

New Homeowner's Handbook

The Complete & Easy Guide to Maintain your Home



HISPANIC HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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INTRODUCTION TO
THE NEW HOMEOWNER'S HANDBOOK:
THE COMPLETE AND EASY GUIDE TO MAINTAINING YOUR HOME
FROM HISPANIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Owning a home is an opportunity and a challenge. A home gives you a sense of security, a place to raise a family and to adapt your space to your needs. But a home also requires continuous care to keep it safe, to keep it comfortable and to keep its value.

That's why we have created this homeowner manual for you. This manual will address the important things you need to know about home maintenance, such as:

- What to do in case of an emergency
- How to keep your home energy efficient

How to maintain your operating systems in good working order

If you purchased a new home from Hispanic Housing Development Corporation, you received a Home Warranty and a Warranty Manual. The Manual also tells you what items an owner is required to maintain or repair, and should not expect a builder to do for you. Please read that booklet. The builder is not responsible for clogged toilets, damage that you or others cause, or routine wear and tear. Furnaces won't work properly if not cleaned, toilets or sinks will clog if overloaded, inside and outside drains must be kept clean to prevent back-up. Look at the "Troubleshooting" sections if you have an emergency on hand. Learn to use things in your house carefully, because you must replace them if they break.

Compare this to owning a new car. A manufacturer's warranty will not cover engine repairs if you don't change the oil. They won't replace a tire if you drove over a nail. They won't replace a windshield if someone threw a rock at it.

We hope this manual will help you keep your home in good operating condition. Also read and understand the manufacturer's manuals that came with any appliance.

If you purchased an existing home, you may not be able to have the seller fix things for you. A good home inspection before buying is critical so that a seller can fix things before you buy. A good knowledge of how to keep things working is even more important in older homes.

If you did not buy your home from HHDC, we are providing this manual as a service to the Homeownership Counseling Organization you have worked with. There are many useful tips that will serve you well in any home that you buy.

Erica Pascal

Vice President

Residential Sales

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Tear out this page and place it somewhere safe and visible. Refer to this guide when confronted with an emergency. This sheet should be placed alongside your Emergency Contacts sheet. Be sure to read through our guide as it contains information that will help you avoid and be better prepared for unexpected situations.

Plumbing System Emergencies

Natural Gas Leak If you smell gas: Do not try to light any appliances. Do not touch any electrical switch; do not use any phone in your building. Immediately call your gas supplier from a neighbor's phone. Follow the gas supplier's instructions. If you cannot reach your gas supplier, call the fire department.

Burst Pipe Line Immediately turn off the Main Water Valve. Contact a certified plumber to correct the problem. Be sure to also shut off your water when there is a severe leak in your building. Shut down the water heater when shutting down the water supply to prevent any damage.

No Water If there is no running water to a specific appliance, check to see that the corresponding water valve is set to the ON position. If there is no running water in the entire house, verify that the main water valve has not been turned off. Call your water department after verifying that the water valves are turned on.

Electrical System Emergencies

Immediately shut off electricity at main panel box when:

- You smell burning material during a complete power outage.
- The area around electrical switches or plugs turns black or is hot.
- Burning occurs in electrical devices or large appliances.
- You smell burning insulation (very distinct odor).

Complete power outage

- Keep a flashlight and other emergency supplies handy in case of power outages. Check the main panel box to see if there is a tripped circuit breaker.
- If you determine that a circuit breaker needs to be replaced, turn off all large appliances or unplug them before replacing a breaker to avoid damage to the electrical system.
- Check your neighborhood to see if others are without power. Call to report the power outage. Call only once to keep the line open for other customers.
- Check your refrigerator to ensure that food does not go bad and cause foodborne illnesses. Discard any food that has been defrosted over a long period of time.
- If you rely on electric medical equipment, such as wheelchairs, ventilators and oxygen compressors, plan ahead by talking to your medical supply company about getting batteries or a generator as a back up power source.

Heating System Emergencies

Complete loss of heat Follow the instructions on page 29-30 of the manufacturer's manual to troubleshoot your furnace. Make sure there is power running into your home. If you are unable to locate the problem, call your gas company.

Evacuation Plan is Located _____

(WRITE HERE THE LOCATION OF YOUR FAMILY'S EVACUATION PLAN)

Emergency Contacts

Police Department Emergencies	911
Police Department Non-Emergencies	312-746-6000
Fire Department Emergencies	911
Fire Department Non-Emergencies	312-744-6666
City of Chicago Services Non-Emergency	311
Hospital	
Ambulance	911
Family Doctor	
Pharmacist	
Illinois Poison Control Center	1-800-222-1222
Neighbors	
Neighbors	
Neighbors	
Gas Company	
Electric Company	
Plumber	
Electrician	

Annual Schedule

○ Set aside the first of the month to perform all tasks designated as "Monthly Tasks".

■ Refer to the "Quarterly Tasks Checklist" for tasks that should be performed this week.

■ Refer to the "Spring Maintenance Checklist" for tasks that should be performed this week.

■ Refer to the "Fall Maintenance Checklist" for tasks that should be performed this week.

■ Refer to the "Annual Tasks Checklist" for tasks that should be performed this week.

January							February							March							April						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13		8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					

May							June							July							August						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
29	30	31					24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30	31	

September							October							November							December						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	8	9	10	11	12	13	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
29	30	31					28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	23	24	25	26	27	28	29

This calendar has been placed here to help you keep track of all routine maintenance listed in this manual. Refer to this calendar frequently. Check off the completed tasks as you go.

Toolbox Essentials

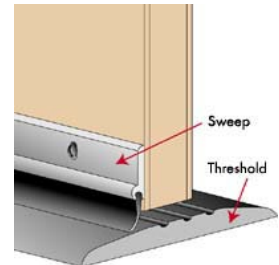
In order to perform all previously mentioned tasks, there are certain tools you must have handy.

- A set of screwdrivers – one Phillips-head and a flat-head.
- Standard pliers.
- Quality interior and exterior caulk.
- Wrenches. While a crescent (adjustable) wrench is a toolbox essential, an assortment of box wrenches in various sizes will give you more power and precision in most applications.
- Flashlights with spare batteries.
- Two hammers - a claw-type for driving nails, removing nails and prying, and a ball-peen hammer for shaping metal, closing rivets and other general work.
- Handsaw and portable drill.
- A utility knife – one with a retractable blade is the most handy and safe to have around.
- Tape measure and level.
- An assortment of screws, nails, nuts and bolts, utility tape and wood glue.
- A good fitting pair of safety goggles.
- A decent-sized shovel and rake.
- Ladder
- Fire Extinguisher
- High quality toilet plunger and toilet auger.
- And a good first aid-kit – filled with bandages in an assortment of sizes, antiseptic wipes, sterile gauze and an antibiotic ointment.

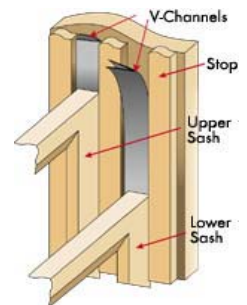
The start of a new season is the perfect time to inspect the outside and inside of your home. This will help you ensure everything is working properly and help reduce problems. The following are guidelines that will help you be better prepared for extreme weather conditions.

Fall Maintenance Check List: Outside

- Have the roof checked and make any small repairs now. Check for leaks.
- Check siding for cracks and holes; fill with caulking as necessary. Clean siding. Paint or seal wood siding. Joints where materials meet should be caulked.
- Inspect wood framing for termites; re-treat as necessary.
- Check weather stripping on all doors and windows. Replace where necessary. Install foam inserts in electrical receptacles on exterior walls.
- Place weatherproof cover on window air conditioner or completely remove air conditioner from window.
- Drain outside faucets. Remove all garden hoses.
- Check garage door for balance. See page 19 for details.



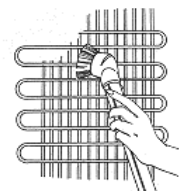
Door Sweep



Window Weather-stripping

Fall Maintenance Check List: Inside

- Check insulation wherever possible (in the attic) ; replace or add as necessary. (Consult a professional if you are not familiar with this process) Make sure window seals are in good condition.
- Call a professional to service your heating system, heat pump, and humidifier. (If you haven't done so recently)
- Walk around your house and make sure all heat vents are clear and clean.
- Change filters on furnace at the beginning of the heating season and every month there after, even during the cooling season because the fan is still working. (See pg 11 for detailed information on furnace)
- Drain 2 - 3 gallons of water from the hot water heater and remove sediment from bottom of tank; clean burner surfaces; adjust burners. (See pg 15 for detailed information on water heater)
- Turn on the humidifier. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to check and clean the humidifier. (See pg 16 for detailed information)
- Vacuum dust from refrigerator coils.
- Inspect the insulation (if any) on the water pipes and water heater. Adjust or replace where necessary.



Vacuum Refrigerator Coils

Spring Maintenance Check List: Outside

- Check all weather stripping and exterior caulking. See page 19 of this manual for specific locations where you should inspect.
- Clean gutters and downspouts. Clear out all outside drains regularly. See page 19 for details.
- Check wood, vinyl and aluminum siding for signs of mold or mildew.
- Check all door and window screens; patch or replace as needed. Clean exterior doors and garage doors; refinish when necessary.
- Check concrete or block foundation for cracks or surface deterioration. Consult a professional if you have any leaking or severe cracking.
- Check A/C unit drain line for clogs. Attach a wet/dry vacuum to the drain line outside (remove the paper filter first) and suck any clogs out.
- Check the garage door for balance. See page 19 for details.



Caulk around windows

Spring Maintenance Check List: Inside

- Have your dryer's exhaust duct cleaned. Clean stove hood, and room fans. (See page 18 of this manual for more information on your dryer)
- Drain 2 - 3 gallons of water from the hot water heater and remove sediment from bottom of tank; clean burner surfaces; adjust burners. Do a visual inspection of the water heater's air intake screen. Clean lint accumulations. See page 15 for more information on your water heater.
- Check the sump pump, make sure it is working properly. Remember to always clean out any debris or accumulated sediment. Make sure it is powered and running at all times. Clean out any blockage in the inlet suction screen.
- Clean drapes and blinds; repair as needed.
- Turn the humidifier off.
- Inspect A/C unit for proper operation.
- Inspect attic for proper ventilation.
- Check the seals on the refrigerator and freezer to make sure the cold air is not leaking. Vacuum dust from the refrigerator coils.
- Check basement walls and floors for dampness; if too moist, contact a professional.



Have the dryer exhaust duct cleaned.

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

Aside from the seasonal routine maintenance there are other, more frequent tasks you should remember to follow up with.

Monthly Tasks

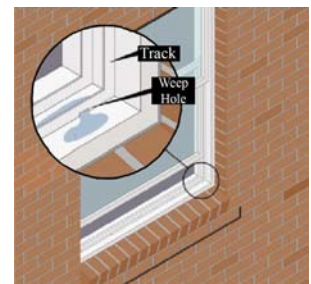
- Replace filters on furnace every 1-2 months.
- Test Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCIs).
- Direct outdoor sprinklers away from the house during summer time.

Quarterly Tasks

- Close and open the main water and all individual supply shutoff valves, this will ensure that it does not get stuck in the open position.
- Check and repair faucet leaks. Clean aerators on faucets. Use a rust or scale remover to return them to normal condition or replace where necessary.
- Check caulking around the inside of your home. See page 18 For specific locations you should check.
- Do a reversal test of your garage door. (See page 19 for details)
- Vacuum around the base of your water heater for dust, dirt, and lint.
- Clean out window weep holes.
- Inspect your garage door and opener for proper operation. See page 17 for detailed check points.



Main Water Shutoff Valve



Clean window weep holes

Annual Tasks

- Check cords and plugs of all electrical appliances for wear.
- Clean lint from the dryer's exhaust duct. (See page 18 for details)
- Operate the water heater's temperature-pressure relief valve manually. (See pg 15 of the manufacturer's manual)
- Have the water heater's anode rod inspected by a professional.
- Check all door hardware and tighten as needed.
- Change the batteries in your garage door remote control units.
- Replace the batteries to your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and thermostats.

Note: Have your roof inspected by a professional every 3 years.
Have your carpet cleaned every 3-5 years depending on your family's lifestyle.
Replace flexible gas connectors and clothes washer supply hoses every 10 years

When Going on Vacation

Follow these steps to prepare your home when you will be absent for an extended amount of time. This will help you avoid unwanted surprises and ensure that everything is working properly when you return.

Prepare your home:

- Slightly lower the heat, but be careful not to lower it too much, water pipes run the risk of freezing and bursting in cold weather. A solution is to drain the water system.
- To drain the system, shut off the main valve (see pg 9 for water shut-off valve locations) and turn on every water fixture (both hot and cold lines) until water stops running. If desired, only one valve should be left open, preferably one in the lowest part of your house, to allow air to flow through and excess water to drain, the rest should be closed.

NOTE: Always turn off all water-using appliances when completely turning off the water source, such as water heaters and humidifiers.

- Disconnect all water hoses.
- To save money and electricity, turn down the water heater and unplug all televisions and appliances. This may also help prevent damages from electrical storms and power surges.
- Turn off your water heater at the electrical breaker panel; this will protect the heating element and reduce your use of electricity while you are away.

Security Measures:

- In case of emergency, provide a trusted neighbor with a spare house key and let him or her know where you can be reached while out of town.
- Don't make your vacation departure obvious. If you can, pack the car with the garage door down so not everyone knows you're leaving.
- If the trip is longer than a week, arrange to have someone mow the lawn.
- Have the post office hold your mail while you're away. Simply go to the post office, fill out a form, and they will hold the mail for up to 30 days. Arrange to have a trusted neighbor come by to pick up any newspapers, flyers or packages for which the post office isn't responsible.
- Don't draw all of the curtains shut. Sheers also help in obscuring the view into the house and aren't as obvious as closed drapes or curtains.
- Set a few electrical timers in different places in the house. During the day, have one of the timers connected to a radio or a television. At dusk, set up a timer to turn on lights in a different room, like a bedroom or living room. Turn telephone ringers off.
- Cover garage windows with mini-blinds to prevent passersby from seeing valuables and a car-less garage. Put a padlock in the track on your garage door to prevent burglars from jacking up the garage door using a crowbar, or just unplug your automatic garage-door opener.
- Have a neighbor use your garbage cans if you're going to be away for more than a week.
- Have a neighbor park their car in your driveway to give the impression that someone is home.
- Some police departments have vacation check programs. Notify them, and generally they will do a routine check of the house. While some will only drive by and look for suspicious activity, some will get out of their vehicles and inspect the grounds looking for any break-ins.

Keeping up with the plumbing system in your home is absolutely necessary to ensure it works properly. Make sure to keep up with all routine maintenance items and always keep in mind the sustainable tips when consuming resources. Sustainable tips not only save our natural resources but also save you money each month.

Safety Tip

Make sure everyone in your household knows where each of the gas and water shut off valves are located. As a general rule, the valves are turned ON when the handle is parallel to the pipeline and OFF when perpendicular. Always refer to the manufacturer's manual when performing any work to a specific appliance. Always practice proper and reasonable safeguards as well as those suggested by the manufacturer of the devices and tools you use.



Kitchen Sink Shut off Valve

WATER SHUT OFF VALVE LOCATIONS

Kitchen / Bathroom Sink: directly below the sink, within the cabinet or vanity.

Dishwasher: directly next to the kitchen's sink shutoff valve. There you will also find a safety switch for the dishwasher.

Clothes Washer: to the left of the washer, where house supply lines meet the washer hoses. The valves are color-coded in red and blue for hot and cold water respectively.

Water Heater: at the top of the water heater, first valve on the incoming water line.

Main Shut off Valve: for single family homes and 2 unit buildings, it is located in the basement next to the water heater. For condominiums and multi-unit buildings, locate the place where the main water supply line enters your unit, there you will find the main shut off valve.



Washer Shut off Valve



Water Heater Shut off Valve

PIPES

- Regularly check under the sinks, while the water is running, to ensure the connections are tight. Fix any loose connections.
- Immediately turn off the water supply to the corresponding appliance or at the main shut off valve if you notice there is a major leak or a broken pipe. Call a licensed professional.
- It is common for pipes to make noise, however, loud banging noises are not normal. A licensed professional should be contacted if this happens.
- If you perform work in the basement during the cold season, make sure all plumbing lines isolated from the heating source are insulated.

Check for internal leaks by taking an actual meter reading. Turn off every water-using appliance inside and outside the house. Take the first reading when you are sure no one will use the water for a couple hours. Take a second reading after a couple hours of no water being used. Ideally, both readings should be the same. Consider the humidifier, ice cube maker, toilet flush, or water softener, if there is unaccounted-for water usage, then you have a leak.

Note: Nine out of ten leaks will be related to your toilet. Refer to page 17 for guidelines on how to determine if your toilet is leaking and how to fix it.

Pipe leaks may be fixed by you, provided that you have the right material and tools. Visit your local hardware store and ask for instructions on how to fix the type of pipeline in your home. Remember to turn off the main water valve and drain all excess water by opening both hot and cold water faucets before you begin any work.



Main Water Shut off Valve



FAUCETS

Faucet Aerators should be cleaned every 3 to 4 months:

1. Unscrew the aerator from the mouth of the faucet.
2. Remove any debris.
3. Remove and rinse the washer and screen.
4. Replace the parts in their original order.
5. Replace the unit on the faucet mouth.

Faucet leaks are usually caused by a worn out washer. Visit your local hardware store or browse the internet for repair information on your specific type of faucet.

DRAINS

Follow these steps regularly to keep drains clear of grease (this will also prevent bad odors):

1. Run hot water through the drain for 15-20 seconds.
2. Add 3 tablespoons of washing soda.
3. Let just enough hot water run to drain the washing soda.
4. Let the washing soda set for 15 minutes, and then run more hot water.

Note: Never pour grease into a drain or toilet.

Before attempting to repair a leak, check the drain. Partially blocked drains can cause overflowing.

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

1. Periodically close and open the main water supply shut off valve, this will ensure that it does not get stuck in the open position. Check individual fixture shutoff valves also.
2. Periodically check for faucet leaks, repair as necessary. Perform internal leak tests annually.
3. Every three to four months, or depending on water hardness, clean aerators on faucets. Use a rust or scale remover to return them to normal condition or replace where necessary.
4. Towards the end of the fall turn off the supply line to the sillcocks (outside faucets) and drain lines. Skip this step if your plumbing system is equipped with frost-free hydrants and water lines are located below the frost line or in a heated space. Remove all garden hoses from sillcocks as they may freeze and cause the sillcock to burst.
5. Annually, inspect the insulation in the hot water pipes (if any). Make sure it is secure and in good condition. Replace or reposition where necessary.

CALL A PROFESSIONAL

If you have determined that you have a water leak but cannot find the source, then it is important for you to call a licensed plumber as soon as possible. Even a slow, steady drip can waste up to 48 gallons of water per day. A leaky toilet will lose almost twice as much. Studies have shown that leaks account for 10-15% of household water consumption.

WATER CONSERVATION

See page 22 of this manual for water conservation tips.

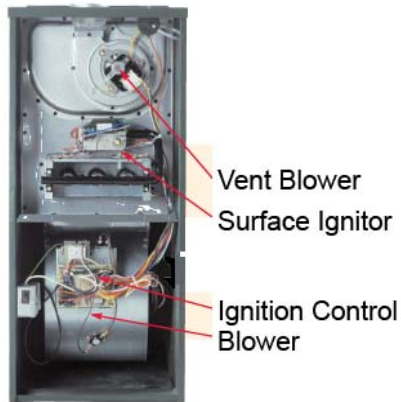
GAS SHUT OFF VALVE LOCATIONS

You will find shut off valves on gas lines near their connection to each item that operates on gas. In case of an emergency where the gas supply must be shut off, call your gas company. Do not try to shut off the main supply line yourself.

The furnace is your home's main heat source. Proper maintenance of the furnace can save energy dollars and prolong its life. Always consult manufacturer's manual for safety guidelines and detailed information on maintenance.

Safety Tip

As with most other repairs, the first step is to turn off the power and fuel in this case. If you do not spot the switch for your furnace model, check the electrical service panel and shut off the appropriate breaker. The gas line will be connected to the furnace in a black pipe and will have a shut off valve nearby. Turn the valve so it is perpendicular to the gas line to shut it off.



Furnace Filter Location

Routine Maintenance

1. The furnace should be inspected by a licensed professional at least once per year. This check should be done before the beginning of the heating season to ensure any necessary repairs are taken care of on time. Ask the licensed professional to pay special attention to the following items:
 - Check for blockage or leakage on flue pipe system. Check the outside termination and the connections at and Internal to the furnace.
 - Check for corrosion and/or buildup within the heat exchanger passageway.
 - Check for proper ignition, burner flame, and flame sense.
 - Check electrical connections for tightness and / or corrosion. Check wires for damage.
2. Furnace filters should be replaced at the start of every heating season and every one to two months their after. Buy filters in large quantity for the sake of convenience. See the manufacturer's manual (pg 27) for information on replacing filters.
3. Bearings have been permanently lubricated by the manufacturer. Lubrication is not required.
4. Make a visual check of the burner flames periodically during the heating season. See the manufacturer's manual (pg 27) for information on burners.
5. Cleaning of furnace should be performed only by a licensed professional.
6. Change the battery in the thermostat annually.

Troubleshooting

Consult the manufacturer's manual for troubleshooting guidelines (pg 29-30).

HINT: Get to know your heating system before it stops working for you. Listen for the various sounds it makes, how long it stays on and where everything is. If you take a few minutes to learn, you'll be better prepared if something goes wrong. If you're unsure where things are, ask your service technician for a tour on the next maintenance inspection.

NOTE: Furnaces **DO NOT** run constantly to keep your house warm, even in cold weather. If you hear your furnace running continually that is a sign that service is

Call a Professional

If after following the troubleshooting instructions in the manufacturer's manual you are still not receiving any heat, contact a licensed professional to assist you. See page 24 of this manual for tips on selecting a reliable service technician.

Energy (Money) Saving Tips

Follow the guidelines below to reduce both, the cost of heating your home and the amount of resources you consume.

- Operate your thermostat consistently. During the daytime set your thermostat between 68 and 72 degrees. During the night or when the house will remain empty for more than 5 hours set your thermostat between 64 and 68. Learn to operate your programmable thermostat so that temperatures are automatically adjusted for time of day.
- Experiment with the adjustable registers in order to establish the most efficient heat flow for your home. Reduce the heat flow in seldom-used areas of the house, but be careful when closing off too many registers as it can lead to high operating temperatures within the furnace.
- Replace the filters every one to two months to help your furnace run more efficiently.
- Keep all windows and doors shut as much as possible.
- Weather strip your windows and doors. This helps eliminate air leakage through the cracks and crevices.
- Seal all air-leaks and make sure you have sufficient insulation. Contact a professional to help you with this.

The electrical system in your home operates on circuit breakers. All electric flow into your home is controlled at the electrical panel box. The breakers for each area or major appliance in your home have been labeled. Follow the troubleshooting guidelines below when you suspect there is no electricity flowing to a specific area in your home.

SAFETY TIPS

- Disconnect any defective equipment, i.e. sparking equipment, frayed cords.
- Avoid using extension cords. If they must be used; do not overload them and check for proper grounding and exposed wires. Keep them out of liquids and traffic ways.
- When using appliances that require a large flow of electricity, such as the microwave and toaster, make sure to connect them directly into the wall outlet and not an extension cord.
- Inspect electrical equipment before using it. Inspect for broken or bent plugs, frayed cords, bare wires, or other defects. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use and maintenance. All electrical devices should be properly grounded either 3-prong plug or double insulated. Never use "cheaters," which convert 3-prong plugs into 2-prong plugs.
- Never operate electrical equipment with wet hands.
- Do not try to repair defective electrical equipment.
- Put a warning tag on any defective electrical device.
- Electrical power to the panel box comes from the electrical service entrance cable. Do not tamper with this cable.
- If a switch or outlet is hot to the touch: Trip the appropriate circuit breaker immediately, and contact an approved electrician for service.
- Protect children from outlets and wiring, use outlet covers with childproof devices.



Main Electrical Panel

TROUBLESHOOTING

If a circuit breaker has switched off: correct the cause of the circuit break before resetting the circuit breaker. Causes could be an excessive number of appliances or lamps plugged into any one outlet, frayed cords, and/or frayed connections. Reset the breaker by pushing the switch all the way to OFF and then back to the ON position. Repeat the steps above if any red shows near the breaker switch.

If a light or lamp won't turn on, make sure the light bulb is not the problem before you decide to trip the corresponding circuit breaker.

NOTE: Excess dust on the circuit breakers may also cause them to trip. Use a can of compressed air to blow dust out of the breaker box. If a circuit breaker trips frequently: Contact a reliable electrician to find out if additional wiring is needed to meet your needs. If you use large appliances, such as electric space heaters, or several small appliances on the same circuit, you can overload the circuit and trip the breaker. If you lose power in one area of your home: Attempt to locate the cause of the failure before using the circuit breaker to restore the current. If you can't locate the cause of the failure, call a licensed electrician.

CAUTION: Never let anyone other than a licensed electrician repair or alter the wiring or electrical system in your home. Some changes may require a permit. Poor electrical maintenance could lead to serious damage to your home and property or injury to you and your family.

CALL A PROFESSIONAL

- Do not try to fix any electrical problems yourself. Always contact a professional.
- Faulty wall outlets should be checked by an approved electrician.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

See page 21 of this manual for tips on energy conservation.

TESTING GFCIs (Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupter)

GFCIs are required in “wet” locations such as kitchens and bathrooms to prevent electrocution which may occur when a person is standing in water or on a wet floor and comes in contact with an electrical outlet or appliance, or if water drips inside the appliance.

All GFCIs should be tested once a month. To test the receptacle GFCI:

- Plug a nightlight or lamp into the outlet. The light should turn on. Then, press the “TEST” button on the GFCI.
- The GFCI's "RESET" button should pop out, and the light should go out.
- If the "RESET" button pops out but the light does not go out, the GFCI has been improperly wired. Contact a certified electrician to correct the problem.
- If the "RESET" button does not pop out, the GFCI is defective and should be replaced.
- If the GFCI is functioning properly, and the lamp goes out, press the "RESET" button to restore power to the outlet.

The gas-fired water heater installed in your home is designed to give you years of trouble free service if maintained properly. Carefully read and follow the instructions in the manufacturer's manual. Make sure you understand how your water heater works and its different parts. The guidelines below only include routine maintenance items and should not be a substitute to the manufacturer's manual.

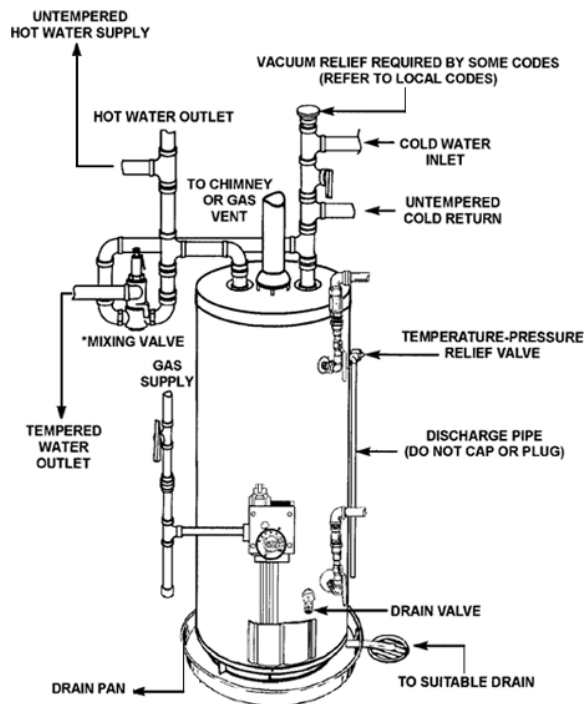
Safety Tips

- Water temperature over 125°F (52°C) can cause severe burns instantly resulting in severe injury or death. Test water before bathing or showering.
- Do not operate water heater if you notice soot build up. Do not operate water heater if flood damaged.
- Do not obstruct water heater air intake with insulating jacket.

If you smell gas:

- Do not try to light any appliance.
- Do not touch any electrical switch; do not use any phone in your building.
- Immediately call your gas supplier from a neighbor's phone. Follow the gas supplier's instructions. If you cannot reach your gas supplier, call the fire department.

Read the manufacturer's manual thoroughly, make sure you understand and follow all warning labels. Call the manufacturer or a service technician and ask them to clarify anything you are not sure about.



Routine Maintenance

1. Periodically, vacuum around base of water heater for dust, dirt, and lint.
2. Inspect insulation, if any, on the water heater tank exterior. Make sure it is mounted correctly and it is not blocking the combustion air inlet or the exhaust vent.
3. Every six months open the drain valve at the water heater tank bottom and drain 2 or 3 gallons of water from the heater to remove any sediment that may have accumulated in the tank bottom. Drain more often if you notice that the drain water contains a high degree of sediment.
4. Every six months do a visual inspection of the air intake screen. Clean any lint accumulations.
5. Annually, have a qualified technician inspect the anode rod. Replace if corroded or pitted.
6. Annually, operate the temperature-pressure relief valve manually. Replace if necessary. See page 19 of the manufacturer's manual.



Water Heater Shut off Valve



Water Heater Drain Valve

TROUBLESHOOTING

Consult the manufacturer's manual for troubleshooting guidelines (pg 22). Follow these guidelines when your water heater is not working properly. Not following these instructions exactly as indicated may result in property damage, personal injury or loss of life.

CALL A PROFESSIONAL

If a condition persists or you are uncertain about the operation of the water heater contact a licensed technician. If you are unsure what is causing your water heater to fail do not try to fix it yourself, contact a licensed professional.

ENERGY AND WATER CONSERVATION

Always set your water heater to the "normal" setting or 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Insulate the first 5 feet of pipe coming out of the top of your water heater. See pages 21 and 22 of this manual for energy and water conservation tips.

The humidifier installed in your home is designed to increase the moisture in your home. Operating the humidifier properly can help you save money and avoid the side effects of a dry atmosphere. Consult the owner's manual for detailed information on your humidifier. The guidelines below will help you with the proper care and operation of your humidifier.

Safety Tip

Before performing any tasks, make sure you have turned off the water supply and electrical power to the humidifier.



Consult the manufacturer's manual for detailed information on the different parts of the humidifier.

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

The humidifier in your home is located next to the water heater. Set the knob on the humidifier in the "WINTER" position during the heating season. Operate the humidistat consistently depending on the outside temperature. The following tasks should be performed at the end of each heating season.

1. Remove water distributor tube, distributor trough, evaporator pad and drain pan. The evaporator pad may be removed from either the top or bottom of the humidifier. Clean excessive mineral deposits from the distributor trough, cover, drain pan and humidifier cabinet. A solution of 1/2 vinegar and water will help loosen mineral deposits.
2. If the evaporator pad has excessive mineral deposits, replace with a new "990-13" evaporator pad. Install trough and drain pan. Replace cover and the distributor tube to proper position over the distributor trough.
3. Turn off the water supply and electrical power to humidifier during the summer. Close the air damper.

CALL A PROFESSIONAL

Follow the manufacturer's instructions to troubleshoot the humidifier. Follow the recommendations on page 24 when hiring a professional to service the humidifier.

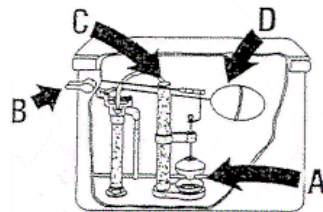
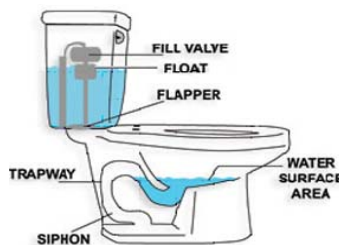
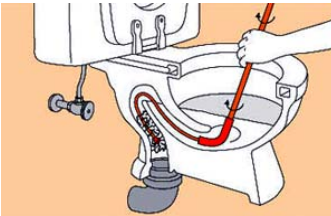
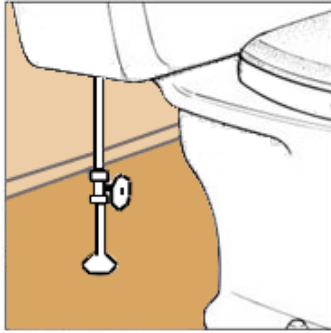
Outside Temp.	Recommended Setting
-20F	15%
-10F	20%
0F	25%
+10F	30%
+20F	35%
+30F	40%

ENERGY (MONEY) SAVING TIPS

Always keep the humidifier at the recommended setting, this will create a comfortable environment inside your home and reduce the energy needed to heat your home. But be careful not to set it too high as this can cause excessive moisture inside your home, making your windows sweat and in more extreme cases cause the drywall joints in your wall to swell and pop.

During the heating season the humidifier should be set on "HI" or "WINTER".

Clogs and water leaks are frequent problems you will have with your toilet. The faster you take care of these problems, the better results you will have and the least water you will waste. Follow the guidelines below when your toilet is not working properly or you suspect there is a water leak.



Safety Tip

Turn off the water supply to the toilet when performing any repairs or routine work. The shut-off valve is located directly behind the toilet. Shutting off this valve will only stop the water directed towards the toilet and not anywhere else in the house.

UNCLOGGING A TOILET

NOTE: Do not flush toilet until you are sure that the clog has been removed, flushing a toilet while still clogged can cause it to overflow.

1. Scoop water from toilet into a bucket leaving only enough to cover the plunger.
2. Insert the plunger into the toilet, making sure that the rubber globe or cup is fully seated over the drain opening.
3. Push down on the plunger handle with firm strokes. Increase pressure on the clog by pushing and releasing the plunger 10 to 15 times. Careless plunging can damage the toilet bowl.
4. If you are unable to remove the clog or the cause of the clog is a relatively big object, then you must use a closet auger.
5. As a precaution when flushing the toilet, have the toilet tank lid off and be ready to stop the water flow by raising the ball in the toilet tank.

LEAKS

There are three possible reasons for toilet leaks, follow the steps below to determine what is causing the leak and take the necessary steps to correct it.

1. Deteriorated flapper valve and valve seat (A); carefully remove the tank lid and add food coloring to make the water turn color. If after 30 minutes you find that the water in the bowl has changed color, then you have a leak in the flapper. Replace the flapper.
- 2) The flushing arm and lift chain (B) not working properly; check inside the tank to make sure the arm and lift chain are aligned properly and in good condition. Adjust any misaligned parts and replace those that are worn out.
- 3) The water level in the tank is too high and spills into the overflow tube (C); check for the water level to be at least an inch below the top of the overflow tube. If the water level is too high, adjust the float so that the water level is at least 1 inch below the top of the tube. Replace float ball (D) if corroded.

CALL A PROFESSIONAL

If you have never tried fixing a toilet before, then you might wish to consult a professional. You may also visit your local hardware store and ask for assistance. Most toilet-related problems are easy to handle and should only take a couple minutes to fix.

WATER CONSERVATION

When replacing your toilet, make sure to choose one that uses a maximum of 1.6 gallons per flush. It is a myth that more water makes for a better flush. Today's high-efficiency toilets use less water and yet outperform many of the older water-guzzling toilets. The right choice of toilet can result in significant water and sewer savings. Remember, the faster you fix a leaky toilet, the less water you will lose.

Remember to always read and fully understand all warning and danger signs when operating an appliance. Always keep the manufacturer's manual handy and refer to them when performing any repairs or maintenance.

ATTIC

- Make sure your attic is always well ventilated. Improper ventilation may lead to excessive moisture build-up which can reduce the lifespan of your roofing material and cause your home to be less energy efficient.
- Have an expert inspect the insulation in your attic to help eliminate air leaks.
- Do not use your attic as storage.

CAULKING

Quarterly check and replace the caulking in the following locations:

- Around plumbing fixtures such as showers, bathtubs, sinks, toilets.
- Around window and door frames.
- Around ceiling fixtures and the attic door.
- Between the sill plate and the foundation.

NOTE: Never use silicone caulking over acrylic caulking, they do not bond properly.

DOORS & LOCKS

- If a door will not close properly because of settling, you can fix this by making a new opening in the jamb for the latch plate (remortising) and raising or lowering the plate accordingly.
- Squeaky door hinges may be fixed by removing the hinge pin and applying a silicone lubricant to it.
- When replacing exterior doors, make sure replacements fit properly or it may start to lose/gain heat through excessive openings.
- Weather strip your doors. A 1/8" space between a standard exterior door and its threshold is equivalent to a 2 square inch hole in the wall.

DRYER VENT

- Disconnect, clean and inspect the dryer duct run on a regular basis.
- Keep your dryer clean. Use a lint brush or vacuum attachment to remove accumulated lint from under the lint trap and other accessible places on a periodic basis.
- Experts recommend to have your dryer taken apart and thoroughly cleaned out by a qualified service technician every 3-5 years depending on usage.
- Clean the lint trap after each load. If you use dryer sheets on a regular basis, rinse the lint trap every six months with water to remove the film left behind by the sheets.
- Never let your clothes dryer run while you are out of the house or when asleep.

DRYWALL

- It is normal for slight cracking to occur on drywall due to settling. Care of drywall is your maintenance responsibility.
- Hairline cracks may be fixed with a coat of paint. Slightly larger cracks may be fixed with spackle or caulk.
- Use a hammer and punch to fix popped nails. Cover it with spackle. Apply 2 to 3 thin coats. When dry, sand the surface with fine-grain sandpaper, and then paint. Do the same for indentations caused by sharp objects.
- Install door stops to prevent damage caused to the wall by door knobs.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

- Fire protection experts recommend for homeowners to have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, garage, workshop and one in each floor of the home. Always have it in plain sight.
- Make sure to explore all the different options when choosing a fire extinguisher, preferably, opt for one that has a multi-purpose rating. It is important to use the right type of extinguisher for the type fire you are combating. Using the wrong type of extinguisher can be life-threatening.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the appropriate care and maintenance of the extinguisher. Be sure to keep up with the routine maintenance items on a timely basis.

SMOKE DETECTORS

- Clean smoke detectors on a regular basis to prevent a false alarm or lack of response in a fire. After cleaning, push the test button to confirm the alarm is working.
- Replace back-up batteries once a year.

SUMP PUMP

- Regularly inspect the sump pump in your basement, especially during heavy or persistent rainfall. It is recommended to hire a professional to clean the sump pump. The following are guidelines to help you with the proper maintenance:
- Fill the sump pit with water to make sure the pump is working properly. Go outside to check that the pump is actually discharging water.
- Make sure the operation of the float isn't restricted. Clean the air hole in the discharge line.
- Listen for any strange noises coming from the motor.
- Replace the battery on the back-up sump pump every second or third year.

BRICK

- Annually check caulking between brick and windows. Remove and re-caulk as needed.
- Clean weep holes once a year.
- Check mortar joints for deterioration every 3 years.
- Make sure there are no plants or vines growing on the brick walls.

CAULKING

Inspect exterior caulking in the following places, remove and re-caulk where necessary:

- Between foundation and siding.
- Around window and door frames.
- Around any objects that cross through exterior walls or roof, such as vents, pipes, faucets, chimneys and skylights.
- At the corners and angles between siding materials.

NOTE: Never use silicone caulking over acrylic caulking, they do not bond properly.

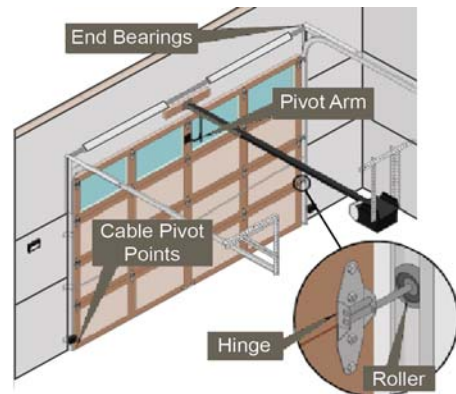
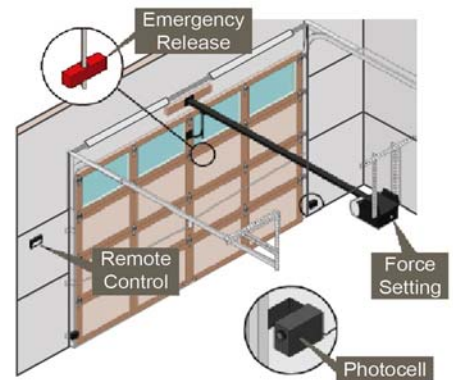
GARAGE DOOR

- Inspect your garage door and opener regularly for signs of wear and improper alignment.
- Check cables, rollers, and hinges for signs of wear quarterly. Tighten any loose hinge screws.
- Lubricate all hinges, rollers, and moving parts quarterly with light oil or spray lubricant. Never lubricate the chain or screw drive.
- Sand your wooden garage door if it sticks due to swelling. If the door sticks because of uneven alignment, inspect hinge screws to make sure they are tight and holding properly. Paint or varnish any areas you sand or plane to protect them from moisture and further swelling.
- Check photocells quarterly.
- Check the batteries in the remote control unit annually. When replacing the batteries, check terminals for signs of corrosion.

Conduct a reversal test quarterly by placing a 2x4 wood plank flat on the floor at the center of the opening and close the door with the remote control unit or the wall button. The door should reverse when it strikes the wood. Consult a qualified professional if this doesn't happen.

Test the force setting of your garage door opener quarterly by applying light upward pressure on the bottom of the door as it closes. If the door doesn't reverse readily, the force may be excessive and need adjusting at the operator motor head. Adjust the force and then re-test.

Check the balance of your garage door at least twice a year by closing the door with the emergency release and then raising it about 4 feet from the ground with your hand. The door should stay put when you remove your hands. Call a qualified professional to adjust the spring tension if test fails.



GUTTERS & DOWNSPOUTS

- Clean gutters on a regular basis. Remove leaves and all other accumulated debris. Clear excess snow from downspouts as soon as possible. Remove the elbow and clear any obstructions.
- If the corners of the gutters leak, then they are not draining properly and need to be caulked. If a joint between sections of gutter drips, caulk the inside joint.
- Direct downspouts away from the foundation.
- Be careful when leaning ladders against gutters, they may cause dents.
- Gutters may overflow during periods of heavy rain. This is expected and requires no repair.

Keep outside drains clear of leaves and other debris at all times, this will reduce the risk of your basement flooding.

ROOF

- Hire a professional to repair any leaks in the roof as soon as you notice it, this will prevent further damage.
- Experts recommend to get a professional inspection of the roof every 3-5 years.
- Maintain the gutters and downspouts free of debris so that they are able to quickly drain precipitation from the roof.
- Limit walking on the roof. Your weight and movement can loosen the roofing material and cause a leak. Never walk on the roof of your home when the shingles are wet.
- After severe storms, do a visual inspection of the roof for damages. Consult a professional if you find pieces of shingle in the yard or shingle edges lifted on the roof.

SIDING

- Direct sprinklers and other forms of forced water away from the siding.
- Adjust downspouts so that they drain away from the siding.
- Clean vinyl siding with a garden hose. Only use soft-bristled brushes.
- Consult the manufacturer's manual for recommended cleaning products to remove dirt and mildew.

Check caulk annually in the following areas, remove and recaulk where necessary:

Where the siding meets the corner board.

At window and door trim.

Around pipes and vent pipes coming through the siding.

At j-channels (on vinyl siding) around the windows and doors.

Being conscious about the amount of resources that are consumed in your home is not easy, but it is a good way to realize how much of it is really necessary and where you can cut down. Follow the quick guidelines below and when your next energy bills come in you will notice what a difference these quick tips will make.

WHAT APPLIANCES TO BUY AND WHERE

When replacing the major appliances in your home always choose products that use energy efficiently. It is not enough to only look at the initial cost, you must also analyze its lifecycle cost, in other words, how much it will cost you in energy and maintenance to operate this appliance. Products such as the ones labeled with the ENERGY STAR logo are products designed to save resources while saving you hundreds of dollars per year on your utility bills. According to ENERGY STAR, using these energy saving appliances can cut your energy bills by 30%, which would mean a \$600 saving per year on a household that usually spend \$1900. The initial cost might be slightly higher, but in a couple months you will have saved that money on your energy bills.

The Northern Illinois Energy Project offers free compact fluorescent light bulbs which use 66% less energy than the standard incandescent bulb call them at (312) 263-4282 or visit their website for more information: <http://www.citizensutilityboard.org/energysavings.html>

PLAN OF ACTION: ENERGY CONSERVATION

TODAY

- Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (120°F).
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents
- Clean or replace furnace, A/C, and heat-pump filters.
- Use energy-saving settings on refrigerators, dishwashers, washing machines and dryers.
- Check the age and condition of your major appliances, especially the refrigerator. You may want to replace it with a more energy-efficient model before it dies.

THIS WEEK

- Buy low-flow showerheads, faucet aerators, and compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- Buy a water heater blanket .
- Inspect and replace caulking around leaky windows.
- Assess your heating and cooling systems. Determine if replacements are justified, or whether you should retrofit them to make them work more efficiently.

THIS MONTH

- Target the biggest bill for energy conservation remedies.
- Crawl into your attic or crawlspace and inspect for insulation. Add as necessary.
- Insulate hot water pipes and ducts wherever they run through unheated areas.
- Seal up the largest air leaks in your house.
- Set your thermostat back (forward) when you can accept cooler (warmer) conditions. Especially during the night-time and when you leave your home for several hours. ENERGY STAR programmable thermostats automatically adjust the settings based on your time-of-day instructions.
- Learn how to conduct your own energy audit by visiting the Home Energy Saver Web site.

THIS YEAR

- Make sure your walls and attic are insulated properly. Have an insulation contractor inspect these areas. If your walls aren't insulated have an insulation contractor blow cellulose into the walls. Bring your attic insulation level up to snuff.
- Replace aging, inefficient appliances. Even if the appliance has a few useful years left, replacing it with a top-efficiency model is generally a good investment.
- Upgrade leaky windows. Consider replacing them with energy-efficient models.
- Have your heating and cooling systems tuned up in the fall and spring, respectively. Duct sealing can improve the energy efficiency and overall performance of your system.

WATER CONSERVATION INSIDE YOUR HOME

- Place a pitcher of drinking water in the fridge to avoid letting water run until it gets cold, this wastes two gallons per minute.
- Fix faucet and toilet leaks ASAP. One drip per second adds up to 2,700 gallons a year.
- Don't throw trash in the toilet. Every unnecessary flush equals 1.6 gallons of wasted water.
- Find other uses for water before getting rid of it, such as watering plants or cleaning.
- Take shorter showers. Replace your showerhead with an ultra-low-flow version. Some units are available that allow you to cut off the flow without adjusting the water temperature knobs.
- When taking a bath close the drain first and fill the tub 1/3 full.
- Don't let water run while shaving or washing your face. Brush your teeth first while waiting for water to get hot, then wash or shave after filling the basin.
- Install aerators with flow restrictors on all faucets.
- Operate automatic dishwashers and clothes washers only when they are fully loaded or set the appropriate water level for the size of load you are using.
- When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink or basin with soapy water. Quickly rinse under a slow-moving stream from the faucet.
- Defrost food over night in the fridge or use the defrost setting on your microwave to thaw meat or frozen foods, never defrost food under running water.
- Consider installing an instant water heater on your kitchen sink so you don't have to let the water run while it heats up. This will reduce heating costs for your household.
- Insulate your water pipes, you'll get hot water faster and avoid wasting it while it heats up.
- Install water softening systems only when necessary. Turn softeners off while on vacation.
- To adjust water temperatures, turn down the offender; if the water is too hot, don't turn up the flow of cold water, instead turn down the hot water.
- Never install a water-to-air heat pump or air-conditioning system. Air-to-air models are just as efficient and do not waste water.

WATER CONSERVATION IN YOUR YARD

- Use mulch around shrubs and garden plants to reduce evaporation from the soil surface. Remove thatch and aerate turf, this will help the water move to the root zone.
- Use water-saving filters on your swimming pool. Avoid ornamental water features unless they recycle the water.
- Sweep driveways, sidewalks and steps rather than hosing off.
- Don't over water your lawn. As a general rule, lawns only need watering every 5 to 7 days in the summer. Don't water your lawn in the winter. A hearty rain eliminates the need for watering for as long as two weeks. Water the lawn or garden during the coolest part of the day, early morning is best. Do not water on windy days.
- Test your soil for nutrient content, add organic matter if needed. Good soil absorbs and retains water better. Raise your lawn mower cutting height-longer grass blades help shade each other, cut down on evaporation, and inhibit weed growth.
- Use a shut-off nozzle on your hose which can be adjusted down to fine spray so that water flows only as needed. Avoid leaks by turning off the water at the faucet instead of the nozzle. Use a kitchen timer to remind yourself when to turn off sprinklers, never let them run unattended or over night, garden hoses can pour out 600 gallons of water in only a few hours.

Even though we have strived to provide you with the most concise and valuable information, it is beyond the scope of this manual to answer every question you may encounter. For this reason we have taken the time to provide you with a list of websites that provide additional information regarding home repair and maintenance. A big part of being a responsible homeowner is being a resourceful consumer.

<http://www.allabouthome.com/tips/index.html>

<http://www.demesne.info/Home-Maintenance/>

www.diy.net

www.doityourself.com

<http://www.factsfacts.com/MyHomeRepair/>

<http://www.naturalhandyman.com/index.html>

www.repairclinic.com

<http://www.servicemagic.com/article.home-improvement-library.html>

<http://www.ehow.com/>

Free internet service is provided at all Chicago Public Libraries.

Free smoke detectors and batteries are available to everyone living in the city. Just stop by any fire station and pick one up.

The City of Chicago offers a free landlord training program. The program is designed to teach building owners, landlords, building managers and residents how to:

- Keep criminal activity out of their buildings;
- Practice preventive building and crime maintenance;
- Screen tenants properly;
- Become a part of CAPS (Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy) partnership by working with the Police and Buildings Department to report illegal activity in buildings;
- Recognize dishonest tenants
- Manage and maintain buildings that are free of building code violations and illegal activity.

For more information and for a schedule of the training sessions visit the City of Chicago website: www.cityofchicago.org ; click on “**Home & Property**” under the “**For Residents**” tab. Then click on “**For Landlords & Tenants**”. Finally, there you will find the link for the “**Landlord Training Program**”.

The following are useful tips you should keep in mind when hiring a craftsman to perform even the smallest job.

- Ask the contractor for written estimates on company letterhead.
- Ask contractor for written guarantees.
- Find someone else if a contractor insists on cash payment.
- Make sure the contractor's licenses and registrations are valid.
- Always ask for a business card.
- Ask for proof of third-party property and injury insurance.
- Are the contractor and any related trades persons bonded?
- Check to see if the contractor is registered with the Better Business Bureau.
- Ask for proof of membership in local Home Builders Associations or chambers of Commerce.

Find out how long the contractor has been in business and can he/she provide references from previous customers?

A reputable trades-person will never resent you asking these questions, so don't be afraid to ask.

The **State of Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation** offers a program where individual consumers can look-up Illinois professionals licensed by this department. The program is called Express-Access License Look-up and is available as part of their website: <http://www.idfpr.com/default.asp> under Professional Regulation.