

# Homeowner Manual

# Homeowner Manual

## Receipt

**Congratulations on your decision to build a new home!**

Elements Design Build is proud to deliver this copy of our homeowner manual to you as a guide to help you through this process:

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Homeowner \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Subdivision \_\_\_\_\_

Lot # \_\_\_\_\_

Plan \_\_\_\_\_ Foundation \_\_\_\_\_ Elevation \_\_\_\_\_

**Please sign and pull this page out for us, as acknowledgment that you received this manual:**

Purchaser \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Purchaser \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

To Our New Homeowner,

Congratulations on your decision to purchase a new home from Element Design Build in Greenville SC. We share your excitement about your new home and look forward to having you work with us to have your home built.

We've designed this *Homeowner Manual* to assist you during and after the purchase of your home. The information presented here will answer many questions and prepare you for each step of the new home experience, making this exciting time easier.

In addition to guiding you through the process of purchasing and building, this manual provides you with maintenance guidelines and a description of our limited warranty program, component by component.

Please take time to review this material thoroughly. Note the amount of detail we have provided. Your new home will receive the same attention to detail.

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

Sincerely,

Dane Lytle  
You're Elements Design Build Team

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b> .....	
	What Happens Next? .....	8
	<i>Contact Information</i> .....	10
<b>2</b>	<b>Purchasing Your Home</b> .....	<b>11</b>
	<i>Purchaser Checklist</i> .....	14
	Purchase Agreement .....	15
<b>3</b>	<b>Arranging Your Loan</b> .....	<b>16</b>
	Loan Application Checklist .....	17
	Loan Application Paperwork .....	19
	Loan Underwriting .....	20
	Loan Lock .....	21
	Loan Closing .....	21
	<i>Down Payment Worksheet</i> .....	22
	<i>Monthly Payment Worksheet</i> .....	23
<b>4</b>	<b>New Home Selections</b> .....	<b>24</b>
	Standard Features .....	25
	Optional Features .....	25
	<i>Sample Selection Sheet</i> .....	27
	Change Orders .....	28
	<i>Sample Change Order</i> .....	29
<b>5</b>	<b>Construction of Your Home</b> .....	<b>30</b>
	Start of Construction .....	38
	Safety .....	31
	Locks and Keys .....	31
	Plans and Specifications .....	32
	Quality .....	34
	Subcontractors .....	35
	Schedules .....	35
	Construction Sequence .....	36
	<i>Our Customer Wants to Know</i> .....	38
<b>6</b>	<b>Homeowner Orientation</b> .....	<b>39</b>
	Scheduling .....	40
	Last-Minute Activity .....	40
	Preparation .....	40

	Completion of Items . . . . .	42
	<i>Orientation Forms</i> . . . . .	43
<b>7</b>	<b>Closing on Your Home</b> . . . . .	<b>45</b>
	Date . . . . .	46
	Location . . . . .	46
	Documents . . . . .	46
	"The Final Number" . . . . .	47
	Preparation . . . . .	47
	House Keys . . . . .	48
	Garage Door Opener Operators . . . . .	48
	First Mortgage Payment . . . . .	49
	Storing Documents . . . . .	49
	<i>Utility and Community Services</i> . . . . .	50
	Moving Hints . . . . .	51
<b>8</b>	<b>Caring for Your Home</b> . . . . .	<b>53</b>
	Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines . . . . .	54
	Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines . . . . .	56
	Warranty Reporting Procedures . . . . .	56
	Warranting Item Processing Procedures . . . . .	59
	Help Us to Serve You . . . . .	59
	Warranty Service Summary . . . . .	63
	Warranty Hours . . . . .	63
	Appliances . . . . .	63
	Emergency . . . . .	63
	Nonemergency . . . . .	63
	Storm Damage or Other Natural Disaster . . . . .	63
	Train Family Members . . . . .	64
	Practice Prevention . . . . .	64
	<b>Extended Absences</b> . . . . .	<b>66</b>
	Plan in Advance . . . . .	66
	As You Leave . . . . .	66
	<b>Energy and Water Conservation</b> . . . . .	<b>66</b>
	Heating and Cooling . . . . .	68
	Water and Water Heater . . . . .	68
	Appliances . . . . .	69
	Electrical . . . . .	69
	Maintenance . . . . .	69
	<i>Appliance Service</i> . . . . .	71
	<i>Home-Care Supplies</i> . . . . .	72
	<i>Maintenance Schedule</i> . . . . .	73
	Air Conditioning . . . . .	74
	Alarm System . . . . .	76

Appliances . . . . .	77
Asphalt . . . . .	77
Attic Access . . . . .	77
Brass Fixtures . . . . .	77
Brick . . . . .	78
Cabinets . . . . .	79
Carpet . . . . .	80
Caulking . . . . .	83
Ceramic Tile . . . . .	84
Concrete Flatwork . . . . .	85
Condensation . . . . .	86
Countertops . . . . .	88
Crawl Space . . . . .	90
Damp proofing . . . . .	90
Decks . . . . .	91
Doors and Locks . . . . .	92
Drywall . . . . .	94
Easements . . . . .	95
Electrical Systems . . . . .	96
Expansion and Contraction . . . . .	99
Fencing . . . . .	100
Fireplace . . . . .	101
Foundation . . . . .	104
Garage Overhead Door . . . . .	105
Gas Shut-Offs . . . . .	106
Ghosting . . . . .	107
Grading and Drainage . . . . .	107
Gutters and Downspouts . . . . .	109
Hardware . . . . .	111
Hardwood Floors . . . . .	111
Heating System: Gas Forced Air . . . . .	113
Heating System: Heat Pump . . . . .	118
Humidifier . . . . .	120
Insulation . . . . .	120
Landscaping . . . . .	121
Mildew . . . . .	125
Mirrors . . . . .	126
Paint and Stain . . . . .	126
Pests and Wildlife . . . . .	128
Phone Jacks . . . . .	128
Plumbing . . . . .	129
Property Boundaries . . . . .	135
Railings . . . . .	135
Resilient Flooring . . . . .	135
Roof . . . . .	137
Rough Carpentry . . . . .	138

Septic System .....	140
Shower Doors or Tub Enclosures .....	141
Siding .....	141
Smoke Detectors .....	142
Stairs .....	143
Sump Pump .....	143
Ventilation .....	144
Water Heater: Electric .....	145
Water Heater: Gas .....	147
Windows, Screens, and Sliding Glass Doors .....	148
Wood Trim .....	151
<i>Warranty Service Request</i> .....	153
<i>One-Time Repairs</i> .....	154
<i>Homeowner Comments</i> .....	155

# Section 1: Introduction

- What Happens Next? — Explains the process we will go through.
- Contact Information — the best ways to get in touch with us.



# What Happens Next?

## *An Overview of Your New Home Experience*

Purchasing a new home is an exciting experience. The process is also complex, with many details to be decided and arranged. While Elements Design Build in Greenville is building your new home, you participate by taking care of several important aspects of your purchase.

The chronological list that follows outlines the events that typically take place in the purchase of a new home and provides an overview of the events that will require your time and attention. Where time frames are specified, you need to observe them in order for us to deliver your home on schedule.

## **Purchasing Your Home**

The purchase agreement and specifications constitute the legal understanding regarding the purchase of your new home. Please read the purchase agreement and all attachments carefully. As with any legal agreement, you may wish to have your attorney review them. Once all the paperwork is signed, we suggest you insert those documents in Section 2 of this manual, Purchasing Your Home, for reference throughout the process.

We have tried to simplify the process for you as much as possible. As you are aware, all that we ask from you is a small deposit and a contract from you, stating that you will buy the home when it is complete. If we own the lot we carry all the construction financing, which makes it easy for you in that you do not have to arrange for 2 loans. However, if you own the land you will be required to obtain your own financing. Next, you make your selections of colors and when the home is complete, you close your loan and move in. It's that simple.

## **Arranging for Your Loan**

Once you have signed the purchase agreement, we need you to contact a lender. To assist you, we may suggest lenders appropriate for your specific financial situation. At this point we just need you to have the lender qualify you for the purchase and possible construction loan depending on the situation. Have them fax or email a letter to us stating that you are qualified for the purchase and then we will get the process started. Section 3, Arranging for Your Loan, contains hints and information on the loan process.

## **New Home Selections**

New Home Selections, Section 4 of this manual, will assist you in the exciting process of personalizing your new home with your selections. This is normally completed at the signing of our agreement. If you require more time it may be available. It makes the process much easier if you take care of this as soon as possible. It allows us time to make sure everyone working on your home has the correct information to build it.

## **Construction of Your Home**

Several tasks need to be completed prior to the start of construction. Some of these are our job; some are yours. They are described in Section 5, Construction of Your Home. We are more than willing to meet you onsite to answer any of your questions. And as always please call us whenever you like an answer to anything. We also expect and welcome your casual visits to the site, please read Section 5, Construction of Your Home, for guidelines on safety, security, and work in progress.

## **Homeowner Orientation (Walk-Thru)**

The homeowner orientation has two purposes. The first is to demonstrate the features of your home and discuss maintenance and our limited warranty program. Equally important, we want to confirm that we have delivered your new home at the quality level described in our documents and with all your selections correctly installed. For detailed information, please review Section 6, Homeowner Orientation.

## **Closing on Your Home**

Closing on Your Home, Section 7 of this manual describes many of the documents you will sign and other crucial details about the closing process. We have included guidelines to assist you in preparing for closing and move-in. At the closing you will be provided a folder with additional information to assist you with your new purchase. Most importantly you will be given the keys to your new home.

## **Caring for Your Home**

Many of your responsibilities as an owner and our responsibilities under the terms of our limited warranty are discussed in Caring for Your Home, Section 8. Begin now to become familiar with the home maintenance you should provide and our warranty service commitment to you.

## **Your Feedback and Suggestions**

Our desire to maintain open communication with you extends through the buying process and after your move-in. In an effort to improve the product and service we provide, we welcome your comments on how we've performed. Our goal is to build the best home and the best customer relationship possible. Your feedback helps us reach that goal.

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

## ***Contact Information***

Two-way communication is vital to a mutually satisfactory relationship. Dane Lytle will be your main contact throughout the process. He will likely be able to handle anything you need. We believe that it is our responsibility to establish and maintain clear lines of communication. If you have a question about anything, please don't hesitate to contact us. Listed below are the best ways for you to communicate with us. **If you haven't done so already you should provide us with the same information.**

**Mail:**  
309 West Circle  
Simpsonville, SC 29681

**Office located at:**  
1278 Pendleton Ln  
Greenville, SC 29611

**Main Office** .....864-420-3756  
**E-Mail** .....Elementshomebuilder@gmail.com  
**Web Site** .....Elementshomebuilder.com  
**Homeowners Login**.....Elementshomebuilder.com login tab

Of the contact methods listed above, homeowner login is preferred. It allows us to have a record of contact and allows us to assure the correct answer is given to any questions you may have.

## Section 2: Purchasing Your Home

- Purchaser Checklist—your opportunity to confirm we have communicated clearly and have delivered all necessary documents
- Purchase Agreement—a brief description of each of the documents you will receive
- *Purchaser Checklist*—a copy of the form you sign at the end of your purchase agreement session

# Purchasing Your Home

We will use several standard forms when you buy your new home. These include the construction purchase agreement and several addenda. The construction purchase agreement becomes binding only when all parties have signed all forms and attachments. Following is explanation of some of these forms.

## **Purchaser Checklist**

This sheet confirms to us that we delivered all necessary documents and discussed key topics to prevent surprises. Our experience shows that the new home process progresses more smoothly with effective communication. To be certain that we have been clear in explaining our construction purchase agreement and that we have called your attention to clauses or topics that have caused confusion in the past, we will ask you to sign this confirmation at the end of the meeting. Pull it out of the manual as it will be kept on file for future reference.

## **Purchase Agreement**

The construction purchase agreement is the legal document that represents your decision to purchase a home to construct. It describes your home (plan, foundation, elevation, and the street address), financing information, homeowner association information, if applicable, and additional legal provisions. We recommend that you read these documents carefully. Please take note of the topics listed on our Buyer's Checklist which we will discuss with you prior to your signing your purchase agreement.

Several exhibits are typically attached to the purchase agreement. The features of the community determine the specific items, but the list below is typical.

### ***Addendum 1***

Specifications list of materials and methods to be used in construction of your home.

### ***Addendum 2***

The selections that will go into your home to ensure you get exactly what you want in terms of colors and types of finishes.

### ***Homeowner Manual***

This book is your Homeowner Manual. It will guide you through the building process and serve as a useful reference after your move in.

# Purchaser Checklist

Purchasers \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Subdivision \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature below confirms that we have delivered the following items to you:

- \_\_\_ Construction Purchase agreement
- \_\_\_ Specifications for your floor plan and signed plan
- \_\_\_ Copy of the limited warranty
- \_\_\_ Homeowner manual
- \_\_\_ Copy of your deposit, \$ \_\_\_\_\_

We discussed your purchase agreement section by section.

We discussed items that are not in the agreement.

- Homeowner association, if any
- Settlement or closing: target delivery date and delivery date updates
- Site visits: procedures and safety

And that we discussed the following topics to expedite communications during the process:

- \_\_\_ Homeowners' preferred contact: Monday – Friday \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Weekend \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Elements Design Build preferred contact: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at  
864-420-3756 or E-mail – elementshomebuilder@gmail.com

Other topics discussed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Purchaser \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Purchaser \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Elements Design Build \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Place in homeowner's file when complete

***Note to Homeowner:***

Insert the completed purchase agreement and specifications here.

## Section 3: Arranging Your Loan

As you know Elements Design Build may be responsible for the financing during the construction of the home. If Elements is responsible your only responsibility is to provide us with a letter from the banker of your choice, which states that you will be able to afford to purchase the home when it is complete. The following chapter will give you some information about the loan process.

- Loan Application Checklist—lists the documents and information typically needed to complete the loan application form
- Loan Application Paperwork—an overview of the forms involved in processing your application
- Loan Underwriting—key points to be aware of regarding the loan approval process; take special note of contingencies that may apply
- Loan Lock—lock your loan only after Elements Design Build has provided you with a written delivery date confirmation
- Loan Closing—avoid changes to your financial circumstances to protect your loan approval
- *Down Payment Worksheet*—to assist you in determining the amount you have available for your down payment
- *Monthly Payment Worksheet*—to assist you in estimating the monthly payment amount for your new home mortgage



# Arranging Your Loan

One of the first items you'll need to take care of is selecting a lender and completing a mortgage application. Plan to accomplish this within 5 business days of signing your purchase agreement. Take the completed purchase agreement with you when you first visit your lender.

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

## **Loan Application Checklist**

The amount of documentation and information required for a mortgage can seem overwhelming. You can facilitate the application process by collecting as much of the needed information as you can before your appointment.

The checklist that follows is a general guide to assist you with the loan application. Some of the items listed may not apply to you, and your lender may request some items that we have not mentioned, but this list will get you off to a good start.

### ***Property Information***

The purchase agreement will include the legal description of the property and the price.

### ***Personal Information***

- Social Security number and driver's license for each borrower
- Home addresses for the last two years
- Divorce decree and separation agreements, if applicable
- Trust agreement, if applicable
- Most recent bank statements

### ***Income***

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

### ***Real Estate Owned***

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

### ***Liquid Assets***

- Complete names, addresses, phone numbers, and account numbers for all bank, credit union, 401K, and investment account
- Copies of the last three month's statements for all bank accounts
- Copies of any notes receivable
- Value of other assets such as auto, household goods, and collectibles
- Cash value of life insurance policies
- Vested interest in retirement funds or IRAs

### ***Liabilities***

- Names, account numbers, balances, and current monthly payment amounts for all revolving charge cards
- Names, addresses, phone numbers, and account numbers for all installment debt and approximate balances and monthly payments for such items as mortgages, home equity loans, and auto loans
- Alimony or child support payments
- Names, addresses, phone numbers, and account numbers of accounts recently paid off, if used to establish credit

## **Loan Application Paperwork**

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

### ***Good Faith Estimate***

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

### ***Truth-in-Lending Disclosure***

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

### ***Verification of Employment***

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

### ***Verification of Deposit***

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

### ***Verification of Mortgage***

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

### ***Credit Report***

Your credit report shows the amounts of money you owe to each of your creditors, minimum monthly payments, and your payment history. The appraisal confirms the value of the home you are purchasing for you and your lender.

### **Loan Underwriting**

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

Once the loan processor has collected this standard documentation, you may be asked to write letters describing your assets, income, or credit. Few loans are finalized without requests for additional information just before the package is submitted to the underwriter for final approval. At this point you may become frustrated with the loan process.

Please remember that your lender requests these letters to assist you in obtaining your financing. Do not hesitate to discuss your concerns with your loan officer. Perhaps he or she can provide some additional insight on what may seem to be redundant requests.

### ***Loan Amount Requested***

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

### ***Loan Approval***

During your first meeting, you and your lender determine the timing to obtain prequalification. This allows us to start the home even though final approval is still pending. You will discuss additional items that you may need to obtain final loan approval. Several weeks after your first meeting with the lender, you should receive loan approval. If any of the documents requested have not been returned to the lender in a timely manner, approval may take longer.

### ***Contingencies***

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

### ***Loan Amount Approved***

If you qualify for an amount that is less than you requested, ask your loan office what changes might qualify you for a larger loan. Or, consider omitting some items now (a deck or finished basement) and adding them to your home later. Another possibility is to talk to another lender with different programs and different requirements.

### ***Loan Declined***

If, after your best efforts, you are not approved for a loan within 45 days of signing your purchase agreement, in accordance with your Purchase Agreement, Elements Design Build will refund your initial deposit upon your signing a release letter and returning this Homeowners Manual to the sales office.

### **Loan Lock**

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

### **Loan Closing**

Between the time your loan is approved and the date of your closing, remember that any significant changes in your financial circumstances could impact your loan approval. If your closing occurs more than 30 days after the lender issues your loan approval, the lender may order an additional credit report just prior to the closing date. Changes in your financial circumstances, for example, purchasing a new car or increases in your charge card will appear as a new liability on your updated credit report. Such changes may cause your lender to reconsider your approval. Holding off on such purchases until after closing is best.

# Down Payment Worksheet

## Available Funds

Equity in present home	\$ _____
Savings, savings certificates	\$ _____
Investments	\$ _____
Insurance (cash value)	\$ _____
Other funds (such as a cash gift)	\$ _____
Total available funds	\$ _____
Minus amount you want to keep in savings	\$ _____
<b>Adjusted Total Available Funds</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

## Expected Expenses

Settlement costs (estimate 5 percent of loan)	\$ _____
Moving costs	\$ _____
Landscaping	\$ _____
Utility/Cable Hookups	\$ _____
Other expected expenses	\$ _____
<b>Total Expected Expenses</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

## Down Payment

Adjusted total available funds	\$ _____
Minus total expected expenses	\$ _____
<b>Amount Available for Down Payment</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

# Monthly Payment Worksheet

## Loan Payment

Principal and interest	\$ _____
Property tax	\$ _____
Hazard insurance	\$ _____

**Total Loan Payment** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Homeowner Association Monthly Dues** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Estimated Utilities

Electric	\$ _____
Gas	\$ _____
Water	\$ _____
Sewer	\$ _____
Trash collection	\$ _____
Cable TV	\$ _____
Security system monitoring	\$ _____

**Total Estimated Utilities** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Monthly Payment

Loan payment	\$ _____
Homeowner association dues	\$ _____
Estimated utilities	\$ _____

**Total Monthly Payment** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 4: New Home Selections

- Standard Features—confirm your understanding of which features are included in your new home
- Custom Features—Elements Design Build will consider your requests for custom features of any type
- Allowance Items—Explanation of uses
- Selection Hints—reminders to guide you through the selection process
- Preferred Allowance Suppliers – names and phone numbers of showrooms where you can view selections and options
- *Buyer Start Order*—a form you sign telling us to start your home
- Change Orders—Elements Design Build will consider requests for changes after you sign the Buyer Start Order in accordance with the schedule and fees described here
- *Change Order*—a copy of the form that documents any changes, requiring the signatures of all parties and full payment prior to implementation



# New Home Selections

Part of the fun of building a new home is selecting the colors and finishes to customize your home. You will make these choices at our office showroom or on the customer login section of our website. As you make choices for your new home, consider your present and future lifestyle. Take into account your family's daily activities, hobbies, and work; the kind of entertaining you do, and your family's holiday traditions.

## **Standard Features**

Each floor plan includes standard features as listed in the specifications. Please review this information carefully to prevent any misunderstandings about which features are included in the price of your new home. If you have any questions, about what these items are or need any clarification, please give us a call. Accurate specifications are a key ingredient the successful building process.

## **Optional Features**

In addition to the features included in your specifications, you may have chosen to add some additional features to your home. If possible, these items should be considered before we commence construction. We will get more specific in the following section regarding change orders.

All requests for custom features should be directed to us and not our subcontractors or suppliers.

## **Selection Hints**

### ***Informed Choices***

We recommend that you review the maintenance tasks and warranty guidelines in Section 8 of this manual prior to making your selection decisions.

### ***Be Thorough***

Costly errors arise from assumptions and incomplete selection sheets. Double-check all color numbers and names, sign and date the selections page and have a copy made for you. We ask that all selections be in writing to avoid any confusion.

### ***Colors***

You are welcome to bring cushions or swatches to our showroom to coordinate colors. View color samples in both natural and artificial light to get an accurate impression of the color. Variations between samples and actual material installed can occur. This is because of the manufacturer's coloring process (dye lots) and the fact that over time, sunlight and other environmental factors affect the samples. Some colors will appear different when seen in a large area as opposed to the sample.

### ***Exterior Choices***

Your homeowner association and selections your future neighbors have made may limit your choices for exterior finish materials or colors. The sooner you make your selections, the more choices you have. Viewing existing homes is one way to select exterior colors. Selections often look different on a full-size home. Some colors require extra coverage which can impact the cost.

### ***Selection Hold***

We reserve the right to place a hold on your selections until your lender has approved your loan and all contingencies are released. If suppliers have discontinued any of your selections, we will contact you and ask you to make an alternate selection within 5 days.

### ***Availability***

If a selection you make turns out to be unavailable, we will contact you and request that you make a different selection within 5 business days. Because so many choices are offered, Elements Design Build is unable to predict when a particular manufacturer or supplier may discontinue any particular item. We regret any inconvenience this causes. Similarly, materials readily available when your home is built may not be available in years to come if replacements are needed.

### ***Record of Selections***

Included here is a blank copy of the selection sheet that you filled out at the time of purchase. Your selections sheet may vary depending on the neighborhood in which your home is in. We can make a copy of the original to insert here for your future reference. It may be useful for matching paint colors, flooring, or replacement items in your home.

# SAMPLE - Selection Sheet

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**JOB NUMBER / ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MODEL:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ELEVATION:** \_\_\_\_\_ **FOUNDATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TILE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CARPET:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CABINETS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIDING:** \_\_\_\_\_ **TRIM:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SHUTTERS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **RAISED or LOUVERED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BRICK:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GARAGE DOOR COLOR:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTES:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Change Orders

Elements Design Build uses a change order form (similar to the sample at the end of this section) to describe and document all changes you may request to your new home's plans and specifications. Change orders fall into three categories. You may decide to:

- Add or delete items from the specifications
- Change a selection previously ordered
- Add to your home's value with a custom feature

In order to deliver your home in a timely manner, we order many items well in advance of installation. Once a particular item is ordered, making further changes may involve adjusting the planned delivery date and additional costs.

### *Processing*

Sometimes a seemingly minor change impacts other elements of the home and therefore may come with hidden costs—for example, if you order a ceiling fan, the framing that will hold it is reinforced. If you add a window, framing, drywall, interior and exterior trim, and paint costs may all be affected.

Changes requested after signing of the purchase agreement and specifications will include an administrative fee. This is necessary because previously issued paperwork must be canceled and reissued. Errors in this process are an Elements Design Builds responsibility. If the change you request impacts the construction schedule, our pricing will include construction loan interest for the additional days. The cost of deleted items will be credited to you although administrative fees are non-refundable.

Information on pricing and any schedule adjustment is returned to you for a final decision. If you elect to proceed with the change, we ask that you sign the change order and make full payment at that time. Change orders that remain unsigned or unpaid become null and void upon the expiration date shown on the change order.

For the protection of all concerned, all changes are documented and incorporated into your new home only after

- Elements Design Build has approved and signed the change
- You have approved, signed, and paid for the change prior to its expiration date
- The applicable building department has approved the change, when applicable

Our contracts with our subcontractors prohibit them from making any changes to plans or specifications without written change order authorization from Elements Design Build.

## Section 5: Construction of Your Home

- Start of Construction—once you sign the Buyer Start Order, Elements Design Build attends to several tasks before starting construction
- Safety—please respect the potentially dangerous nature of a construction site and follow our site visit policies
- Locks and Keys—once you use your house keys, only your keys will open your home
- Plans and Specifications—no two homes are alike
- Quality—We monitor work on your home to note and correct any errors that occur and ensure that the home we deliver meets the standards we promised you
- Subcontractors—trades people have no authority to make changes without a Elements Design Build’s written change order and are unaware of all the elements in your home; any questions you have should be communicated through us.
- Schedule—delivery dates are a moving target until we confirm a closing date; We promise a minimum of 20 days’ notice
- Construction Sequence—an overview of the major steps typically followed in building a home
- *Our Customer Wants to Know*—forms for your convenience, please document any questions you have about your home during construction and forward them to us

# Construction of Your Home

The construction of a new home differs from other manufacturing processes in several ways. By keeping these differences in mind, you can enjoy observing the construction process as we build your new home.

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

## Start of Construction

Before construction of your home can begin, Elements Design Build has several important tasks to accomplish that involve outside people and entities. For example:

- Residential construction in this area requires that we obtain a building permit. The process varies and can take a few days to many weeks depending on the volume of applications being processed by the building department. This volume varies from month to month.
- Subcontractors work for many builders and we must work in conjunction with their schedule.
- The time of year may affect the start date because of the weather conditions.
- We may also have other homes that are ahead of your home in the start sequence.

Rest assured that we are doing all we can to get your house started.

## Safety

We understand that you may want to visit your new home during construction. A new home construction site is exciting and can also be dangerous. Your safety is of prime importance to us. We ask that you schedule site visits on your homeowner login. During site visits please observe these commonsense safety procedures at all times when visiting:

- Keep older children within view and younger children within reach or make arrangements to leave them elsewhere when visiting the site.
- Do not walk backward, even one step. Look in the direction you are moving at all times.
- Watch for boards, cords, tools, nails, or construction materials that might cause tripping, puncture wounds, or other injury.
- Do not enter any level of a home that is not equipped with stairs and rails.
- Stay a minimum of six feet from all excavations.

- Give large, noisy grading equipment or delivery vehicles plenty of room. Assume that the driver can neither see nor hear you.

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

### **Locks and Keys**

Once exterior doors and locks are installed, we will access your home with a Lock Box on the door handle. This combination lock operates like your high school locker. This code is changed on a regular basis for security reasons. Contact our office to obtain the combination. When you take possession of your home, we will reposition the lock tumblers and the construction key will no longer open your home.

### **Plans and Specifications**

The building department of the city or county where your home is to be located must review and approve the plans and specifications for your home. We construct each home to comply with the plans and specifications approved by the applicable building department. Many factors can cause variations between the model home(s) you viewed and the home we deliver to you. Occasionally there are discrepancies between the plans and specifications. Following are some examples of such instances. In the event this occurs the specifications will prevail.

### ***Regulatory Changes***

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

### ***Topography and Homesite Conditions***

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

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

### ***Soil Addition/Removal***

Due to the variation between size and elevation of lots, we cannot determine, prior to construction, if we will need to either remove soil from the site or bring in soil to match grading plans provided by the city or county engineer. Any removal of dirt is the responsibility of Elements Design Build. If we require additional soil to be brought in it shall be soil of our choice. The developed lots that we build on do not have any topsoil onsite and no provision has been made to bring in topsoil.

### ***Utilities and Mailboxes***

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

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

The new-home industry, building trades, and product manufacturers are continually working to improve methods and products. In addition, manufacturers sometimes make model changes that can impact the final product. For instance, appliance manufacturers generally make design changes every year.

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

### ***Models***

Model homes may be equipped with larger capacity air conditioners to accommodate high traffic; models also display many decorator items, window coverings, and furnishings. Mature landscaping; extra walks, fences, lighting, fountains, signs and flags are other examples of items which are not part of the home we will be building for you. Please review your home's specifications as well as information Elements Design Build provides about optional items displayed in the models carefully to avoid misunderstandings. Contact us with any questions.

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

### ***Television and the Internet***

You may be aware of various home construction methods and materials from watching television programs or exploring the Internet. Elements Design Build routinely reviews new approaches with a focus on building homes with materials and methods that perform predictably and to our standards. While we will be happy to discuss alternative methods and materials you may be interested in, we take a conservative approach to utilizing new approaches until they have been



proven over time. In addition, what is appropriate for a home in one area may not be appropriate for your home because of soil, climate, and other conditions.

### ***Natural Variations***

Dozens of trade contractors have assembled your home. The exact placement of switches, outlets, registers, and so on will vary slightly from the model and other homes of the same floor plan.

### **Quality**

Our company will build your new home to the quality standards described in our documents and demonstrated in our office. Each new home is a handcrafted product—combining art, science, and raw labor. During this process, the efforts of many people with varying degrees of knowledge, experience, and skill come together to build the best home possible. We have systems and procedures for inspecting our homes to ensure that the level of quality meets our requirements. We inspect every step of construction and are personally responsible for quality control. In addition, the county, city, or an engineer conducts a number of inspections at different stages of construction. Your home must pass each inspection before construction continues.

### ***Errors and Omissions***

From time to time during a process that takes several months and involves dozens of people, an error or omission may occur. If you notice something you think has been left out, we ask that you first check your purchase documents to review what you ordered and the specifications for construction of your home. If you still believe we are in error contact us with your question, by phone, e-mail, fax, or in writing. Communication is the key to everyone being happy. You are welcome to use one of the *Our Customer Wants to Know* forms included at the end of this section. We will note the date and time it was received and will respond within one business day. Also keep the following points in mind once you have notified the Elements Design Build of a concern:

- Your concern may involve a detail Elements Design Build has already noticed or appreciates your pointing out. Still, correction may not occur immediately. Trades and suppliers often impose trip charges for extra visits to the homesite so to be efficient, we may schedule the correction for the next routine visit. Also, a particular trade may be unavailable on short notice.
- Work may simply be incomplete; an early stage can look wrong to you but be exactly right when finished.
- Methods and materials vary from region to region and change over time. When you are familiar with one method, you naturally question a different one. That does not make the new method wrong. Ask questions until you are comfortable.

### ***Ugly Duckling Stages***

During the construction process, every home being built experiences some days when it is not at its best. Homes under construction endure wind, rain, snow, foot traffic, and activities that

generate noise, dust, and trash. Material scraps are a byproduct of the process. Although your new home is cleaned by each trade upon completion of their portion of the work, during your visits you will encounter some messy moments. Keep in mind that the completed homes you toured also once endured these "ugly duckling" stages.

## **Subcontractors**

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

Each subcontractor works on a limited portion of the home; they may not be aware of all the details that affect the home and are not in a position to offer judgments. All questions or requests for changes should go through Elements Design Build, and we will obtain input from trades when that is appropriate.

Suppliers and trade contractors have no authority to enter into agreements for Elements Design Build. For your protection and theirs, the terms of our subcontractor agreements prohibit alterations without written authorization from Elements Design Build. Their failure to comply with this procedure can result in termination of their contract. Please discuss changes you are considering with us.

## **Schedules**

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

### ***Delivery Date Updates***

Elements Design Build recognizes that timing is critical to planning your move. Although a guaranteed date is unrealistic in the early stages of construction, we can provide regular updates. As the home nears completion, we can provide a good estimate delivery date (usually 30 days before the closing). Meanwhile, be flexible and avoid making arrangements that might cause you worry if the move-in date changes.

You are also welcome to check with us for the most current target date. The jobsite schedule can be tracked daily by you at the Elements homeowner's login page. As completion nears, more

factors come under our control and we can be more precise about that date. Expect a firm closing date no later than 20 days before delivery.

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

Please keep in mind that your belongings may be brought into the home only after the closing because of insurance issues and the regulations of the applicable building department.

### ***"Nothing's Happening"***

Expect several days during construction of your home when it appears that nothing is happening. This can occur for a number of reasons. Each trade is scheduled days or weeks in advance of the actual work. This period is referred to as "lead time." Time is allotted for completing each trade's work on your home. Sometimes, one trade completes its work a bit ahead of schedule. The next trade already has an assigned time slot, which usually cannot be changed on short notice.

Progress pauses while the home awaits building department inspections. This is also part of the normal sequence of the construction schedule and occurs at several points in every home. Also, throughout construction of a home, work progresses rapidly at some stages as highly visible stages are completed (such as installing large expanses of walls) and more slowly at others (such as detail work in trim and closets). If you have questions about the pace of work, please contact us for an update.

### **Construction Sequence**

Although the specific sequence of construction steps varies and overlaps, generally we build your home in the following order:

#### ***Exterior***

##### **Foundation**

- Excavation
- Footer installation
- Form and pour walls
- Perimeter drain, if applicable
- Concrete Slabs
- Waterproof
- Inspection

##### **Framing**

- Floors/Exterior Walls
- Roof trusses
- Roof sheathing

- Interior punch out
- Roofing
  - Felt or paper
  - Valley flashing
  - Shingles
- Exterior trim
  - Fascia (boards at ends of rafters)
  - Windows and doors
  - Finish materials (Brick/Siding)
  - Painting
  - Gutters, if applicable
- Concrete or asphalt
- Final grading

### ***Interior***

- Rough-in of mechanical systems
  - HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air conditioning)
  - Plumbing
  - Electrical
  - Rough inspections
- Insulation
- Drywall
  - Hang
  - Tape and texture
- Initial Painting
- Ceramic Tile or Vinyl Installation
- Interior trim
  - Doors
  - Cabinets/countertops
  - Baseboards, casings, other details
  - Closet boards
- Finish work
  - Floor coverings
  - Appliances
  - Hardware
  - Light fixtures
  - Plumbing fixtures
- Paint and stain
- Construction cleaning
- Elements Design Build' punch list
- Certificate of occupancy
- Homeowner orientation (Walk=-thru)
- Closing
- Home maintenance

# Our Customer Wants to Know...

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Purchaser \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Lot # \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## *Question*

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Our preference is to receive a response by \_\_\_ phone \_\_\_ fax \_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_ letter

## *Response*

---

---

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See attached

By \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 6: Homeowner Orientation

- Schedule—Elements Design Build sets orientation appointment Monday through Friday, between 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M.; the meeting takes approximately 1 hour
- Last-Minute Activity—many items are fine-tuned in the last few days before delivery
- Preparation—hints on how to get the most from your orientation
- Completion of Items—many items will be completed prior to your move-in, and any remaining work will be performed by appointment
- *Feedback on Orientation Items*—an extra check and balance to ensure we have completed the work we committed to performing during your orientation
- *Orientation Forms*—copies of the orientation forms for your review; in particular, note the information regarding cosmetic surfaces on the first page of this set of forms

# Homeowner Orientation

Your homeowner orientation is an introduction to your new home and its many features. We follow a preplanned agenda and a set route through the home to assure that we cover everything. Our homeowner orientation provides you with a

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

## **Scheduling**

We schedule the orientation with you as your home nears completion, typically several days before your closing. Appointments are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Especially, in winter months, beginning by 4:00 P.M. assures sufficient day light to view all surfaces adequately. We meet at your new home. Expect your orientation to take approximately 1 hour.

## **Last-Minute Activity**

If you visit your home a day or two prior to orientation, you may notice dozens of details that need attention. During the last few days just prior to your orientation appointment, many trades people and our own staff will be working in your home. We are completing last-minute adjustments and fine-tuning your home. These finishing touches cannot be performed until all of the parts have been installed. What seems like a rush of activity is a normal part of the construction process.

## **Preparation**

Following these hints will assure that you get the maximum benefit from your orientation.

### ***Allow Enough Time***

Arrange your schedule so you can use the full amount of time allotted.

### ***Bring This Manual***

By having this manual with your selection sheets and any approved change orders with you, any questions about the items installed in your home can usually be answered conveniently and immediately.

### ***Attend Alone***

Our experience shows that the orientation is most beneficial when buyers 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 after your orientation. Similarly, we suggest that, if possible, children and pets not accompany you at this time. If a real estate agent has helped you with your purchase, he or she is welcome but is not required to attend.

### ***Review Orientation Forms***

We have included copies of our orientation forms at the end of this section. We will note details that need attention on the orientation forms.

### ***Cosmetic Surfaces***

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, during your orientation, we will confirm that all surfaces are in good and acceptable condition. Any details that need attention will be listed on your orientation forms. After we correct any items noted during the orientation, repair of cosmetic surface damage is your responsibility. Additional details appear on the orientation forms.

Our limited warranty specifically excludes repairs for damage caused by moving in or living in the home. If your movers scratch the marble entry floor bringing the piano in, notify the moving company. If you splinter some wood trim and break a taillight backing out of your new garage, repairs to the garage and the car are your responsibilities. Elements Design Build is always available to assist you with information about cosmetic repairs you may need to make.

### ***Bring Questions***

If you have not already done so, please read the maintenance information, limited warranty, and warranty guidelines in Section 8 of this manual. If you have questions, make note of them to bring up at the orientation.

### ***Attire***

Wear shoes that are convenient to get off and on. We will tour both the exterior and interior of your home. Anticipate that some dust, bending, kneeling, and reaching may be encountered.

### ***Get Involved***

Plan to listen carefully and take a hands-on approach. Push buttons, lock locks, and flip breakers. This helps you remember the dozens of details we cover.



## *Quality*

The overall quality of your home should equal that shown in our models and described in your purchase documents. We will list items we agree need further attention and arrange appropriate work. Orientation items fall into several categories:

- Incomplete or missing (Cabinet knob not installed.)
- Incorrect (Porch light should be polished brass, not antique.)
- Dysfunctional (Bath fan does not come on.)
- Below company standard (Mitered corner rough, top right of den door, hallway side.)
- Damaged (Scrape on wall from carpet installation.)
- Unclean (Mud on the garage floor.)

At some point, quality ceases to be scientific and becomes a matter of personal taste. In a few areas, your personal standards may be even higher than ours. Our commitment to you is that we will deliver what we promised. If you wish to make it even better after moving in, we will be happy to assist you with information.

## **Completion of Items**

Elements Design Build takes responsibility for resolving any items noted. We will complete most items before your move-in. If work needs to be performed in your new home after your move-in, construction personnel are available for appointments Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Under normal circumstances, you can expect us to resolve all items before you move in. Sometimes we are unable due to last minute notification of the issue, backordered items, or scheduling conflicts. If unable to complete the items prior to your move in, you can expect us to resolve all items within 7 working days. 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 by Elements Design Build.

Gaining access to occupied homes to complete orientation items is a concern to homeowners and Elements Design Build alike. Elements Design Build asks that you make appointments so that someone over 18 is present for repairs. Working around your busy schedule may result in service taking longer than anyone wants. Your cooperation is essential. Service hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

We will confirm that any items listed during your orientation have been resolved to meet our standards and policies. To be doubly certain of this, we will mail you a written form for feedback. We ask that you return this form as it assists us in evaluating our customer service performance

# Orientation

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Lot # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Purchasers \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 New Phone \_\_\_\_\_

We believe that your home is complete, in satisfactory condition, and meets the quality standards described in your contract documents. We invite your confirmation of this fact by offering you an opportunity to review your home at this time. Your signature indicates that with the exception of items noted on page 2, the components listed below are in good and acceptable condition, including, where applicable, the cosmetic surfaces of these items. Cosmetic damages noted subsequent to those identified today and listed on page 2 are excluded from warranty coverage except as specifically described in your homeowner manual.

<p><b>Cosmetic surfaces are in acceptable condition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Appliances</li> <li>___ Brass fixtures</li> <li>___ Cabinets</li> <li>___ Carpet</li> <li>___ Caulking</li> <li>___ Ceramic tile/grout (walls, counters, floors)</li> <li>___ Countertops</li> <li>___ Decks and exterior rails</li> <li>___ Doors</li> <li>___ Drywall</li> <li>___ Fireplace doors</li> <li>___ Garage overhead doors</li> <li>___ Hardware (knobs, towel bars)</li> <li>___ Hardwood floors</li> <li>___ Landscaping (sod, shrubs, trees)</li> <li>___ Light fixtures</li> <li>___ Marble or manufactured marble</li> <li>___ Masonry</li> <li>___ Mirrors and medicine cabinets</li> <li>___ Paint</li> <li>___ Plumbing fixtures (sinks, tubs, faucets)</li> <li>___ Vinyl floor coverings</li> <li>___ Shower or tub enclosure</li> <li>___ Siding</li> <li>___ Stair rail</li> <li>___ Stucco</li> <li>___ Windows, screens, patio doors</li> <li>___ Wood trim</li> </ul>	<p><b>Selections/change orders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ All selections and change order items are installed</li> </ul> <p><b>Status summary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Grade: Complete Pending</li> <li>___ A/C: Charged Pending N/A</li> <li>___ Crawl: Dry Damp N/A</li> <li>___ Smoke detectors respond to test buttons</li> <li>___ GFCIs respond to test/reset buttons</li> <li>___ Outside faucets function without leaks</li> </ul> <p><b>Manufacturer literature/parts delivered</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Heat system</li> <li>___ Air conditioning</li> <li>___ Humidifier</li> <li>___ Water heater</li> <li>___ Range</li> <li>___ Cook top</li> <li>___ Range hood</li> <li>___ Microwave</li> <li>___ Dishwasher</li> <li>___ Disposal</li> <li>___ Fireplace</li> <li>___ Broiler pan</li> <li>___ Disposal wrench</li> <li>___ Sink strainer and drain cover</li> <li>___ Garage door openers or keys</li> <li>___ Paint and stain samples</li> </ul>
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**Warranty service**

For your protection and to allow efficient operation of our services, our warranty system is based on your written list of items. Please refer to Section 8 of your homeowner manual for complete details.



## Section 7: Closing on Your Home

- Date—Elements Design Build provides a minimum of 10 days’ notice for the closing
- Location—We confirm the location of your closing appointment when we set the appointment
- Documents—an overview of the materials that you will sign at closing
- “The Final Number”—due to changes in interest, the final amount you will need to bring can be determined only after your closing date is set
- Preparation—reminders to assure you have addressed all necessary tasks prior to closing
- House Keys—delivered to you at the closing table
- Garage Door Opener Operators—left in a kitchen drawer in your new home
- Mailbox Keys—available from your post office upon presentation of your personal identification
- First Mortgage Payment—your lender will inform you where to send your house payments and when the first payment will be due
- Storing Documents—your closing documents are valuable papers; store them safely
- Utility and Community Services—names and numbers for your convenience
- Moving Hints—some reminders and checklists to make moving easier

# Closing on Your Home

At closing the ultimate purpose of your purchase agreement is achieved: Ownership of your new home is transferred from Elements Design Build to you. The funds are disbursed to the appropriate people and companies, title is transferred to your name(s), and the loan is recorded against your new property. This process involves about 75 documents—some of which are duplicates. These documents are not negotiable, and thousands of home buyers have signed them.

## **Date**

Elements Design Build recognizes that timing is vitally important in planning your move and locking in your loan. We can specify an exact delivery date when construction reaches a point at which weather, material and labor shortages, lender issues, or change orders are unlikely to affect completion of your home. The closing takes place shortly after your orientation. Elements Design Build will notify you of the closing date 10 days or more before the date. We set the specific appointment time with at least 2 days' notice. Typically, the closing process takes about an hour.

## **Location**

The closing on your new home typically takes place at an attorney/ title company which requires it to take place at their office; we will work with all parties to find a suitable location. We will be in contact with you and the title agency to assure that the location and time work for everyone.

## **Documents**

At closing, the documents necessary to convey your new home to you and to close the loan from the mortgage company will be signed and delivered. In addition to these standard items, the lender, the title company, and Elements Design Build may require other documents to be signed. The principal documents typically include the following:

### ***General Warranty Deed***

The general warranty deed conveys the home and lot to you, subject only to permitted exceptions. This does not apply if you already own the lot.

### ***Elements Design Build Limited Warranty***

We can provide a copy of the limited warranty your review prior to your closing if you like. It is a one (1) year warranty, during which time all items in your home are covered. After one year all of your appliance and manufacturer warranties will cover most of the items in your home. At your closing, we will ask you to sign the warranty, we will take a copy for our records and you will keep the original. This is a standard document published by the National Association of

Homebuilders. It details all aspects of your warranty. If you have any questions regarding the warranty, please ask.

### ***Promissory Note***

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

### ***Deed of Trust***

This encumbers your home as security for repayment of the promissory note.

### ***Homeowner Association Documents***

You will receive and sign for another copy of your homeowner association covenants, conditions, and restrictions; the association bylaws; and articles of incorporation at closing. Elements Design Build recommends that you read these carefully. The provisions they contain will be enforced.

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

Prior to your closing the title agency will provide you with a settlement statement which outlines all the credit and debts that apply to your home. Certain customary items in connection with the property will be prorated to the date of closing such as prepaid expenses, or reserves required by your lender and homeowner's association, if applicable. Proration of general real property taxes and assessments will be based on the current year's taxes and assessments or, if they are unavailable, on the taxes and assessments for the prior year.

The final cost figure is available near to the actual closing. Although a reasonably close estimate may be determined before the date of closing, the proration of several items included is affected by the closing date and cannot be calculated until that date is known. The Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA) provides you with many protections. Under this law, you can review the settlement page that lists costs you are paying at closing one day before the closing appointment.

### ***Preparation***

The key to a smooth closing is preparation. Several details require your attention. You can handle most of these by phone. Address these details during the weeks before closing to prevent last-minute delays.

### ***Form of Payment***

Plan to bring cash, certified funds, or a bank check (made out to yourself, which you will endorse at the closing) to the closing table. In your planning, be sure to allow time to arrange for and

obtain these funds. Keep in mind that some banks place a hold on monies moved from another account.

### ***Insurance***

You need to provide proof of a homeowner's policy from your insurance company. Your insurance agent should know exactly what is needed. We suggest you arrange for this at least 3 weeks before the expected closing date.

### ***Elements Design Build or Lender Issues***

The title company is not authorized to negotiate or make representations on behalf of any of the parties involved in the closing. Therefore, please discuss any questions, agreements, or other details directly with us or your lender in advance of the closing.

### ***Utilities***

Elements Design Build will have utility service removed from its name 3 days after closing. You will need to notify all applicable utility companies of your move so that service is provided in your name. We suggest that you contact these companies well ahead of time to avoid any interruption in service. If you ordered a security system for your home, you can arrange to activate that system by contacting the monitoring service for a connection appointment. For your convenience, we have included a list of your utility companies and contact information at the end of this section.

### **House Keys**

When the closing process is complete, you will get the keys to your new home. The same key will operate both the knob and the deadbolt locks on all of your doors. When you insert your new key for the first time in each lock, the tumblers are altered, and our master key will no longer unlock your door.

We recommend that you try all of the keys in all of your locks to confirm smooth operations. Depending on the number of family members living in the home, you may want to get extra copies of your house keys made.

### **Garage Door Opener Operators**

Garage door opener operators, if applicable, will be left in a drawer in your kitchen or brought to you at the closing. You will receive two operators for each garage door opener installed in your home. If you need additional operators, contact the garage door opener company using the customer service number shown in the manufacturer's literature that came with the openers. Your house is also equipped with a keyless garage door operator located next to the overhead door. We suggest that you change the code to one that is easy for you to remember. All of our keyless operators are initially set with the same code. We will include directions on how to change the code in your closing packet. Batteries typically need to be replaced about once a year.

**First Mortgage Payment**

Your lender will provide you with information on where to send your mortgage payments and when the first payment will be due. Many lenders supply payment coupons for you to send in with your payments.

**Storing Documents**

We suggest that you store the legal documents from your closing with other valuable papers, in a safe place. You will need them for tax purposes and when you refinance or sell your home.



# Utility and Community Services

The following are some phone numbers for local utility and community services. Service provider is determined by your location, not all services listed may be available to your location.

If you have any questions which service you have just give us a call

<b>Electric</b>  Duke Energy 800.777.9898  Blue Ridge Electric 864.242.6350  Laurens Electric 864.288.7412	<b>Gas</b> Piedmont Natural Gas 800.752.7504  <b>Sewer</b> City of Greenville 864.467.4345  Greenville County 864.232.6721	<b>Telephone</b> Bell South (Res.) 1.800.780.2355  <b>Trash Collection</b> Contact local city  <b>Water</b> Greenville Water 864.241.6000
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# Moving Hints

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

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

Whatever else is going on, at dinner time assemble the family for your first meal together in the new home. Sit across the card table from each other, smile, and say "We made it."

## Moving Preparation Checklist

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

## **Packing Materials**

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

## **Moving Day Necessities**

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

## Section 8: Caring for Your Home

- Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines—introduction to the maintenance information in this manual
- Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines—introduction to the criteria Elements Design Build uses to screen warranty items
- Warranty Reporting Procedures—standard, emergency, miscellaneous, and appliance warranty procedures
- Warranty Item Processing Procedures—a simple description of a complex process
- Help Us to Serve You—things you need to know so we can provide effective warranty service
- Warranty Service Summary—a one-page guide to who to contact in various service situations
- Fire Prevention—reminders to prevent fire in your home
- Extended Absences—tips for preparing and reminders for the day you leave
- Energy and Water Conservation—suggestions consuming energy and water wisely
- Appliance Service—a worksheet where you can record serial and model numbers along with manufacturer service phone numbers
- Home Care Supplies—create a shopping list of and supplies you will need to care for your home
- Maintenance Schedule—a place to make notes about routine maintenance tasks and plan your schedule
- Air Conditioning through Wood Trim—an alphabetical list of the items in your home, including maintenance hints, warranty criteria, and troubleshooting tips
- Forms—for your convenience when reporting warranty items and giving us feedback about this manual

# Caring for Your Home

Elements Design Build has constructed your home with carefully selected materials and the effort of experienced craftsmen and laborers under our supervision. Although this group works from detailed plans and specifications, no two homes are exactly alike. Each one is unique; a home is one of the last hand-built products left in the world. Over time, each behaves differently.

Although quality materials and workmanship have been used in creating your home, similar to an automobile, it requires care from the first day. Regular homeowner maintenance is essential to providing a quality home for a lifetime. This section of our manual was assembled in to assist you in that effort.

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

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

### ***Checklists***

You will find several checklists included in this manual. These cover fire prevention reminders, energy and water conservation tips, suggestions for extended absences, appliance service information, home maintenance supplies list, and a maintenance schedule. Again, we make no claim that we have included every detail. We do believe we have provided you with a good start, and we've allowed space for you to add your own notes to our checklists.

### ***Prompt Attention***

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

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

## ***Manufacturer Literature***

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

We make every effort to keep the information in this manual current. 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 materials. In some cases, manufacturer's warranties may extend beyond the first year and it is in your best interests to know about such coverage.

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

### ***Corrective Actions***

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

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

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

### ***We Sometimes Say No***

With a product as complex as a home, different viewpoints regarding which tasks are homeowner maintenance responsibilities and which are Elements Design Build warranty responsibilities are possible. If you request warranty service on a maintenance item, we will explain to you the steps you should take to care for the item. We are available to answer your home-care questions during and after your warranty period. Providing normal maintenance for your home is your job.

### ***Warranty Specimen Provided for Your Review***

You will receive the signed limited warranty document at your closing. We provide a specimen copy for your review at the time you sign your purchase agreement. Please read through this information, as well as the service procedures and guidelines discussed on the following pages. If you have any questions, please contact our warranty office.

### **Warranty Reporting Procedures**

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

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

You are welcome to mail, fax, e-mail, or drop off your list in person at our office. Keep a copy for your records. Experience has taught us that accuracy and efficiency suffer when we work outside this system and sacrifice careful documentation.

We plan two standard warranty contacts with you. The first is 60 days after your closing and the second is at 11 months after closing. We also have emergency response procedures and have provided for miscellaneous warranty requests between the standard 60-day and 11-month reports. Service for your appliances is handled differently and is described in detail on the next page.

#### ***60-Day Report***

For your convenience and in order for our service program to operate at maximum efficiency, we suggest that you wait 60 days before submitting a warranty list. This allows you sufficient time to become settled in your new home and to use most components repeatedly. As you notice items, jot them down on a service request form (found at the end of this manual). You may also report the warranty requests to the Elements Design Build homeowner's login page.

#### ***11-Month Report***

Near the end of the eleventh month of your materials and workmanship warranty, you should submit a year-end report if you have any items to report. We will also be happy to discuss any maintenance questions you may have at that time. Again, keep notations of items on a service request form or online. This is also the best time for you to request the "one-time" repairs we offer on several components such as drywall.

## ***Emergency Service***

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

	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Phone</u>
▶ Air conditioning	Reliable Heat and Air	864-377-4383
▶ Electrical	JGS Electrical	864-449-0200
▶ Heat system	Reliable Heat and Air	864-377-4383
▶ Plumbing	GOL Plumbing	864-323-1486
▶ Roof (leak)	Apex Roofing	864-626-3344
▶ Gas leak	Piedmont Natural Gas	1-800-752-7504

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

If your review of the troubleshooting tips fails to solve the problem, during business hours, call Elements Design Builds' office:

**(864)420-3756**

After hours, or on weekends or holidays, call the necessary trade contractor or utility company directly. Their phone numbers are listed on the Emergency Phone Numbers sheet you receive at orientation. We suggest that you insert the Emergency Phone Numbers sheet in this section of your homeowner manual or secure it inside a kitchen cabinet, near your phone.

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

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

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

***Air Conditioning.*** Understandably, if your air conditioner is not working, you want it fixed pronto. In a typical scenario, many other homeowners across our region will discover they too need service on their air conditioners on the same hot day that you do. The trades who address these needs generally respond to calls on a first come, first served basis. If your call for service comes during this time period, you may wait several days for a technician to arrive. For this reason, we recommend that you operate your air conditioner as soon as warm temperatures



begin. In this way, if service is needed, you can avoid the rush and get a more satisfactory response.

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

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

### ***Other Warranty Service***

If you wish to initiate non-emergency warranty service between the standard 60-day and 11-month report, you are welcome to do so by sending in a service request form (We've included 3 copies of this form at the back of this manual) or simply by writing a letter that includes your name, address, phone numbers, and a list of your concerns.

Homeowners who want to arrange 60-day or 11-month warranty visits receive priority scheduling. We schedule appointments for miscellaneous requests on a first come, first served basis between the standard appointments. As a result, service on miscellaneous requests may take a bit longer to address.

### ***Kitchen Appliance Warranties***

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

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

## **Warranty Item Processing Procedures**

When we receive a warranty service request, we may contact you for an inspection appointment. Warranty inspection appointments are available Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. We inspect the items listed in your written request to confirm warranty coverage and determine appropriate action. Generally, reported items fall into one of three categories:

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

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

## **Help Us to Serve You**

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

- ▶ Your name, address, and the phone numbers where you can be reached during business hours.
- ▶ A complete description of the problem, for example, "guest bath—cold water line leaks under sink," rather than "plumbing problem."
- ▶ Information about your availability or the best days or times to reach you. For instance, if calling you at work is acceptable, let us know. Otherwise, we will use your home phone number.

## ***Access to Your Home***

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

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

### ***Exterior Items***

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

### ***Repair Appointments***

Depending on the work needed, at the conclusion of the inspection appointment, the warranty manager will most likely ask you to designate a *work date*—a date a minimum of 10 days from the inspection date—for approved repairs to be made. This 10-day time frame allows us to notify appropriate trades people and arrange for most repairs to occur on the same day.

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

### ***Inspection and Work Hours***

Many homeowners ask whether evening and weekend appointment times are available. Elements Design Build understands the desire for appointments outside normal business hours. We recognize the trend to services being available "24/7" in many businesses. However, in investigating how such appointments could be arranged, we discovered many factors that make extended service hours impractical.

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

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

- ▶ Administrative staff: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.
- ▶ Inspection appointments: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.
- ▶ Work appointments: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

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

### ***Pets***

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

### ***You're Belongings***

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

### ***Surfaces***

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

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

### ***Signatures on Work Orders***

Signing a work order acknowledges that a technician worked in your home on the date shown and with regard to the items listed. It does not negate any of your rights under the warranty nor does it release us from any confirmed warranty obligation. If you prefer not to sign the work order, the technician will note that, sign the work order and return it to us for our records. Our work order form includes a brief survey about the service provided. We appreciate your taking a moment to respond to the items listed and let us know your opinion. If you are dissatisfied with any service we provide, you can note that on the work order or call the warranty office with your feedback. We will review your concerns and determine whether our requirements have been met. While complaints of this type are infrequent, about 50 percent of the time we find the homeowner is correct and more attention is needed.

### ***Completion Time***

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

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

### ***Missed Appointments***

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

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

# Warranty Service Summary

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

## Warranty Hours

- ▶ Administrative staff: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.
- ▶ Inspection appointments: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.
- ▶ Work appointments: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

## Appliances

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

## Allowance Items

Contact your suppliers directly for allowance item warranty issues.

## Emergency

First, check the troubleshooting tips under several individual headings in this manual. If those tips do not solve the problem, during our business hours (Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.), call our office:

**(864)420-3756**

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

## Non-emergency

Please mail, fax, or e-mail, your list of items to our warranty office. You will find warranty service request forms at the end of this manual or you can request copies by calling our office.

Phone (864)-420-3756

Elements Design Build  
1278 Pendleton Ln  
Greenville, SC 29611

## Storm Damage or Other Natural Disaster

Contact your homeowner's insurance agent immediately. Contain damage as much as possible without endangering yourself.

# Fire Prevention

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

## Train Family Members

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

## Practice Prevention

- Store matches away from children and heat sources.
- Avoid smoking in bed.
- Avoid leaving small children home alone, even for a short time.
- Maintain appliances in clean and safe working condition.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets.
- Ensure that all electrical cords are in good repair.
- Use correctly sized fuses.
- Avoid having any flammable objects or materials near the stove.
- Keep the range hood filter clean to prevent a buildup of grease.
- Allow space for cooling around electrical equipment.
- Unplug the iron when it is not in use. Do not leave an iron that is on unattended.
- Use electric blankets with care, following manufacturer directions.
- Store volatile materials (paint, gasoline for the lawn mower, and so on) in appropriate containers, away from flames (such as pilot lights) or heat sources. Many trash collection services offer a means for you to dispose of hazardous items. Check with your service provider for details.
- Keep the barbeque clear of flammable objects and materials.
- If your home includes a gas fireplace, follow all directions and do not leave the fireplace unattended when it is on. If you have a wood burning fireplace:
  - ▶ Arrange for professional cleaning of the chimney at appropriate intervals.
  - ▶ Maintain the spark arrester on the chimney.
  - ▶ Never use liquid fire starters (such as for a charcoal barbeque) in an indoor fireplace.

- ▶ Use a screen or glass doors when a fire is burning.
- ▶ Confirm the fire is out before closing the flue.
- ▶ Do not leave the fireplace unattended while a fire is burning.
- During holidays, ensure that all cords and connections are in good condition and of appropriate capacity for electrical decorations.
- If you decide to remodel, finish the basement, or add onto your home, obtain a building permit and work with trained professionals. Ensure that all building department inspections occur and that the work complies with all applicable codes. This also applies to installing a gas line for an outdoor barbeque, a gas fireplace, clothes dryer, and so on.

**Your Additional Reminders and Notes:**

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# Extended Absences

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

## Plan in Advance

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

## As You Leave

- Forward phone calls to a relative or close friend.
- Unplug computers and other electronic devices that might be harmed in an electric storm.
- Leave window coverings in their most typical positions.
- Confirm that all doors and windows are locked, and the deadbolts are engaged.
- Shut off the main water supply. Set the thermostat on the water heater to "vacation" to save energy.
- Store items such as your lawn mower, bicycles, or ladders in the garage.
- Disengage the garage door opener (pull on the rope that hangs from the mechanism). Use the manufacturer's lock to bolt the overhead door. *Caution:* Attempting to operate the garage door opener when the manufacturer's lock is bolted will burn out the motor of your opener. Upon your return, unlock the garage door first, then re-engage the motor (simply push the button to operate the opener and it will reconnect) to restore normal operation.
- Leave a second car in the drive.
- Summer: Turn your air conditioner fan to on. Set the thermostat to 78.
- Winter: Set the thermostat to a minimum of 55. Leave doors on cabinets that contain plumbing lines open. Leave room doors open as well. This allows heat to circulate.
- Arm your security system, if applicable.



# Energy and Water Conservation

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

## Heating and Cooling

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

## Water and Water Heater

- Set your water heater at 120 degrees if your dishwasher has a water booster heater. If not, set the water heater at 140 degrees.

- Follow the steps outlined in the manufacturer's directions for draining water from your water heater in order to remove accumulated hard-water scale that builds up inside the tank. Timing will depend on the nature of your water supply.
- Correct plumbing leaks, running toilets, or dripping faucets ASAP.
- Keep aerators clean.
- If you have a swimming pool, consider using solar heating power.

### **Appliances**

- In selecting your home's appliances, compare the information on the (yellow and black) Energy Guide sticker. Sometimes spending a bit more up front can reduce operating costs over the life of the appliance, conserving energy at the same time.
- Use cold water when operating your disposal. This not only saves hot water you pay to heat, it preserves the disposal motor.
- When baking, preheat your oven just five minutes before you use it. When possible, bake several items at the same time or at least consecutively. Turn the oven off a few minutes before baking time is done.
- Microwave rather than using the range when possible, especially during hot weather.
- Run the dishwasher when it has a full load and use the air-dry cycle. Avoid regular use of the rinse and hold cycle.
- Turn electric burners off a few minutes before cooking is complete.
- Refrigerators with the freezer on top generally use significantly less energy than side-by-side models. Select an appropriate size for your needs; two small refrigerators use more energy than one large one.

### **Electrical**

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

### **Maintenance**

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

**Your Additional Reminders and Notes:**

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# Appliance Service

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

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

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



# Home-Care Supplies

You will find that caring for your home is much easier if you have necessary tools and supplies on hand. As you review the maintenance information in this manual and in the manufacturer materials, note the materials and tools you will need. Note sizes, colors, brands, sources, and so on to create a convenient inventory that will make shopping for home-care products easier. You may wish to make copies of this form before filling it out.

<b>For</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Color/ Style</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Notes</b>



# Maintenance Schedule

Begin care of your home with organized records, including information about all of its components and your furnishings. This information will make caring for you home easier, the records may be useful in completing tax returns, and will be valuable when you sell your home. Another worthwhile step is to inventory all equipment, appliances, furnishings, and personal belongings. A photo album containing pictures of each room is an excellent supplemental item. In addition to normal daily and weekly care, develop a schedule of preventative routines based on the information in this manual and the manufacturer literature you receive. A change of season creates special maintenance needs so plan for winterizing and summarizing your home.

Task/Notes	Frequency	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

# Air Conditioning

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

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

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

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

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

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

### *Adjust Vents*

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

### ***Compressor Level***

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

*See also Grading and Drainage.*

### ***Humidifier***

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

### ***Manufacturer's Instructions***

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

### ***Temperature Variations***

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

### **Troubleshooting Tips: No Air Conditioning**

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

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

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

The air conditioning system should maintain a temperature of 78 degrees or a differential of 15 degrees from the outside temperature, measured in the center of each room at a height of 5 feet above the floor. Lower temperature settings are often possible, but neither the manufacturer nor Elements Design Build guarantee this.

#### ***Compressor***

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

#### ***Coolant***

The outside temperature must be 70 degrees F or higher for the contractor to add coolant to the system. If your home was completed during winter months, this charging of the system is unlikely to be complete and will need to be performed in the spring. Although we check and document this at orientation, your call to remind us is welcome in the spring.

#### ***Nonemergency***

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

## **Alarm System**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

# Appliances

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

Please see page 8.5 and your *Appliance Service* information sheet.

## Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines

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

# Attic Access

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

## Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines

Elements Design Build and the local building department inspect the attic before your closing to confirm insulation is correct.

# Brass Fixtures

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

### *Cleaning*

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

### ***Corrosion***

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

### ***Polish***

When peeling, spotting, or discoloration occurs, you can sometimes restore the beauty of the metal by completely removing the remaining coating and hand-polishing the item with a suitable brass polish. Applying a light coat of wax and buffing with a soft cloth helps maintain the gloss.

### ***Tarnish***

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

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

# **Brick**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***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.

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We check the brick-work during the orientation to confirm correct installation of designated materials.

### ***Cracks***

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

# **Cabinets**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***Cleaning***

Products such as lemon oil or polishes that include scratch cover are suggested for wood cabinet care. Follow container directions. Use such products a maximum of once every 3 to 6 months to avoid excessive build-up. Avoid paraffin-based spray waxes and washing cabinets with water, as both will damage the luster of the finish.

### ***Hinges***

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

### ***Moisture***

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

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

### ***Alignment***

Doors, drawer fronts, and handles should be level and even.

### ***Operation***

Cabinets should operate properly under normal use.

### ***Separations***

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

### ***Warping***

If doors or drawer fronts warp in excess of 1/4 inch within 24 inches, contact your supplier directly as this is an allowance item.

### ***Wood Grain***

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

## **Carpet**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***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.

### ***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 removers on an out-of-the-way area of the carpet, such as in a closet, to check for any undesirable effects.

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

### ***Crushing***

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

### ***Fading***

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

### ***Filtration***

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

*See also Ghosting.*

### ***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 re-stretch 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 in the model homes of how carpet seams diminish after they have been vacuumed repeatedly and have experienced traffic.

### ***Shading***

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

### ***Shedding***

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

### ***Snags***

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 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.

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your orientation, we will confirm that your carpet is in acceptable condition. We will correct stains or spots noted at this time by cleaning, patching, or replacement. Elements Design Build is not responsible for dye lot variations if replacements are made. Carpet is supplied through your floorcovering allowance. Any warranty issues following orientation should be directed to your supplier.

## **Caulking**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***Colored Caulk***

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

### ***Latex Caulk***

Latex caulking is appropriate for an area that requires painting, such as along the stair stringer or where wood trim meets the wall.

### ***Silicone Caulk***

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

### ***Inspection Schedule***

Exterior caulking around windows and doors should be inspected and repaired once in the spring and once in the fall to prevent any water infiltration.

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation we confirm that appropriate areas are adequately caulked.

### ***One-Time Repair***

We will touch up caulking one time during your materials and workmanship period. We suggest that this be performed with your 11-month service.

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

## **Ceramic Tile**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***Cleaning***

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

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

### ***Grout Discoloration***

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

### ***Sealing Grout***

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

### *Separations*

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

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Ceramic tile is supplied through your allowance. Any warranty issues should be directed to your supplier.

## **Concrete Flatwork**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

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

### *Cleaning*

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

### *Cracks*

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

During the summer, moisture finds its way under the concrete along the edges or through cracks in the surface. In winter, this moisture forms frost that can lift the concrete, increasing the

cracking. Maintaining drainage away from all concrete slabs will minimize cracking from this cause.

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

### ***Expansion Joints***

In exterior concrete we install expansion joints to help control cracks and to keep them 'organized'. Occasionally these cracks will appear outside of the joints. When this occurs, fill the resulting gap with a gray silicone sealant, which you can purchase at most hardware stores. In basement slabs we do not install expansion joints. We have found that to do so creates a problem if you finish the basement. Under carpet, you cannot feel a crack, but you will notice an expansion joint.

### ***Heavy Vehicles***

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

### ***Ice, Snow, and Chemicals***

Driving or parking on snow creates ice on the drive, which magnifies the effects of snow on the concrete surface. Remove ice and snow from concrete slabs as promptly as possible after snow storms. **Do not use any de-icing chemicals or salt to melt snow or ice.** Protect concrete from abuse by chemical agents such as fertilizers, radiator overflow, repeated hosing, or de-icing agents, such as road salt that can drip from vehicles. All of these items can cause spalling (chipping of the surface) of concrete.

### ***Sealer***

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

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

### ***Color***

Concrete slabs vary in color. Elements Design Build provides no correction for this condition.

### ***Cracks***

If concrete cracks reach 3/16 of an inch in width or vertical displacement, Elements Design Build will patch or repair them one time during the warranty year. Subsequently, concrete slab maintenance is your responsibility. If you prefer to have the slab replaced, we will obtain a price for you and assist in scheduling the work upon receipt of your payment. However, we advise against this expense since the new slab will crack as well.

### ***Finished Floors***

Elements Design Build will correct cracks, settling, or heaving that rupture finish floor materials that we installed as part of the home as you originally purchased it.

### ***Level Floors***

Concrete floors in the habitable areas of the home will be level to within 1/4 inch within any 32-inch measurement except for an area specifically designed to slope toward a floor drain or door.

### ***Separation***

Elements Design Build will correct separation of concrete slabs from the home if separation exceeds one inch.

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

Elements Design Build will repair slabs that settle or heave in excess of 2 inches or if such movement results in negative drainage (toward the house) or hazardous vertical displacement.

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

Causes of spalling include repeated hosing of concrete for cleaning, animal urine, radiator overflow, fertilizer, uncleared snow and ice, ice-melting agents, and road salts from vehicles. Repair of spalling is a home maintenance task.

### ***Standing Water***

Water may stand on exterior concrete slabs for several hours after precipitation or from roof run-off. Elements Design Build will correct conditions that cause water to remain longer than 12 hours unless it is from roof run-off of melting snow or ice.

# Condensation

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

### *Humidifier Operation*

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

### *New Construction*

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

### *Normal Activities*

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

### *Temperature*

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

### *Ventilation*

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

*See also Ventilation.*



## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

# **Countertops**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Use a cutting board to protect your counters when you cut or chop. Protect the counter from heat and from extremely hot pans. If you cannot put your hand on it, do not put it on the counter. Do not use countertops as ironing boards and do not set lighted cigarettes on the edge of the counter.

### ***Caulking***

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

### ***Cleaning***

Avoid abrasive cleaners that will damage the luster of the surface.

### ***Mats***

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

### ***Wax***

Wax is not necessary, but it can be used to make counters gleam.

*See also Ceramic Tile.*

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

### ***Laminates***

Laminated countertops will be supplied through your cabinetry allowance and are warranted by the supplier. Report any separations in laminate seams that exceed 1/16 of an inch.

### ***Manufactured Marble***

Edges should be smooth and even. Where backsplash joints occur Elements Design Build will caulk this area and will be inspected during the orientation. Any gaps should be noted. Caulking not noted on the orientation list is your responsibility.

### ***Separation from Wall***

Separation of countertops from walls, backsplash, and around sinks results from normal shrinkage of materials. Elements Design Build will recaulk these areas one time during the materials and workmanship warranty. Subsequently caulking will be your home maintenance responsibility.

## **Crawl Space**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

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

*See also Ventilation.*

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

## **Damp-proofing**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

We spray your foundation walls with an asphalt waterproofing material. Although we make every effort to assure a dry basement, during times of excessive moisture, you may notice some dampness. Over time, natural compaction of soils in the backfill areas will usually eliminate this condition. Careful maintenance of positive drainage will also protect your basement from this condition. Most dampness in basements may be controlled with the use of a dehumidifier available at your local building supply house.

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Elements Design Build will correct conditions that allow actual water to enter the basement unless the cause is improper installation of landscaping or failure to adequately maintain drainage.

# **Decks**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***Effects of Exposure***

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

### ***Foot Traffic***

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

### ***Outdoor Furniture***

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

### ***Sealing or Water Repellent***

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

### ***Snow and Ice***

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

### ***Pressure Treated Wood***

Recent studies have concluded there is a health risk by exposure to unsealed pressure treated wood, known as CCA. The industry is currently developing alternative preservatives. In the meantime, washing your hands and your children's after exposure to CCA is recommended. Also maintaining the water sealant on your deck is recommended.

### ***Stain***

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

### ***Color Variation***

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

### ***Replacement Boards or Rails***

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

## **Doors and Locks**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***Bifold Doors***

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

### ***Exterior Finish***

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

### ***Failure to Latch***

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

### ***Hinges***

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

### ***Keys***

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

### ***Locks***

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

### ***Shrinkage***

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

### ***Slamming***

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

### ***Sticking***

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

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

### ***Warping***

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

### ***Weather Stripping***

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

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

### ***Adjustments***

Because of normal settling of the home, doors may require adjustment for proper fit. Elements Design Build will make such adjustments.

### ***Panel Shrinkage***

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

### ***Warping***

Elements Design Build will repair doors that warp in excess of 1/4 inch.

# **Drywall**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

## ***Ceilings***

The ceilings in your home are easy to maintain: periodically remove dust or cobwebs as part of your normal cleaning

## ***Repairs***

With the exception of the one-time repair service provided by Elements Design Build, 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.

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

### ***One Time Repairs***

One time during the materials and workmanship warranty, Elements Design Build will repair drywall shrinkage cracks and nail pops and will touch up the repaired area using the same paint color that was on the surface when the home was delivered. Touch-ups will be visible.

Repainting the entire wall or the entire room to correct this is your choice and responsibility. You are also responsible for custom paint colors or wallpaper that has been applied subsequent to closing. Due to the effects of time on paint and wallpaper, as well as possible dye lot variations, touch-ups are unlikely to match the surrounding area.

### ***Lighting Conditions***

Elements Design Build does not repair drywall flaws that are only visible under particular lighting conditions.

### ***Related Warranty Repairs***

If a drywall repair is needed as a result of poor workmanship (such as blisters in tape) or other warranty-based repair (such as a plumbing leak), Elements Design Build completes the repair by touching up the repaired area with the same paint that was on the surface when the home was delivered. If more than one-third of the wall is involved, we will repaint the wall corner to corner. You are responsible for custom paint colors or wallpaper that has been applied subsequent to closing. The effects of time on paint and wallpaper, as well as possible dye lot variations, mean touch-up may not match the surrounding area.

# Easements

## Homeowner Use and Care Guidelines

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

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

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

*See also Property Boundaries.*

# Electrical System

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

### ***Breakers***

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

### ***Breakers Tripping***

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



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

### ***Buzzing***

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

### ***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.

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

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

### ***Grounded System***

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

### ***Light Bulbs***

You are responsible for replacing burned-out bulbs other than those noted during your orientation.

### ***Luminous Light Panels***

Translucent panels covering ceiling lights are made of polystyrene plastic. To clean, gently push up, tilting the panel slightly and remove it from the fixture frame. Wash with a diluted (1 to 2 percent) solution of mild detergent and warm water. Do not rinse; the soap film that remains reduces static electricity that attracts dust.

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

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

### ***Modifications***

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

### ***Outlets***

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

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

### ***Underground Cables***

Before digging, check the location of buried service 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 electrical service connections.

### ***Under- or Over-Cabinet Lights***

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

## **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: NO ELECTRICAL SERVICE**

### ***No Electrical Service Anywhere in the Home***

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

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

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

## **Before calling for service, check to confirm that the**

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

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

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation, we confirm that light fixtures are in acceptable condition and that all bulbs are working. Elements Design Build ' limited warranty excludes any fixture you supplied.

### ***Designed Load***

Elements Design Build will repair any electrical wiring that fails to carry its designed load to meet specifications. If electrical outlets, switches, or fixtures do not function as intended, Elements Design Build will repair or replace them.

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

Elements Design Build is not responsible for food spoilage that results from your plugging refrigerators or freezers into a GFCI outlet.

### ***Power Surge***

Power surges are the result of local conditions beyond the control of Elements Design Build and are excluded from limited warranty coverage. These can result in burned-out bulbs or damage to sensitive electronic equipment such as TVs, alarm systems, and computers. Damage resulting from lightning strikes is excluded from limited warranty coverage.

# **Expansion and Contraction**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty**

Elements Design Build provides one-time repairs to many of the effects of expansion and contraction. See individual categories such as drywall and caulk for details.

## **Fencing**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

#### ***Drainage***

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

#### ***Homeowner Association Design Review***

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

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

*See also Property Boundaries.*

### ***Variation***

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

### ***Wood Fences***

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

### ***Wrought Iron Fencing***

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

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty**

If fencing is part of your home purchase, we will confirm the acceptable condition of the fence during your orientation. Elements Design Build will correct fence posts that become loose during the warranty period. Be aware that damage to fencing caused by severe weather should be referred to your homeowner insurance company and is specifically excluded from warranty coverage.

## **Fireplace**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

*See also Fire Prevention.*

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

Look upon burning a fire as a luxury that adds much to the atmosphere but just a little to the heat in a home. About 10 percent of the heat produced by a fire is radiated into the house. In many older homes, the air used by the fireplace for combustion is replaced with cold outside air drawn in through cracks around doors and windows. However, your home is constructed so tightly that this does not happen. We install a fresh air vent to supply the fireplace with combustion air and

reduce the amount of heated air the fire draws from your house. Open this vent before starting the fire as you do the damper.

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

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

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

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

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

### ***Chimney Cleaning***

Creosote and other wood-burning by-products accumulate inside the flue over a period of time. This build-up can be a fire hazard. The way you use your fireplace and the type of wood you

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

### ***Spark Arrester***

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

### ***Gas Fireplace***

Elements Design Build offers direct-vent gas fireplaces. If you ordered this type of fireplace, it is demonstrated during the 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.

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

Occasionally the glass front may need to be cleaned. Follow the manufacturers cleaning procedures.

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

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

Separation of a brick chimney from a newly constructed home may occur. Elements Design Build will repair separation from the main structure in excess of ½ inch in 10 feet. Caulking is acceptable in most cases.

#### ***Cracks***

Normal shrinkage of mortar results in hairline cracks in masonry. Elements Design Build will repair cracks that exceed 1/8 inch in width. The repair consists of pointing or patching and the mortar color will be matched as closely as possible but expect some variation.

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

#### ***Discoloration***

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

#### ***Downdraft***

Although extremely high winds can result in a downdraft, this condition should be temporary and occasional. We will determine and correct continuous malfunction if caused by a construction or design defect.

### ***Glass Doors***

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

### ***Water Infiltration***

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

## **Foundation**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***Cracks***

Cracks can develop in the basement wall. These cracks are usually due to the nature of concrete, in that as it cures it shrinks. Surface cracks are not detrimental to the structural integrity of your home. If a crack develops in a foundation wall that allows water to come through, follow the procedures for submitting a warranty claim.

### ***Dampness***

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

### ***Future Construction in Basement***

If you decide to perform additional construction in the basement, obtain guidelines from a licensed engineer, obtain a building permit, and comply with all codes and safety requirements. Elements Design Build does not warrant that you will be able to obtain such a permit because of the possibility that building codes may change.

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

The foundation of your home has been designed and installed according to the local building regulations. The walls of the foundation are poured concrete with steel reinforcing rods.



### ***Cosmetic Imperfections***

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

### ***Cracks***

Shrinkage or backfill cracks are not unusual in foundation walls, especially at the corners of basement windows. Elements Design Build will seal cracks that allow water to enter the basement.

### ***Leaks***

Elements Design Build will correct conditions that permit water to enter the basement, provided you have complied with the drainage, landscaping, and maintenance guidelines.

## **Garage Overhead Door**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***Light Visible***

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

### ***Lock***

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

### ***Lubrication***

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

### ***Opener***

To prevent damage to a garage door opener, be sure the door is completely unlocked, and the rope-pull has been removed before using the operator. If you have an opener installed after closing on your home, we suggest that you order it from the company that provided and installed

the garage door to assure uninterrupted warranty coverage. Be familiar with the steps for manual operation of the door in the event of a power failure.

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

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

### ***Painting***

Repaint the garage door when you repaint your home, or more often if needed to maintain a satisfactory appearance.

### ***Safety***

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

For your safety, after the expiration of the one-year warranty, have any needed adjustments made by a qualified specialist. The door springs are under a considerable amount of tension and require special tools and knowledge for accurate and safe servicing. Have the door inspected by a professional garage door technician after any significant impact to the door.

### ***Sag***

The garage door may sag slightly due to its weight and span. This will stabilize after the panels have dried.

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

# Gas Shut-Offs

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

You will find shut-offs on gas lines near their connection to each item that operates on gas. In addition, there is a main shut-off at the meter, and on the “tree” in the basement. We point these out during the orientation.

### *Gas Leak*

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

## Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines

The gas company is responsible for leaks up to the meter. Elements Design Build will correct leaks from the meter into the home.

# Ghosting

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

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

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

*See also Carpet/Filtration.*

# Grading and Drainage

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

### *Drainage*

Typically, the grade around your home should slope 1 foot in the first 10 feet, tapering to a 2 percent slope. In most cases, drainage swales do not follow property boundaries. Maintain the slopes around your home to permit the water to drain away from the home as rapidly as possible. This is essential to protect your foundation. Failure to do so can result in major structural damage and will void your warranty.

### *Exterior Finish Materials*

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

### *Roof Water*

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

### *Rototilling*

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

### *Settling*

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

### ***Subsurface Drains***

Occasionally Elements Design Build installs a subsurface drain to ensure that surface water drains from a yard adequately. Keep this area and especially the drain cover clear of debris so that the drain can function as intended.

*See also Landscaping.*

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

### ***Backfill Settlement***

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 first year, Elements Design Build will make one repair to the areas affected. Removal and replacement of any landscaping, sod or seed is your responsibility. Elements Design Build will make these repairs one time during your warranty period. Any additional settling is your responsibility. We recommend waiting as long as possible to make these repairs although the timing is left to you.

### ***Erosion***

Elements Design Build is not responsible for weather-caused damage to unlandscaped yards after the final grade has been established or the closing date, whichever occurs last.

### ***New Sod***

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

### ***Recommendations***

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

### ***Swales***

Elements Design Build does not alter drainage patterns to suit individual landscape plans. Typically, a lot receives water from and passes water on to other lots, so changes in grade often

affect adjacent or nearby lots. Elements Design Build advises against making such changes. After heavy rain or snow, water may stand in swales up to 48 hours.

### ***Under Concrete***

Elements Design Build will fill visible sunken areas under concrete during the first year.

### ***Winter Grading***

Due to weather conditions, especially during winter and early spring, the final grade may not have been established at the time of closing. We document the status of your grading at the time of delivery. When conditions permit, grading work will continue. Confirm that we have completed your grading before beginning landscaping.

## **Gutters and Downspouts**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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.

### ***Paint***

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

### ***Snow and Ice***

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

*See also Roof/Ice Dam.*

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

#### ***Leaks***

We correct leaks that occur during the warranty period.

#### ***Overflow***

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

#### ***Standing Water***

Small amounts of water (up to one inch) will stand for short periods of time in gutters immediately after rain. No correction is required for these conditions.

## **Hardware**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

Elements Design Build will repair hardware items that do not function as intended.

## **Hardwood Floors**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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 1 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.*



### *Shoes*

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

### *Spills*

Clean up food spills immediately with a dry cloth. 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.

### *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.

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

### *Separations*

Shrinkage will result in separations between the members of hardwood floors. If these exceed 1/8-inch, Elements Design Build will fill them one time. Elements Design Build is not

responsible for removing excess filler that appears on the surface if the boards expand due to subsequent changes in humidity and expel the filler.

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

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

#### ***Adjust Vents***

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

#### ***Avoid Overheating***

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

#### ***Blower Panel (Fan cover)***

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

#### ***Combustion Air***

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

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

#### ***Duct Cleaning***

Exercise caution before spending money on professional ductwork cleaning services. A study by the EPA found no proof that ductwork cleaning improves indoor air quality, nor was evidence found that it prevents health problems. For more information contact the EPA and request

document EPA-402-K-97-002. Or you can view this information on their Website: [www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/).

### ***Ductwork Noise***

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

### ***Filter***

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

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

If you have a permanent, washable, removable filter, you need to clean this monthly. Use water only to clean the filter, tap to dry or air dry, and leave 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.

### ***Fuse***

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

### ***Gas Odor***

If you smell gas, call the gas company immediately.

### ***Odor***

A new heating system may emit an odor for a few moments when you first turn it on. An established system may emit an odor after being unused for an extended time (such as after the

summer months if you do not use air conditioning). This is caused by dust that has settled in the ducts and should pass quickly.

### ***On-Off Switch***

The furnace has an on-off blower switch. This switch looks like a regular light switch and is located in a metal box outside the furnace. When turned off, this switch overrides all furnace commands and shuts down the blower. This is usually done only when maintenance service is being performed, although young children have been known to turn the furnace off using this switch. (If your furnace is a high-efficiency model, it does not have a pilot or an on-off switch.)

### ***Pilot***

On models with manually lit pilots, lighting the furnace pilot involves several steps. First, remove the cover panel to expose the pilot. Then rotate the on-off-pilot knob to pilot. When the knob is in this position, you can depress the red button. While depressing the red button, hold a match at the pilot. Once the pilot lights, continue to hold the red button down for 30 to 60 seconds. When you release the red button, the pilot should stay lit. If it does not, wait several minutes to allow any gas to dissipate from the furnace area and repeat the entire process. If the pilot stays lit, rotate the on-off pilot knob to the on position. Reinstall the cover panel. You can find these instructions on a sticker on the furnace and in the manufacturer's literature.

### ***Registers***

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

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

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

### ***Temperature***

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

### ***Thermostat***

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

### ***Trial Run***

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

### **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: NO HEAT**

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- ▶ Thermostat is set to "heat" and the temperature is set above the room temperature.
- ▶ Blower panel cover is installed correctly for the furnace blower (fan) to operate. This panel compresses a button that tells the blower it is safe to operate. Similar to the way a clothes dryer door operates, this panel pushes in a button that lets the fan motor know it is safe to come on. If that button is not pushed in, the furnace will not operate.
- ▶ Breaker on the main electrical panel is on. (Remember, if a breaker trips you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.)
- ▶ Switch on the side of the furnace is on.
- ▶ Fuse in furnace is good. (See manufacturer literature for size and location.)
- ▶ Gas line is open at the main meter and at the side of the furnace.
- ▶ Filter is clean to allow airflow.
- ▶ Vents in individual rooms are open.
- ▶ Air returns are unobstructed.

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

Adequacy of the system is determined by its ability to establish a temperature of 70 degrees F, as measured in the center of the room, 5 feet above the floor. In extremely cold temperatures (10 degrees below or colder), the system should be able to maintain a temperature differential of 80 degrees from the outside temperature.

### ***Duct Placement***

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

### ***Ductwork***

Although the heat system is not a sealed system, the ductwork should remain attached and securely fastened. If it becomes unattached, Elements Design Build will repair as needed.

### ***Furnace Sounds***

Expansion or contraction of metal ductwork results in ticking or popping sounds. While eliminating all these sounds is impossible, Elements Design Build will correct oil canning. (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.)

### ***Thermostat***

Thermostats are calibrated to plus or minus 5 degrees.

## **Heating System: Heat Pump**

### **Homeowner Care and Maintenance**

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

### ***Air Circulation Across Coils***

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

### ***Air Conditioning and Heating***

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

### ***Air Temperature at Vents***

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

### *Auxiliary Heat System*

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

### *Defrost Cycle*

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

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

### *Night Setback*

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

### *Register Adjustment*

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

### *Return Air Vents*

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

### **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: NO HEAT OR AUXILIARY HEAT STAYS ON WHEN OUTSIDE TEMPERATURE IS 30 DEGREES OR ABOVE**

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Thermostat is set to "heat" and the temperature is set above the room temperature.

- ▶ Breaker on the main electrical panel is on. (Remember, if a breaker trips you must turn it from the tripped position to the off position before you can turn it back on.)
- ▶ Filter is clean to allow airflow.
- ▶ Vents in individual rooms are open.
- ▶ Air returns are unobstructed.
- ▶ Outside unit is not blocked by snow or other materials.
- ▶ Outside coil does not have an excessive ice build-up.

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

## **Humidifier**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Operate a humidifier only with the furnace, not with the air conditioner. If you notice condensation on windows, the humidifier should be adjusted to a lower setting. Clean the moisture pad according to the manufacturer's instructions and suggested timetable (usually every six months).

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

## **Insulation**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

Electrical outlets normally emit noticeable amounts of cold air when outside temperatures are low. There are commercial products at your local building supply that will seal a leaky outlet.



## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Elements Design Build will install insulation to meet or exceed the building codes applicable at the time of construction and outlined as part of your purchase agreement.

# **Landscaping**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

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

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

### ***Additions***

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

### ***Backfill***

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

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

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

*See also Grading and Drainage.*

### ***Bark or Rock Beds***

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

### ***Erosion***

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

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

### ***Hired Contractors***

You are responsible for changes to the drainage pattern made by any landscape, concrete, deck, 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 Elements Design Build.

### ***Natural Areas***

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

### ***Planning***

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

### ***Plant Selection***

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

*See also Property Lines.*

### ***Requirements***

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

### ***Seeded Lawns***

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

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

### ***Sod***

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

### ***Soil Mix***

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

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

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

### ***Sprinkler System***

If Elements Design Build included a sprinkler system with your home, we will arrange to have the installer demonstrate the system and make final adjustments shortly after you move in. The

installer will note and correct any deficiencies in the system at the same time. Whether we install your sprinkler, or you install it yourself, keep these points in mind.

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

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

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

### ***Stones***

The soil in your area may have stones and rocks. Removing these naturally occurring elements is a maintenance activity. If Elements Design Build installs seed or sod, large rocks will be picked up and surface raking performed. You will need to provide continued attention to this condition as you care for your yard.

### ***Trees***

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

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

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

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

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

### ***Utility Lines***

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

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

*See also Easements.*

### ***Waiting to Landscape***

If you leave ground unlandscaped, it erodes. Correcting erosion that occurs after closing is your responsibility.

### ***Weeds***

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty**

Landscape materials we install are warranted for one growing season. We will confirm the healthy condition of all plant materials during the orientation. Maintaining landscaping is your responsibility.

## **Mildew**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We will remove any mildew noted during the orientation. Elements Design Build warranty excludes mildew.

# Mirrors

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We will confirm that all mirrors are in acceptable condition during the orientation. Elements Design Build will correct scratches, chips, or other damage to mirrors noted during the orientation.

# Paint and Stain

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### *Colors*

Your selection sheets are your record of the paint and stain color names, numbers, and brands in your home.

### *Exterior*

Regular attention will preserve the beauty and value of your home. Check the painted and stained surfaces of your home's exterior annually. Repaint before much chipping or wearing away of the original finish occurs; this will save the cost of extensive surface preparation.

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

When you repaint the exterior of your home, begin by resetting popped nails and removing blistered or peeling portions of paint with a wire brush or putty knife. Sand, spot with primer,

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.

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

### ***Wall Cracks***

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

*See also Drywall.*

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your orientation we will confirm that all painted or stained surfaces are in acceptable condition. Elements Design Build will touch up paint as indicated on the orientation list. You are responsible for all subsequent touch-up, except painting we perform as part of another warranty repair.

### ***Cracking***

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

### ***Fading***

Expect fading of exterior paint or stain caused by the effects of sun and weather. Elements Design Build' limited warranty excludes this occurrence.

### ***Touch-Up Visible***

Paint touch-up is visible under certain lighting conditions.

### ***Wood Grain***

Because of wood characteristics, color variations will result when stain is applied to wood. This is natural and requires no repair. Today's water-base paints often make wood grain visible on painted trim. Elements Design Build does not provide corrections for this condition.

## **Pests and Wildlife**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

## **Phone Jacks**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

Your home is equipped with telephone jacks as shown on the blueprints and specification sheets. Initiating phone service, additions to phone service, and moving phone outlets for decorating purposes or convenience are your responsibility.

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Elements Design Build will correct outlets positioned so that a wall phone cannot be installed, for instance, if a kitchen phone outlet is positioned too close to a cabinet or countertop backsplash and prevents a wall phone from being connected.

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



# Plumbing

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

### *Aerators*

Even though your plumbing lines have been flushed to remove dirt and foreign matter, small amounts of minerals may enter the line. Aerators on the faucets strain much of this from your water. Minerals caught in these aerators may cause the faucets to drip because washers wear more rapidly when they come in contact with foreign matter. Occasionally (usually every 3-4 months) remove the aerator by unscrewing it from the faucet, clean the debris and reinstall.

*See also Dripping Faucet.*

### *Basement Construction*

If you perform any construction in your basement, ensure that the plumbing lines in the basement or crawl space are not isolated from the heating source without insulation being added.

### *Cleaning*

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

### *Clogs*

The main causes of toilet clogs are domestic items such as disposable diapers, excessive amounts of toilet paper, sanitary supplies, Q-tips, dental floss, and children's toys. 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 shower head 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 the basement floor drain. If you leave the tank full, keep the pilot on and set the temperature to its lowest or "vacation" setting. Check manufacturer's directions for additional hints and instructions.

*See also Extended Absence checklist.*

### ***Fiberglass Fixtures***

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

### ***Freezing Pipes***

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

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

### ***Gold or Brass Finish***

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

### ***Jetted Tubs***

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

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

Auto wax will help seal and preserve your tub's surface. Avoid abrasive cleansers.

### ***Laundry Tub***

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

### ***Leaks***

If a major plumbing leak occurs, the first step is to turn off the supply of water to the area involved. This may mean shutting off the water to the entire home. Then contact the appropriate contractor.

### ***Low Flush Toilets***

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

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

### ***Low Pressure***

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

### ***Main Shut-Off***

The water supply to your home can be shut-off entirely in two locations. The first is at the street and the second is at the meter. We will point both of these out during your orientation.

### ***Marble or Manufactured Marble***

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

### ***Outside Faucets***

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

### ***Porcelain***

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

### ***Running Toilet***

To stop running water, check the shut-off float in the tank. You will most likely find it has lifted too high in the tank, preventing the valve from shutting off completely. In this case, gently bend the float rod down until it stops the water at the correct level. The float should be free and not rub the side of the tank or any other parts. Also check the chain on the flush handle. If 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 near 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. 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. There is also a shut-off provided at the water softener. This valve will shut off water to the main house but leave on any hard water spigots to the outside.

### ***Sprinklers***

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

*See also Landscaping/Sprinkler.*

### ***Stainless Steel***

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

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

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

### ***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 Filter or Softener***

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

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

*See also Septic System.*

## **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: PLUMBING**

### ***No Water Anywhere in the Home***

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- ▶ Main shut off on the meter inside your home is open.
- ▶ Main shut off at the street is open.

- ▶ Individual shut-offs for each water-using item are open.

### ***No Hot Water***

See Water Heater

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

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

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

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

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

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

- ▶ Shut off the water supply to the toilet involved.
- ▶ Use a plunger to clear the blockage.
- ▶ Use a snake to clear the blockage.
- ▶ If you've been in your home fewer than 30 days, contact Elements Design Build or the plumber listed on your Emergency Phone Numbers sheet.
- ▶ If you've been in your home over 30 days, contact a router service.

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

- ▶ If you've been in your home fewer than 30 days, contact Elements Design Build or the plumber listed on your Emergency Phone Numbers sheet.
- ▶ If you've been in your home over 30 days, contact a router service.
- ▶ Remove personal belongings to a safe location. If items are soiled, contact your homeowner insurance company.

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation we will confirm that all plumbing fixtures are in acceptable condition and are functioning properly, and that all faucets and drains operate freely. Your plumbing system warranty is covered by Hewitt Plumbing 937-890-8850. You may contact them directly to solve any warranty issues you may have inside your home.

Elements Design Build will correct construction conditions that disrupt the supply of water to your home if they involve service from the main water supply to your home, provided actions of yours have not caused the problem. Disruption of service due to failure of the water department system is the responsibility of the water department to correct.

## **Property Boundaries**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

At closing you will receive a copy of a survey that shows your lot and the location of your home on the lot. To construct the home Elements Design Build established the property boundaries and corners.

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

*See also Easements.*

## **Railings**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation we will confirm that all railings are in good condition. Elements Design Build installs railings in positions and locations to comply with applicable building codes. Railings should remain securely attached with normal use.

# Resilient Flooring

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***No-Wax Flooring***

The resilient flooring installed in your home is the no-wax type. No-wax means a clear, tough coating that provides both a shiny appearance and a durable surface. 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.

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

### *Adhesion*

Resilient floor covering should adhere. Elements Design Build will repair lifting or bubbling and nail pops that appear on the surface.

### *Ridges*

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

### *Seams*

Seams will occur and are sealed at the time of installation. Elements Design Build will correct gaps in excess of 1/16 inch where resilient flooring pieces meet or 1/8 inch where resilient flooring meets another material. Elements Design Build will correct curling at seams unless caused by excessive water.

## **Roof**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### *Clean Gutters*

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

### ***Ice Dam***

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

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

### ***Leaks***

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

### ***Limit Walking***

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

### ***Severe Weather***

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

## **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: ROOF LEAK**

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

- ▶ Confirm the source of the water is the roof rather than from a
  - Plumbing leak
  - Open window on a higher floor
  - Ice dam
  - Clogged gutter or downspout
  - Blowing rain or snow coming in through code required roof vents
  - Gap in caulking
- ▶ Where practical, place a container under dripping water.
- ▶ If a ceiling is involved, use a screwdriver to poke a small hole in the drywall to release the water.
- ▶ Even if the troubleshooting tips do not identify a solution, the information you gather will be useful to the service provider you call.
- ▶ Remove personal belongings to prevent damage to them. If damage occurs, contact your homeowner insurance company to submit a claim.

- Report the leak to Elements Design Build during first available business hours.

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Elements Design Build will repair roof leaks which occur within the warranty period other than those caused by severe weather, such as hail damage, or some action you have taken, such as walking on the roof. Roof repairs are made only when the roof is dry.

#### ***Ice Dam***

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

#### ***Inclement Weather***

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

## **Rough Carpentry**

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Some floor and stair squeaks are unavoidable. Although Elements Design Build does not warrant against floor squeaks, a reasonable effort will be made to correct them.

#### ***Floor Deflection***

Floors will deflect (bend) when walked on. This will be more noticeable next to hutches, bookcases, pianos, chairs, and other heavy furniture. This is not a structural deficiency and Elements Design Build will take no action for this occurrence.

#### ***Floor Level***

Floors will be level to within 1/4 inch within any 32-inch distance as measured perpendicular to any ridge or indentation. Elements Design Build will correct floor slope that exceeds 1/240 of the room.

#### ***Plumb Walls***

Elements Design Build will correct walls that are out of plumb more than 1/2 inch in an 8-foot distance or walls that are bowed more than 1/4 inch in any 32-inch measurement.

# Septic System

## Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines

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

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

## *Pumping the System*

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

## *System Failure*

Signs that your septic system is failing include:

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

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

### ***Water Softener***

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

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

## **Shower Doors or Tub Enclosures**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

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

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

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During your orientation we will confirm the good condition of all shower doors and tub enclosures. Elements Design Build warrants that shower doors and tub enclosures will function according to manufacturer specifications.

## **Siding**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***Wood and Wood Products***

Wood or wood-product siding will require routine refinishing. The timing will vary with climatic conditions. Maintain caulking to minimize moisture entry into the siding. Note that some paint colors will require more maintenance than others and some sides of the home may show signs of wear sooner based on their exposure to the elements. Some wood siding, such as cedar, is subject to more cracking and will require more maintenance attention.

### ***Vinyl***

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

### ***Cement Based Products***

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

*See also Paint and Wood Trim.*

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Elements Design Build warrants all siding to be free of defects in material and workmanship. We will confirm the good condition of the siding during your orientation. Subsequent damage to the siding will be by your responsibility to repair.

Elements Design Build will caulk and apply touch-up paint to cracks that exceed 3/16 inch. We provide this repair one time only near the end of the first year. Paint or stain touch-up will not match.

We will correct any separation at joints or where siding meets another material if the separation allows water to enter the home. Elements Design Build will correct delaminating siding.

## **Smoke Detectors**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***Battery***

If a smoke detector makes a chirping sound that is a sign that the battery needs to be replaced. Follow manufacturer instructions for installing a new battery. Most smoke detectors use a 9 volt battery.

### *Cleaning*

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

### *Locations*

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

## **Stairs**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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.

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Although Elements Design Build does not warrant against stair vibration and squeaks, a reasonable effort will be made to correct them.

## **Sump Pump**

### **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

If conditions on your lot made it appropriate, the foundation design includes a perimeter drain and sump pump. The perimeter drain runs around the foundation to gather water and channel it to the sump pit, or crock. When the water reaches a certain level, the pump comes on and pumps the water out of your home. Read and follow the manufacturer's directions for use and care of your sump pump.

### *Continuous Operation*

The pump may run often or even continuously during a heavy storm or long periods of rain. This is normal under such conditions.

### ***Discharge***

Know where the discharge for your sump pump system is and keep the end of the drain clear of debris so that water can flow out easily.

### ***Power Supply***

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

### ***Roof Water***

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

### ***Routine Check***

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

### ***Trees and Shrubs***

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

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

# **Ventilation**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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 and crawl space vents to minimize accumulation of moisture.



### ***Attic Vents***

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

### ***Crawl Space Vents***

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

### ***Daily Habits***

Your daily habits can help keep your home well ventilated:

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

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

Elements Design Build warranty guidelines for active components (for example, exhaust fans) are discussed under the appropriate headings (such as electrical systems, heating system, and so on).

## **Water Heater: Electric**

### **Homeowner Care and Maintenance**

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

#### ***Drain Tank***

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

### ***Element Cleaning or Replacement***

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

### ***Pressure Relief Valve***

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

### ***Safety***

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

### ***Temperature***

Temperature settings on an electric water heater will produce approximately the temperatures listed below:

Hot	120 degrees F
A	130 degrees F
B	140 degrees F
C	150 degrees F
Very Hot	160 degrees F

The recommended setting for operation of a dishwasher is B, or 140 degrees. Higher settings can waste 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.

### **TROUBLE SHOOTING TIPS: NO HOT WATER**

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the

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

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

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

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty**

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

# **Water Heater: Gas**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

### ***Condensation***

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

### ***Drain Tank***

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

### ***Pilot***

Never light a gas pilot when the water heater tank is empty. Always turn off the gas before shutting off the cold-water supply to the tank.

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

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

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

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

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

## ***Safety***

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

## ***Temperature***

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

## **TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS: NO HOT WATER**

Before calling for service, check to confirm that the:

- Pilot is lit. (Directions will be found on the side of the tank.)
- Temperature setting is not on “vacation” or too low.
- Water supply valve is open.

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

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

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

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

*See also Plumbing*

# **Windows, Screens, and Sliding Glass Doors**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

## ***Acrylic Block***

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

## ***Aluminum***

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

## ***Condensation***

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

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

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

## ***Sills***

Window sills in your home are made of wood, wood product, man-made marble, or marble. The most common maintenance activity is dusting. Twice a year, check caulking and touch-up as needed. Wax is not necessary but can be used to make sills gleam. Protect wood and wood product sills from moisture. If you arrange plants on a sill, include a plastic tray under the pot.

## ***Sliding Glass Doors***

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

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

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

## ***Sticking Windows***

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

### ***Tinting***

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

### ***Weep Holes***

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

### **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

We will confirm that all windows, screens, and sliding glass doors are in acceptable condition during the orientation. Elements Design Build will repair or replace broken windows or damaged screens noted on the orientation list. Windows should operate with reasonable ease and locks should perform as designed. If they do not, Elements Design Build will provide adjustments.

### ***Condensation***

Condensation on interior surfaces of the window and frame is the result of high humidity within the home and low outside temperatures. You influence the humidity level within your home; Elements Design Build provides no corrective measure for this condition.

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

### ***Infiltration***

Some air and dust will infiltrate around windows, especially before the installation of landscaping in the general area. Elements Design Build warranty excludes this occurrence.

### ***Scratches***

Elements Design Build confirms that all window glass is in acceptable condition at the orientation. Minor scratches on windows can result from delivery, handling, and other construction activities. Elements Design Build will replace windows that have scratches readily visible from a distance of 4 feet. Elements Design Build does not replace windows that have scratches visible only under certain lighting conditions.

## ***Tinting***

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

*See also Ventilation*

# **Wood Trim**

## **Homeowner Use and Maintenance Guidelines**

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

*See also Expansion and Contraction*

## **Elements Design Build Limited Warranty Guidelines**

During the orientation we will confirm that wood trim is in acceptable condition. Minor imperfections in wood materials will be visible and will require no action. Elements Design Build will correct readily noticeable construction damage such as chips and gouges listed during the orientation.

## ***Exterior***

Elements Design Build will caulk and apply touch-up paint to cracks in exterior trim components that exceed 3/16 inch. We provide this repair one time only near the end of the first year. Paint or stain touch-up will not match. We will correct any separation at joints that allows water to enter the home.

### ***Raised Grain***

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



# Warranty Service Request

For your protection and to allow efficient operations, our warranty service system is based on your written report of non-emergency items. Please use this form to notify us of warranty items. Mail or Fax the form to us. We will contact you to set an inspection appointment. Service appointments are available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

*Thank you for your cooperation.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ph (Home) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ph (Work) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ph (Work) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Community \_\_\_\_\_  
 Lot # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Plan \_\_\_\_\_  
 Closing Date \_\_\_\_\_

<i>Location</i>	<i>Service Requested</i>	<i>Service Action*</i>		
		Warranty	Courtesy	Maintenance

\*Warranty or Courtesy indicates a Elements Design Build responsibility. Maintenance indicates a homeowner responsibility.

*Comment:* \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Homeowner \_\_\_\_\_

# One-Time Repairs

We provide several first-time repairs for your home. Your Homeowner Manual lists these under individual headings such as drywall and grout in the Caring for Your Home section. We provide this service as a courtesy and to give you an opportunity to observe methods and materials needed for ongoing maintenance of your home.

Only *one* one-time repair request per home during the warranty period, please. We suggest sending this in near the end of your warranty year to maximize the benefits you receive. Simply complete and mail or fax this form to our office with your year-end warranty list. Thank you!

<i>Room</i>	<i>Location</i>

*Comment:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Homeowner \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Homeowner,

We want our Homeowner Manual to be relevant and useful to the needs of our customers and homeowners. We revise this material once each year and would appreciate your feedback and comments.

<p>Please indicate how you used this manual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Read it from cover to cover</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Briefly looked it over</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Looked up answers to specific questions on occasion</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Did not use it at all</li></ul>	<p>Did you find the information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Useful</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Easy to understand</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Accurate</li></ul>
<p>What sections were most helpful?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Purchasing Your Home</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Arranging Your Loan</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> New Home Selections</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Construction of Your Home</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Homeowner Orientation</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Closing on Your Home</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Caring for Your Home</li></ul>	

1. What topics should we add?
2. Are there any topics we need to clarify, or any item that was confusing?
3. Do you have any additional comments?

If you would like us to call you, please give your name and phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you from your warranty team at Elements Design Build. We sincerely appreciate the trust you placed in us to build your home. Please let us know if there is anything, we can do for you.