suggest that you wait until after the first heating season to repair drywall cracks or other separations due to shrinkage.

During your homeowner's orientation we will confirm that all painted or stained surfaces are in acceptable condition. San Joaquin Valley Homes will touch up paint as indicated on the homeowner's orientation list.

PLUMBING SYSTEM

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

In compliance with conservation regulations, we install "low flow" or "water saver" toilets in all new homes. These toilets use approximately 1.6 gallons or less of water per flush. While the new toilets are more water conserving, they are less efficient than the older toilets. At times, two flushes will be required to clear the toilet completely of debris. Also, you may find that if you hold the flush handle down during the flush, more water will be available to clear the toilet more efficiently.

During the Orientation we demonstrate, under the maximum load of tub, wash basins and toilet, that all drains are clear and functioning properly.

Most blockages in plumbing drains, including toilet drains, are progressive—they begin slowly and get worse over time until the drain is completely blocked. Use a plunger at the first sign of a slow or clogged drain. This simple remedial step will prevent most serious drain blockages.

- **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 filter 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 in this section.

- **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 according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- **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, kitchen paper towels and children's toys. Bathroom tissue is constructed to disintegrate easily while the above items are not. **Improper garbage disposal use** also causes many plumbing clogs. Always use plenty of cold water when running the disposal. This recommendation also applies to grease; supplied with a steady flow of cold water, the grease congeals and is cut up by the blades. If you use hot water, the grease remains a liquid, then cools and solidifies in the sewer line. Allow the water to run 10 to 15 seconds after shutting off the disposal.

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

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

- **Dripping Faucet:** You can repair a dripping faucet by shutting off the water at the valve directly under the sink, then removing the faucet stem, changing the washer, and reinstalling the faucet stem. The showerhead is repaired the same way. Replace the washer with another of the same type and size. You can minimize the frequency of this repair by remembering not to turn faucets off with excessive force. (Please note that some manufacturers do not use rubber washers.)
- **Extended Absence:** If you plan to be away for an extended period, you should drain your water supply lines. To do this, shut off the main supply line and open the faucets to relieve pressure in the lines. You may also wish to shut off the water heater. Do this by turning off the cold water supply valve on top and the gas control at the bottom. Drain the tank by running a hose from the spigot on the bottom to a drain or driveway. If you leave the tank full, keep the pilot on and set the temperature to its lowest or "vacation" setting. Check manufacturer's directions for additional hints and instructions.
- **Leaks:** If a major plumbing leak occurs, the first step is to turn off the supply of water to the area involved. This may mean shutting off the water to the entire home. Then contact the appropriate contractor.
- **Low 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.
- **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.
- **Porcelain:** You can damage porcelain enamel with a sharp blow from a heavy object or by scratching. Do not stand in the bathtub wearing shoes unless you have placed a protective layer of newspaper over the bottom of the tub. If you splatter paint onto the porcelain enamel surfaces during redecorating, wipe it up immediately. If a spot dries before you notice it, use a recommended solvent.
- **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. Use the screws to adjust the float to the correct level. The float should be free and not rub the side of the tank or any other parts. Also check the chain on the flush handle. If it is too tight, it will prevent the rubber stopper at the bottom of the tank from sealing, resulting in running water.

- **Shut-Offs:** Your main water shut-off is located at your meter. You use this shut-off for major water emergencies such as a water line break or when you install a sprinkler system or build an addition to your home. There is a house shut-off located where the water mainline enters the house. 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.
- **Stainless Steel:** Clean stainless steel sinks with soap and water to preserve their luster. Avoid abrasive cleaners; these will damage the finish. An occasional cleaning with a good stainless steel cleaner will enhance the finish. Avoid leaving produce on a stainless steel surface, since prolonged contact with produce can stain the finish.
- **Tank Care:** Avoid exposing the toilet to blows from sharp or heavy objects, which can cause chipping or cracking. Avoid abnormal pressures against the sides of the tank. It is possible to crack the tank at the points where it is attached to the bowl.
- **Water Hammer Noise:** Water hammer is the sound of moving water suddenly stopped cold by the closing of a valve. The force, or inertia, of this water is transferred instantly from the water to the pipe, and then into the fixtures or framing of your home. It is most pronounced with washing machines and dishwashers, which employ quick acting solenoid shutoff valves. However, it can and does occur with faucets and toilet valves as well.

During the homeowner's orientation we will confirm that all plumbing fixtures are in acceptable condition and that all faucets and drains operate freely.

PROPERTY PINS and/or MARKERS

Homeowners should ensure that all property markers are accurately identified by a surveyor prior to the installation of any landscaping, fences or walls.

City Open Space Encroachments: ***Be advised that there are specific ordinances confining encroachment on city open spaces areas. These ordinances may vary from city to city.*** Failure to comply with city ordinances may result in substantial fines.

ROOF

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

- **Clean Gutters and Valleys:** Keep the gutters, valleys and downspouts free of debris (such as leaves and accumulating materials) and able to quickly drain precipitation from the roof.
- **Leaks:** If a leak occurs, try to detect the exact location. This will simplify finding the area that requires repair when the roof is dry.
- **Walking on the roof:** *We do not recommend walking on your roof.* Your weight and movement can loosen the roofing material and in turn result in leaks. It is advisable to avoid putting up holiday decorations that require that you be on the roof. Never walk on the roof of

your home when the roof materials are wet—they will be slippery.

- **Severe Weather:** After severe storms, do a visual inspection of the roof for damages. Notify your insurance company if you find pieces of roof materials in the yard or roof tile edges that are lifted on the roof.

It is recommended the homeowner periodically have a professional inspect the roof for broken, cracked or slipped materials, deteriorated sealer around roof penetrations such as vents, pipes, skylights, etc. and debris buildup in roof valleys. Left unrepaired, the above items could cause roof leaks.

SIDING

See also Paint and Wood Trim

Exterior siding expands and contracts in response to changes in humidity and temperature. Slight waves are visible in siding under certain weather conditions; this cannot be entirely eliminated. Wood or wood product siding will require routine refinishing. The timing will vary with climatic conditions.

SMOKE and CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

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

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

STAIRS

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

STUCCO

Stucco is a brittle cement product that is subject to expansion and contraction. Minor hairline cracks (visible from 8 feet under normal lighting conditions) will develop in the outer layer of stucco and are impossible to eliminate completely. This is normal and does not reduce the function of the stucco in any way. Movements in the supporting building structure most commonly cause cracks at the header and sill corner of windows and doors, over concentrations of large dimension wood framing members, and at focus points of stress buildup.

Never install decorative items on the exterior surfaces by driving a nail through the stucco. This may allow water intrusion.

- **Drainage:** To ensure proper drainage, keep dirt and concrete flatwork a minimum of 6 inches below the stucco screed (mesh underneath final coat of stucco). Do not pour concrete or masonry over the stucco screed or right up to the foundation.
- **Efflorescence:** The white, powdery substance that sometimes accumulates on stucco surfaces is called efflorescence. This is a natural phenomenon and cannot be prevented. In some cases, 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.
- **Sprinklers:** Since stucco is not a water barrier, avoid spraying water from irrigation or watering systems on stucco surfaces to avoid possible leaks. Check the spray from the lawn and plant irrigation system frequently to make certain that water is not spraying or

accumulating on stucco surfaces. This could cause damage to the stucco.

SUBDRAINS

Certain soil conditions require the installation of a subsurface French drain system. Review your escrow documents for this disclosure and any covenant information. **It is very important that this system's intended purpose is not compromised.** If the system is accidentally or intentionally altered (as during improvements such as a pool installation), it is recommended that you acquire the services of an engineer to certify proper repair of the system.

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 health and safety.

Building codes require attic vents to minimize accumulation of moisture. Attic ventilation occurs through vents in the soffit (the underside of the overhangs), on gable ends, or on the roof. Driving rain 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.

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.
- Run the bath fans when bathrooms are in use.
- Provide fresh outside air 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. In new houses, bringing outside air inside should be increased during the first 12 months to help dry out moisture initially contained in concrete, drywall, plaster, lumber and other materials, as well as to exhaust air pollutants.

WINDOWS, SCREENS and PATIO DOORS

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

- **Cleaning:** Review manufacturers cleaning recommendations. Clean vinyl frames 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.
- **Door Locks:** Acquaint yourself with the operation of patio door hardware for maximum security.
- **Door Tracks:** Keep patio door tracks clean for smooth operation and to prevent damage to the

doorframe. Silicone lubricants work well for these tracks.

- **Invisible Glass:** Under certain lighting conditions, door glass may be hard to see. Keep the screen fully closed when the glass door is open. Provide decorations on the glass door low enough to be visible to small children and remember that screens are not childproof or security devices. Children can fall against and through the screen.
- **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.
- **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.

We will confirm that all windows and screens are in acceptable condition during the Homeowners Orientation. San Joaquin Valley Homes will repair or replace broken windows or damaged screens noted on the Homeowners Orientation list only. Screens are provided as a courtesy and are not warrantable.

WOOD TRIM

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

Shrinkage may also cause a piece of trim to pull away from the wall. If this occurs, drive in another nail close to, but not exactly in, the existing nail hole. Fill the old nail hole with putty and touch up with paint 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. During the Homeowners Orientation we will confirm that wood trim is in acceptable condition.

4. Homeowner Checklist and Maintenance Schedules

The importance of maintaining your home on a regular basis is directly comparable to maintaining a brand new car. If you never change the oil or get the car tuned up, minor problems will eventually become big problems.

Similarly, your new San Joaquin Valley Homes home is designed and built to last for many years, and yet it has numerous components and equipment that require periodic maintenance by the homeowner. As the homeowner, your implementation of the following preventative maintenance guidelines can help to keep your home's components and equipment functioning properly and with as few problems as possible.

To assist you in scheduling specific maintenance procedures, please refer to the following CHECKLIST and MAINTENANCE SCHEDULES. They are divided into sections chronologically starting with "After Move-In" and include periodic and seasonal maintenance schedules. For additional information, please refer also to the appropriate manufacturer's operating instructions and/or the Table of Contents of this manual for specific subject discussions.

AFTER MOVE-IN CHECKLIST

- Bathrooms:** Inspect caulking around tubs, showers and sinks.
- Electric:** Locate and label the main circuit breaker and GFCI's (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) in the electric panel box and show family members how to turn it off in case of emergency.
- Fire Extinguisher:** Purchase a general purpose fire extinguisher for each floor of the home plus one small kitchen extinguisher for grease fires. Demonstrate proper usage to family members in case of emergency.
- Fireplace:** Purchase fireplace tools as necessary.
- First Aid Kit:** Keep first aid materials and a first aid manual in an accessible location.
- Flooring:** Install furniture protectors underneath furniture legs to protect carpet, ceramic tile, hardwood, and resilient (vinyl) floors.
- Household Tools:** Acquire basic tools for normal home maintenance chores. Include: pliers, adjustable wrench, flat-blade & Phillips head screw drivers, claw hammer, hand saw, tape measure, caulk & caulking gun, putty knife, paint roller & brush, power drill & drill bits, assorted nails, brads, screws, nuts & bolts, sandpaper, utility knife, toilet plunger and flashlights.
- Plumbing:** Locate and label the main water line shutoff valve and show all family members how to close it in case of a plumbing emergency. Find and mark the sewer clean-out locations.
- Water Erosion:** After the first heavy rain, check the soil adjacent to the foundation for erosion and fill eroded areas. Thereafter, always be on the alert for soil erosion and take immediate action to fill eroded areas. Check this manual for additional information.

HOMEOWNER MAINTENANCE SCHEDULES

Monthly

Cabinets: Check drawers and hinges for proper alignment. Tighten and adjust as necessary. Clean according to manufacturer's recommendations.

Caulking: Check for cracks or separations in caulking around sinks, bathtubs, toilets, faucets, countertops and backsplashes, ceramic walls, resilient and ceramic floors, window sills, and any other areas originally caulked by San Joaquin Valley Homes. To repair these areas, use an appropriate caulking compound and follow the caulking instructions in the Caulking section of this manual.

Faucet Aerators: Check for proper flow of water. If the flow is reduced, clean the aerator screen. During the first two months of owning your home, the aerators may require more frequent cleaning.

Furnace and Air Conditioning: Check air filters and replace as necessary. Vacuum air supply and air return registers to remove dust and lint.

Garbage Disposal: Clean disposer blades by grinding up ice cubes. Freshen it with baking soda and grinding up citrus fruit rinds.

Hardwood Stair Rails: Clean and apply a light coat of lemon oil based wood protection product.

Kitchen Exhaust Fan: Remove and clean the filter. Clean the grease deposits from the fan housing.

Perimeter Inspection: Look for evidence of insect invasion. If evidence of insects is found, consult an exterminator.

Plumbing: Check under the kitchen and bathroom cabinets, around showers and tubs, at the clothes washer connection, and at other appliance connections for possible leaks. Check the area around the water heater for leaks as well. Make repairs as needed.

Every Three Months

Doors: Check for proper alignment in the door jamb and functioning of hardware.

Exterior Finishes: Inspect the exterior surfaces of your home every three months for areas that may require maintenance, including wood trim. Confirm that water is not puddling near the house and that the lawn sprinklers are not hitting the house. Over-watering can cause serious damage to your home.

Plumbing: Run water in any seldom used plumbing fixtures to keep water in the "P" trap.

Windows: Check sills for caulking cracks or separations and recaulk if necessary. Check weatherstripping around windows and repair or replace as necessary.

Check windows for smooth opening and closing operation. Clean tracks and lubricate as necessary with a non-oil based lubricant.

Inspect window screens and repair or replace as necessary. Inspect and replace broken glass immediately so as not to cause further damage. Inspect and remove debris from weep holes at the base of the window frames.

Every Six Months

Cabinets: Maintain the wood according to the cabinet manufacturer's recommendations.

Doors: Lubricate hinges as needed with a non-oil based lubricant.

Electric: Test and reset all GFCI and Arc Fault receptacles. Check all electrical extension and appliance cords; replace frayed or split cords.

Exterior Finishes: Check for cracks and voids in exterior caulking and recaulk where necessary.

Check exterior painted surfaces for damage and weathering. To repair, follow the maintenance instructions contained in the Caulking section of this manual.

Exterior Doors: Check the finish on your exterior doors. Check for cracks, blistered or peeling paint. Repaint as necessary, following the color schedule.

Garage Doors: Lubricate the hardware with Manufacturer recommended lubricant, including the springs and moveable lock parts.

Gutters and Downspouts: Clean out debris before the start of the rain season. Clean out any debris caused by storms.

Shower Door and Tub Enclosures: Inspect for proper fit and seal. Adjust the doors if necessary. Inspect caulking at track. Replace caulking if cracks are evident.

Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Detectors: Test the detectors by pushing the "test" button.

Annually

Attic: Check attic to ensure that soffit vents are not blocked with insulation. Move any insulation back to its original location if there are voids left on the attic floor.

Carpeting: Thoroughly clean according to manufacturer's recommendations/

Caulking: Replace caulking

Countertops: Reseal (or seal originally) the tile grout.

Exterior Wood Surfaces: Repaint as needed. Check the regulations of your homeowner's association (if applicable) before changing paint colors.

Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Detectors: Replace the batteries.

Washing Machine Control Valve: Inspect to confirm that it is opening properly. Replace as needed.