

MAINTAINING YOUR HOME AFTER MOVING IN

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Congratulations! You've purchased a new home. As a new homeowner, what should you expect from your builder, and what are your responsibilities to maintain the value of your home?

Portrait Homes, Ovation Award winner for 2017 Best Single Family Residential Community: Nelson Peaks, provides an excellent example of what a homeowner can and should expect.

"Buying a new home is the best decision you can make," says Robert Grimm, senior advisor to Portrait Homes. "Today's homes are built to strict energy efficiency guidelines that will save you money in operating costs. A new home comes with a two-, five- and 10-year warranty that gives you peace of mind for years to come.

"At Portrait Homes, we are passionate about customer care and building the best homes we can. We go the extra mile for our homeowners – whether it is the tag on each appliance confirming it has been checked, or the Home Care Kit including extra tiles, an additional furnace filter and caulking gun, to name a few. Portrait Homes even offers an online consumer library, assisting homeowners with easy fixes such as unclogging a slow drain, changing a furnace filter and cleaning fridge coils."

Though your home is new, "properly maintaining and looking after it will help preserve its value for years to come," says Grimm. Here are a few suggestions for taking care of your new home:



CLEAN YOUR GUTTERS EVERY FALL

Doing so will prevent water from potentially entering your home via the foundation or roof. Grab a sturdy ladder and use gloved hands or even a gardening trowel to remove debris from the gutters before flushing them with a garden hose.

CHECK THE CAULKING ON KITCHEN COUNTERTOPS, TOILETS, TUBS AND SHOWERS ANNUALLY

Intact caulking will prevent water from leaking into the rest of the bathroom, which can ultimately result in mold and other potential damage. If the caulking is cracked or peeling, replace it with a polyurethane caulk. If you notice condensation or discolouration, we recommend calling a plumber to source the cause of the leak.

CHANGE YOUR FURNACE FILTER QUARTERLY

A filter is not very expensive and keeping it clean will reduce your heating costs and give you cleaner air to breathe. Turn off your system, remove the old filter, slide the new one in and turn everything back on. Don't forget to service your furnace regularly. Portrait Homes recommends changing it quarterly,

as this will help prolong the life of your unit.

CHECK AND TOUCH UP EXTERIOR PAINT EVERY SUMMER

Aside from curb appeal, the paint and stain serve as important protectants that prevent gutters from rusting and your wood siding from rotting. Grab your ladder and look for chipping, peeling, blistering or cracking; touch-ups can include sanding, scraping, patching, priming and repainting small areas.

While this list contains important items, it doesn't include all the things you can do to maintain your home. We recommend connecting with a professional at gvhba.org.

The Ovation Awards are dedicated to acknowledging quality and excellence in our industry. For more information on Portrait Homes or to explore more award-winning homes, please visit ovationawards.ca.

Bob De Wit is CEO of the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association. Visit gvhba.org.

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