

Home Care Basics for New Homeowners

You have finally done it - you've just moved into your brand new home. The smell of fresh paint still permeates the air. You are likely consumed with unpacking, setting up furnishings, rearranging, decorating - energized by the blank pallet you have to work with. But once you have signed the thick pile of closing documents, the moving trucks have left and everything is neatly in its place, what do you do next? It is time to get a handle on the routine maintenance you will need to perform in order to ensure that you and your family live comfortably in your new home for years to come. Here is some advice to get you started and help save money while you are at it:


Maintaining a clean home ensure it lasts longer and works better. Dust and dirt, if allowed to accumulate, can harm the finishes on blinds, cabinets, countertops, floors, sinks, tubs, toilets, walls, tiles, and other items. If dirt does accumulate, make sure to clean it with a substance that does not scratch or damage the finishes.

On the outside of your home, make sure that gutters and downspouts do not get clogged with leaves or other objects. The exterior of your house is built to withstand exposure to the elements, but a periodic cleaning will improve the appearance and, in many instances, prolong the life of siding and other exterior products.

When you bought your home, you probably received a warranty from the builder on workmanship and materials. This warranty applies to problems related to the construction of the home, but it does not apply to problems that arise because of failure to perform routine maintenance. For example, if your roof begins to leak after six months because of faulty workmanship, your warranty will cover that. If you develop a problem because water backed up in clogged gutters that you should have cleaned, the builder is not responsible for repairs. Also, some items, such as appliances, may be covered by manufacturers? Warranties and are not the responsibility of the builder.



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You should fully familiarize yourself with the terms of your warranty soon after you move into your home. With all the excitement surrounding a move into a new home, most people have little desire to curl up in front of the fireplace and read a legal document. Nonetheless, you should not wait to read your warranty until a problem arises. Set aside an hour to learn what your rights and responsibilities are from the outset.

Additional Tips for Properly Maintaining Specific Systems in Your New Home

Heating and Cooling Systems

Late summer or early fall are the ideal time to do an annual inspection and cleaning of these systems.

Make sure you change the filters every three months.

Keeping your pilot light burning during the summer will help keep the furnace dry and prevent corrosion.

Registers help regulate the flow of air and maintain the desired temperature in your home. Keeping registers closed in rooms you do not use will save on cooling/heating costs.

Using heat generating appliances in the evening and reducing the number of lights on will help keep the temperature down and save on costs during the summer.


Plumbing

Every member of your family should know where the intake valves are located. Label each one.

If any of your appliances develops a leak, inspect you drain trap. A partially clogged drain can cause overflow. Use a plunger or a plumber's snake to unclog the drain. If you need to, use boiling water to help unclog a partially opened drain. Call a plumber if these techniques do not work.



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A worn washer, a loose part in a faucet or steam in a hot water pipe generally causes a noisy pipe. Do not hesitate to repair the noise because vibrations can follow the noise and lead to leaks.

Driveways

If you have an asphalt driveway, remove oil, gasoline, and similar substances immediately with soapy water.

To avoid holes in your asphalt driveway, refrain from resting patio furniture or bicycle stands on it.

Do not burn anything on your driveway.

When winter weather produces ice and snow, remove it promptly and avoid gouging your pavement while chipping away at ice.

Use kitty litter or sand for traction on tough patches of ice. Thawing and freezing agents using salt and chemicals can damage concrete, brick, mortar, and asphalt. Salt will kill grass, shrubs, and trees as well - and wreaks havoc on leather-soled shoes.

Gutters and Downspouts

Clear away leaves, tree limbs and other debris from gutters and downspouts.

Downspouts should be turned away from your home's foundation.

Every four to six years, paint gutters that not made of aluminum or vinyl to help prevent rust.

Remember to Read

Remember to read the instruction manual for every appliance in your new home. The manuals provide recommended cleaning and maintenance schedules and sometimes your warranty will become void if you do not follow these recommendations.

Look for more information about taking care of your new home on at:

<https://www.nahb.org/other/consumer-resources/Routine-Home-Maintenance>



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