

# MASTERCARE



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## Protecting your Investment: Critical Home Care Tips

### **Humidity control and ventilation**

One of the most important things you can do to protect your home and its warranty is maintain proper humidity control for the current outside temperature. This is even more critical in a modern, new home that is built to Minto's and the new building code's air-tight and energy efficiency standards. Purchasing a hygrometer and taking readings in various areas of your home can help you effectively monitor and adjust humidity.

Maintaining the relative humidity in your home has many benefits, not only to your overall comfort, but proper humidity control can also extend the life of any wood products inside the home, such as furniture, cabinetry, and flooring. It is highly recommended, particularly during the winter months, that indoor relative humidity is monitored and that efforts are made to control the humidity levels by ventilating well; either by opening windows, using your range hood exhaust, investing in a dehumidifier, running bathroom fans and/or HRV. As a general guideline, it is recommended that relative humidity level of 35% be maintained; however, on extremely cold days, which are common in the Ottawa winter months, the number should be lowered. Some wood products and hardwoods require slightly higher or lower humidity levels, as recommended by their manufacturer. Please contact the Minto MasterCare Warranty Team for more advice.

### **Watering your new lawn**

Watering of new sod just after its installation is critical for your new grass to survive. In the absence of adequate rain, water new grass daily to promote root development. The optimum time for watering is early morning. To ensure that you are watering enough, lift a corner of the new sod. If the soil underneath is not soaking wet, more watering is required. After two to three weeks, the grass should be well established and should then only require watering depending on the amount of rainfall. If the sod begins to turn reddish brown, more frequent watering is needed.

## Keep in mind

Condensation and high humidity are a common cause of deficiencies in a new home and if the root cause of a deficiency is determined to be improper humidity, the item is not covered by your new home warranty. In the winter months as the exterior temperature drops and central heating is turned on in homes, moisture in the air condenses on cold surfaces such as windows and doors. Water droplets form on these surfaces and run down, which if left unchecked, can cause damage to window frames, drywall, flooring and interior trim. Damage resulting from condensation is also not covered by the home warranty, and if ignored can lead to fungal growth on wet surfaces. Water damage from condensation is unsightly, but in most cases, it can be easily repaired as long as any standing water is cleaned up and the surface is allowed to properly dry out.

| Outside Air Temperature |                 | Ideal Relative Humidity (%)              |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Celsius (°C)            | Fahrenheit (°F) | At an indoor temperature of 21°C (70 °F) |
| -24                     | -10             | 25%                                      |
| -18                     | 0               | 30%                                      |
| -12                     | 10              | 35%                                      |
| -7                      | 20              | 40%                                      |
| 0                       | 32              | 45%                                      |

## Maintaining your grading and rainwater run-off

The grading or shape of your land on your lot provides positive drainage away from your home and into the storm sewer system. The grading must be maintained to prevent drainage issues on your lot, and the lots of your neighbours. Lot drainage systems such as swales, (shallow ditches) and catch basins are designed to direct water away from the home. Remove leaves and other debris from the catch basin covers in the spring and fall, as well as snow and ice in the early spring. This will ensure proper drainage.

Your property has been graded for proper drainage during a normal rainfall. Heavy or prolonged rains may result in some standing water pooling in depressions or on the road adjacent to the curb when the soil is saturated, for up to 48 hours.

## Winterizing your water pipes

Exterior hose bibs and faucets need to be properly drained each year before the winter season to prevent freezing pipes. Winterize your pipes every fall, before frost occurs, as burst hose pipes or damage to exterior faucets are not covered under the new home warranty. Please contact the MasterCare Warranty Team if you are not sure how to winterize your exterior faucets.

## **Preventing water damage**

Water damage is one factor of home care many homeowners don't think about until it's too late. It's important to learn the signs of a potential water problem in your home so you can avoid costly repairs.

- Never ignore a drip or drop. You should immediately attempt to find and stop leaks before they cause any damage
- Do not leave standing water or wet cloths on a countertop, particularly on joints or near the junction of the countertop and back splash as this can cause water damage including swelling of the subsurface of the countertop
- Wipe up spills on hardwood flooring before they are absorbed into the wood or become sticky
- Remove spills from carpeting immediately to prevent spots and stains. If stains occur do not rub the carpet surface while attempting to remove them. Stains should be blotted out with cotton cloths or paper towels

## **Preventing heat damage**

Homes are filled with large and small appliances that make life easier, however, heat from these appliances can cause damage to homes:

- Take care when using heat producing appliances (such as a toaster) below cabinets in order to minimize the possibility of damaging the cabinets due to excessive heat
- Read the operating manual before operating a new stove or cooktop. Gas stoves have been known to damage laminate cupboards. Electric or gas range cooktops or appliance burners should not be operated without being covered with a pot or pan. Equally important, the doors of a stove or wall oven should not be left open for extended periods of time
- Hot pans or activated electrical appliances should not be placed under wall cabinets or directly on laminated surfaces - use protective insulating pads