

# **Laird Group - Sample**

## **Section D - Maintenance Guide**

Your new home has been built to provide you with years of service. However, like a car, it needs regular preventive maintenance to preserve its beauty and value – and to prevent costly repairs and replacements later.

This area of our manual will help you understand some things that you can do to keep your home looking good and operating efficiently. During the lifetime of your home, you will need to be actively involved in its care and up-keep. By following a preventative maintenance plan, many times a minor adjustment or repair done immediately saves a more serious, time-consuming, and sometimes costly repair later. In addition, you'll save time and money, you may have a house that will give you a greater return if you decide to sell, and you will free up more time to do the things that you really want to do – like play golf or spend time with family and friends.

In the first year, **all new homes** go through a break-in period. Doors may stick, caulk may pull away from a countertop and cabinets may need adjustment. These things happen and are part of a new home. If it is a warrantable item, repair and/or replacement is provided by your home's warranty program. If it is a maintenance item, remember to use this guide, it will give tips and suggestions on how to take care of the situation.

### **About This Manual...**

This manual is not intended as a complete maintenance manual and Laird Group assumes no liability and/or responsibility for the effectiveness or the possible outcome from using any of the following suggestions. In addition to this information, it is important

that you take time to read the literature provided by the manufacturers of consumer products (stove, dishwasher, heating system, etc.) and other items in your home. Although much of the information may be familiar to you, some points may be significantly different from homes you have had in the past. The information contained in that material is not repeated here.

In the future, you may find a situation where this document suggests one thing and a manufacturer's document suggests another. In these circumstances, always follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

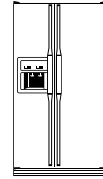
This manual is designed for interior and exterior use around the home. The first section is information on "**Interior**" systems in the home. The second section is on "**Exterior**" systems. As you might expect, there will be some overlap between interior and exterior systems. If you are uncertain about where to look, use the Table of Contents to find the information you need.

It is a good idea to set yourself up with a few basic tools and supplies for your home. Having them on hand saves a lot of time and can help you in case of an emergency or a loss of power at your home. We suggest the following:

<p><b>A medium-sized tool box</b> <b>Adjustable wrench</b> <b>Pair of pliers</b> <b>Full set of screwdrivers</b> <b>Hammer</b> <b>Assorted nails and screws</b> <b>6' stepladder</b> <b>Flashlight</b> <b>Caulk gun</b> <b>Interior and exterior caulk</b> <b>1", 2" and 3" paint brushes</b> <b>Assorted sandpaper</b></p>
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# Interior Systems

## Appliances



Your Laird Group home comes equipped with a variety of appliances. These can include stoves, dishwashers, microwave ovens, refrigerators, garbage disposals, or a washer/dryer to name a few. At your Homeowner Orientation, our representative will test all the appliances for proper operation. He will also see that you receive all the information and instruction manuals, as well as the manufacturer's warranties for each appliance. If you haven't already done so, look through all the paperwork carefully, and make sure to fill out and return the registration card for each appliance to start the manufacturer's warranty on each appliance. Then file the manuals in a convenient location for future reference.



## **MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

- Many manufacturers offer a toll-free 800-Hotline service or a website to answer questions about appliance problems and operation. If you have a problem with any of your appliances, contact the manufacturers directly as they are up to date on your appliances and carry the complete warranty for each. Their number is located in the manual that came with the unit.
- When calling a manufacturer for service, be prepared to give the purchase date (your move-in date), the serial and model number for the appliance and a description of the problem. The serial number is generally located on a small metal plate or seal attached to the appliance in an inconspicuous location.
- Black "glass" panels that may be installed on your appliances are generally made of plastic and should be cleaned with mild detergent and water. Do not use abrasive cleansers as they will damage the finish.

***Before Calling for Service: If an electrical appliance fails to work, implement the following checklist before calling the appropriate***

**manufacturer.**

1. Check that the appliance is plugged in.
2. The circuit breaker in the panel box controlling the appliance should be in the on position.

See *Circuit Breakers in the Electrical Systems Section*.

3. Some appliances come with their own separate fuses or circuit breakers.

Review the

Manufacturer's Service Manual for exact location, then check for proper set.

**Manufacturer Warranties:** *As mentioned, the appliances installed in your home are protected by Manufacturer Warranties. Should you experience warranty protected problems, please contact the manufacturer.*

**Warranty Caution:** *Any electrical, Heating and A/C or plumbing addition, alteration, or modification to the original appliance installations, may void all applicable warranties.*

## **Appliance Serial Numbers**

For warranty service on an appliance, contact the appropriate manufacturer directly at the service number provided in the appliance literature. You can do this by either calling them at their 1.800 number or by using their web site. 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 \_\_\_\_\_

**Appliance      Manufacturer    Model #                      Serial #**  
**Service Phone #**

<b>Range</b>				
<b>Range Hood</b>				
<b>Cooktop</b>				
<b>Oven</b>				
<b>Microwave</b>				
<b>Dishwasher</b>				

<b>Disposal</b>				

## **ATTIC**

The attic space, located immediately below the roof, may be constructed with dimensional lumber or a truss system. Whichever system you have, it is not engineered to support additional weight and this area should not be used for storage. We provide access to this area for maintaining mechanical equipment that is either located or passes through this space. When you perform needed maintenance in the attic, use caution and avoid stepping off wood members onto the drywall. If you step off the wood members, you will damage the ceiling below, you may be injured and such injury or damage is not covered by your limited warranty.

Energy efficient homes are reasonably air tight, sometimes causing the attic access cover to lift up during high winds. Placement of the cover in the proper resting position after a windstorm is a normal maintenance task.



### **MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

- Laird Group installs a variety of attic vents to remove excessive heat and moisture from the attic space. These can include ridge vents, gable louvers, roof **vents**, soffit vents, and baffles where the roof meets the wall. Do not cover these vents with insulation or any other material.

- Insulation on the attic floor protects the rooms below it. If the insulation is moved, it will leave gaps between the insulation panels and may obstruct the attic vents. Always replace moved insulation back to its original position.

**Warranty Caution:** *Roof trusses or dimensional lumber should not be cut for any reason. This can structurally damage the integrity of the roof and will void your Builders Limited Warranty Program's major structural defect warranty.*

## **Bathrooms - General Information**

The tile walls in your bathroom are easy to maintain. The seams, joints, and sealers are not waterproof, and require proper maintenance to prevent water seepage and damage of materials adjacent to and underneath the tile.

Cracks in the caulking joints between tile and tub, in the shower stall corners, and at the floor, are caused by the high degree of moisture present in every bathroom, as well as from the normal shrinkage of caulking material. Separation between the tub and wall tile is caused by home settlement and by the weight of the tub when filled with water.



### **MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

- Clean bathroom mirrors with a spray glass cleaner and a soft cloth, wiping several times to remove all glass cleaner residue. Do not use abrasive cleansers which will permanently scratch and mar mirror surfaces.
- **Mildew:** Moisture and mildew problems can occur in any room where water vapor is present. To reduce mildew, turn on the exhaust fan or slightly open a window when bathing. Wipe off wet tiles when done, and then hang up towels and washcloths to dry. To clean mildewed surfaces and reduce mildew odors, apply a liquid agent in a well-ventilated room, followed by a disinfectant and thorough rinsing with clear water. For soap scum, rust stains or other hard to clean residue, consult a home improvement specialist for products or cleaning tips to remove the stain.

- **Tile Repair Note:** Laird Group cannot ensure that ceramic tile wall repairs requiring new material will match the color of the existing tile material or colored grouting. Color variations are normal.

## **Cabinets – Kitchen, Bathroom, Laundry Room, Study, Etc.**

Your cabinets are selected for their attractive appearance, durability, and ease of care. They should be cared for in much the same way as fine wood furniture. A light coat of wax or lemon oil applied once or twice a year will protect the finish and appearance. Never clean cabinets with harsh abrasives. It's best to use a soft cloth slightly moistened with water. After wiping the area, use a dry cloth to remove any moisture that is still on the woodwork. Wood cabinet tone, grain, and color variations are normal, and reflect the natural characteristics of real wood.



### **Maintenance Guidelines**

- Avoid “washing” cabinets with water as the water may damage the luster and dry out the wood.
- If you have spills, wipe them up immediately. Never leave any liquid on your wood surfaces as it can cause staining and warping of the woodwork.
- Over time, your cabinet doors will loosen. Straighten the door and tighten the hardware with a screwdriver as needed. If hinges or drawer glides become sluggish, use a small amount of spray silicone to improve their action.
- Cabinet mounted coffee makers are not recommended since the rising steam will damage solid wood and wood veneer, causing fading or delamination. For the same reason, position regular coffee makers or crock-pots out from underneath the upper cabinets and near the front of the counter.
- **Laminate Cabinets:** Clean laminate cabinets with a soapy cloth or sponge, or use a non-abrasive liquid household cleanser for more stubborn stains. There

are one-step cleaning products available for laminates that clean, reduce streaking, and leave surfaces polished. As with all cleaning products, carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions.

- **Shelves and Lazy Susan Cabinets:** Flat and carousel shelves are not designed to hold weight that exceeds 20 pounds per square foot. Keep canned goods, flour, sugar, and heavier products on the bottom shelf of the base cabinets. If desired, apply contact paper to shelves to protect against scratches and water stains.
- **Drawer and Hinge Care:** Check the hinges at least once a year for proper alignment and tightness, using a screwdriver to make necessary adjustments. Check drawers for easy movement and apply a silicone spray to the drawer guides should sticking occur.
- **Repairing Nicks and Scratches:** Hardware stores offer color matching putty, stains, and polymer fillers to cover and repair cabinet nicks and scratches.
- Your color selection sheets are your record of the brand, style and color of cabinets in your home. Make sure you keep these on hand for reference.

## **Caulk**



Caulk has been applied to several areas around your home – both inside and outside. In fact, in nearly any place where two different materials come together, caulk is used to seal the area and give your home a neater appearance. Caulk is also used to help insulate your home and to keep water away from areas where it shouldn't be. During your home's lifetime, caulk will separate as a result of your home continually adjusting to its environment. This is a normal homeowner maintenance item and can be easily taken care of using a caulk gun and the proper caulk.





## **Maintenance Guidelines**

- When purchasing caulk, make sure to buy the best type for your particular job. As a general rule – **Silicone caulk** works well around water but it is not paintable. **Latex caulk** is paintable and is generally used for cosmetic purposes. We recommend that you ask the hardware store in your area for suggestions on which type of caulk to use.
- **Colored caulk** is available where larger selections are provided. As with any colored material, dye lots can vary.
- Caulk used in the kitchen, bathroom and laundry room needs to be checked frequently for any shrinkage or cracking. If you notice this happening, repair the caulk immediately to prevent more serious problems down the road.
- You will want to inspect all interior caulking around the home once a year and re-caulk as necessary. Remember to use the right caulk for your particular job.

## **Countertops – Laminate (Formica)**

Laminate countertops are long lasting and can be cared for easily by simply wiping or sweeping up crumbs or spills when they occur. Never use abrasive cleaners, as they will dull the surface.



## **Maintenance Guidelines**

- **Laminate countertops are heat "resistant", not heat "proof"**. Do not set hot pans or skillets on your laminate countertops as you could scorch the surface, leaving a permanent burn mark in the countertop. Instead, set all hot materials on oven pads.
- Always use a cutting board when cutting, chopping, etc. Sharp knives can penetrate the surface, leaving a permanent mark.
- Do not use your countertop as an ironing board.

- When cleaning, use a soapy cloth or sponge to wipe up materials. **Do not let any liquid stand on your laminate surfaces** as it could penetrate seams, corner joints and the backsplash, damaging your countertop. There are one-step cleaning products available for laminates that clean, reduce streaking, and leave surfaces polished. As with all cleaning products, carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Check seams periodically and re-caulk as necessary.
- In time, steam from an open dishwasher may cause swelling and delamination. To reduce moisture damage, apply a waterproof sealer to the underside of countertop, directly over the dishwasher, and two feet left and right of the dishwasher. Apply this sealer every year to this area to keep your countertops looking new.

### **Countertops - Ceramic Tile, Corian, Granite**

To clean ceramic tile, corian or granite countertops, use a soft towel or a brush to wipe up breadcrumbs or sugar. For spills, use a slightly damp cloth to wipe up the area. Make sure the area is completely dry when you are finished. As with laminate countertops, don't use abrasive cleaners, as they will damage the surface.



#### **Maintenance Guidelines**

- The material between your tiles is called grout. It is the same material used in your tile floors, showers and bathtubs. For more information on grout, **please see page 24.**
- Ceramic tile is brittle and can be broken by a sharp blow from a heavy object. Be careful to not drop objects on ceramic tile.
- It's best to use a portable chopping block or cutting board when preparing meals as a knife can scratch tile.
- Scouring powder should be used sparingly as they can very easily discolor the grout between the tiles. Water is the best solution for cleaning tile countertops.

Use a very small amount of water and when you're finished, make sure that the area is completely dry.

- If you have a stain that will not come up simply with water, consult with a home improvement expert about products that will work on the stain.
- Excessive heat can cause charring, burning, lifting, or blistering. Do not place hot pans, coffee pots, baking dishes, hot irons, or burning cigarettes directly on these surfaces. Use protective hot pads or trivets under countertop electrical appliances.
- Avoid exposing Corian to strong chemicals, such as paint removers, oven cleaners, etc. If contact occurs, quickly flush the surface with water.
- **Do not cut directly on Corian countertops. Always use a cutting board.**
- Run cold water when pouring boiling water into sinks. **This is especially needed with Corian sinks.**
- **Ceramic, Granite and Corian Countertop Repair Note:** Laird Group cannot ensure that ceramic countertop tile repairs requiring new material will match the color of the existing tile material or colored grouting. Color variations, thickness and veining are normal.

## **Condensation/Mold**

Condensation occurs when warm moist air comes into contact with a colder surface, like a window or mirror. Condensation is most prevalent in new homes, especially during the first year. It is caused by the large quantities of water used to build the home, from the concrete foundations to the paint on the walls. In addition, the wood that was used to construct your walls and roof also has excess water that will work its way out. As this water evaporates and the drying-out process occurs, the moisture takes the form of condensation on interior windows, basement walls and plumbing pipes. Condensation is normal. However, it does need to be controlled. If not, it can remain inside your home and in some cases, begin to produce mold.

For homeowners everywhere, mold is a serious issue. It is a product of humidity, condensation and water leaks. Mold generally occurs when moisture is not allowed to properly vent from the home.

Products today such as windows, doors, caulk and insulation work together to produce a more energy efficient home. In the process, these new products, and the techniques for installing them, have also eliminated air leaks, creating a more airtight home. While these changes help reduce energy bills and keep drafts inside the home to a minimum, they also prevent fresh air from coming into the home.

Therefore, ventilation is essential to keep condensation and mold to a minimum. If condensation is not properly vented out of the home, mold can develop.



### **Maintenance Guidelines**

- When showering, cooking or doing laundry, always use the exhaust fan in the room. This will take the moist air to the outside of the home. You may also want to open a window in the room slightly.
- Your home's HVAC system (especially air conditioning) is the biggest help that you will have in eliminating condensation and mold. Make sure it is kept in good working order.
- Any water leaks that may occur inside your home should be taken care of immediately to prevent mold from developing. If your home is under warranty, contact warranty service for assistance. If your warranty has expired, contact a licensed professional.
- During warm dry weather, open basement windows, and close them when outside humidity is high. Keep windows closed during damp, muggy weather and opened during clear, dry weather.
- Ensure that the clothes dryer is properly vented to the outside and that the vent is clear of obstructions and lint.

- Do not try to accelerate the “drying out” process by creating high heating temperatures during winter, or too cold temperatures in the summer. This will lead to an uneven drying which will exaggerate the effects of normal shrinkage.

- **Crawl Space Areas:** There should be no standing water in your crawl space. However, the crawl space may be damp at certain times of the year. Proper ventilation in crawl space areas prevents high humidity levels, condensation, and resulting mildew. Fans may be used to help vent the crawl space. Do not enclose crawl space areas that open to an existing basement unless you provide exterior venting. Plastic (**visqueen**) is used as a vapor barrier to keep the floor joists from soaking up moisture from damp soils. Do not use the crawl space for storage of flammable items or items that may be damaged by high humidity and mildew. Crawlspace vents should be closed and insulation placed in front of them during the winter season to prevent cold air from freezing pipes. After the threat of frost or freezing temperatures, crawl space vents should be reopened to allow ventilation.