

Home Warranty and Maintenance Guide



What's covered at a glance:

Common Service Items	Strongvox Coverage		Comments / Exceptions
	Yes	No	
Appliances		✓	Manufacturers' warranty
Brick and mortar (exterior)	✓		Minor cracks due to shrinkage are normal, to be expected and are therefore the home owner's responsibility
Building fabric	✓		Third party damage caused by installation, repair or maintenance of equipment is not covered
Central heating boiler		✓	Manufacturers' warranty, depending on service history
Central heating boiler service		✓	Home owner's responsibility, to be completed annually
Chips and scratches		✓	If reported within 7 days of legal completion, these may be considered for repair
Colour variations of wood, marble etc.		✓	Colour and tone variations in natural materials should be expected
Condensation		✓	This is normal during the drying out process
Cracks – concrete	✓		Minor cracks are normal due to shrinkage, to be expected and are therefore the home owner's responsibility
Cracks – drylined/plaster wall (major)	✓		Major cracks i.e. 5mm or more during 2 year warranty (one time repair)
Cracks – interior paint (minor)		✓	Maintenance and touch-ups are the home owner's responsibility
Decorator's filler (caulking/mastic)		✓	Maintenance and touch-ups are the home owner's responsibility
Doors and lock adjustments	✓		During 2 year warranty (minor warping which does not affect the function is not covered)
Drainage	✓		Blockage due to foreign materials is the home owner's responsibility
Extractors and vents	✓		During 2 year warranty
Fencing		✓	Maintenance and care are the home owner's responsibility
Grouting	✓		Minor cracks and loss of grout are normal, to be expected and are therefore the home owner's responsibility
Hard floor coverings (tile/marble)	✓		Minor cracks are normal and are therefore the home owner's responsibility
Landscaping		✓	Maintenance and care are the home owner's responsibility
Meters and utility lines		✓	Contact service supplier directly
Plumbing (pipe) leaks	✓		During 2 year warranty
Roof	✓		Damage due to severe weather conditions is the home owner's responsibility
Settlement in garden paths		✓	Ground settlement should be expected
Shower door leaks	✓		During 1st year of warranty only
Shower leak due to grout/mastic cracks	✓		During 1st year of warranty only (one time repair)
Structure, load bearing	✓		10 year third party warranty
Window frames (PVCu)		✓	Manufacturers' warranty
Window, sealed unit - glazing		✓	Manufacturers' 10 year warranty
Wood (external)		✓	Minor separations, shrinkage and/or warping are normal
Wood finishes (external)		✓	Variations in colour and/or appearance are normal conditions

Welcome

Congratulations on your purchase of a new Strongvox home

Since 2004 Strongvox have built over 1250 homes across the West Country. All our homes are carefully and thoughtfully designed to a high specification with the emphasis on making each house individual and in harmony with its surroundings.

Strongvox work hard to offer you something special. Our ethos is to build beautiful new homes and create vibrant new communities where people love to live. We hope you enjoy your journey with us and your Strongvox home for many years to come.





Our commitment to you

At Strongvox we are committed to giving you the best possible service

Our Customer Charter sets out to demonstrate how our customers are at the heart of our business. Our trained and knowledgeable team will be on hand throughout your home buying experience, helping to make your move as easy as possible.

This guide deals with three things. First of all, it provides information on your Home Demonstration and Customer Inspection Period – this is when we will be making sure your home is finished to the highest standards.

Then the document moves on to the two main sections – warranties and home maintenance. Please take the time to read through every section as these give valuable information on looking after your home, particularly the drying out process and the most effective means of making any adjustments that are needed.

The drying out process will be most noticeable in the first few months, as your home adjusts to the environment. Your own home maintenance work, combined with Strongvox's Home Warranty and Maintenance Guide Programme, will ensure your house is at its best for many years to come.





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Introduction



The Home Demonstration

One of the most important steps in your warranty plan occurs just before legal completion on your new Strongvox home. You will be asked to attend a meeting with a Strongvox representative for your Home Demonstration. At this meeting, our representative will lay out a full and comprehensive induction, highlighting how to ensure your home runs smoothly, including important seasonal considerations.

Please take the time to walk through your new home and listen carefully to the information presented. Our representative will familiarise you with the features of your new home and demonstrate the operation of the various systems. Please do not hesitate to ask questions on any items not familiar to you. The items covered will include:

- Water meter
- Electricity meter
- Gas meter
- Stopcocks, feeds and outlets
- Heating and hot water systems
- Boilers
- Other sealed heating systems
- Kickspace heaters

Point out key maintenance items. For example, we will advise when to have your boiler serviced, how to maintain your windows, how to test the smoke detectors and explain the process for registering your appliances with manufacturers.

Verify that the home meets Strongvox standards. Our benchmarks for quality are the standards demonstrated in our show homes and building regulatory standards. Our representative will compile a list of any items that need correcting or adjusting. You will then receive a copy of this document. Items identified during the Home Demonstration will be rectified, where possible, prior to legal completion. If an issue cannot be corrected before completion we will inform you as soon as possible and give an estimation of when the work will be carried out.

Customer Inspection Period

Completion day

Strongvox strives to hand over the finest quality homes, however it is important that you inspect certain items in your home carefully as wear and tear is not covered by the Warranty Programme.

Please ensure that you stress to your removal company the need to protect items from being scratched, dented or chipped. Obvious moving in damage or major breakages will not be covered by our warranty.

Seven day period

We realise that moving in day can be a stressful experience with much to organise. We allow an inspection period and give you seven days from the date of legal completion to check the elements in your home are to your satisfaction.

Recording any items that need correcting or adjusting

These should be noted on the Customer Inspection Form and forwarded to our Customer Care Team, again, no later than seven days after legal completion. The Site Manager will deal with the items outstanding from the Home Demonstration list and Customer Inspection Form. Weekday access during working hours to view and rectify these items will be required.

It is very important that the above mentioned items be examined carefully and defects listed. We will not repair items that are reported broken or damaged after the seven day period.

Confirmation of satisfaction

You will be asked to confirm that the works reported at the time of your Home Demonstration and those detailed on your Customer Inspection Form have been completed to your satisfaction. This is part of ongoing service and does not affect any further requests for assistance you may have within the scope of the Warranty Programme.

Items to be inspected	Inspection criteria
Sanitary ware	Free from chips, cracks and scratches
Kitchen units & worktops	Free from obvious chips, cracks and scratches in unit doors and worktops
Fireplace	Free from chips, cracks and scratches
Stairs	Viewed in natural daylight from a distance of not less than 2 metres Free from visible nicks, marks and paint/stain defects
Appliances	Free from chips and scratches
Patio/french doors	Viewed in natural daylight from a distance of not less than 2 metres Free from obvious nicks, marks and scratches
Glazing and frames	Viewed in natural daylight from a distance of not less than 3 metres Free from obvious nicks, marks and scratches
Internal décor	Viewed in natural daylight from a distance of not less than 2 metres Free from visible nicks, marks and paint defects Minor tooling marks are acceptable
Wardrobes	All shelving and rails present
Landscaping	Completed and free from dead or diseased planting

Health and Safety

Additional safety information for customers

There is a requirement for plant and machinery to drive through areas which are outside the fenced off construction areas. Please ensure that your children are aware of the danger, particularly when vehicles are reversing. Please try to keep your children away from such areas during working hours.

There may become occasions when grid/manhole covers will need to be removed. We will try to ensure that the exposure is for the minimum period possible. You should not allow your children to cycle close to such areas.

Materials will normally be inside fenced areas. Please keep your children away from any materials, which are stored outside.

Ensure that your children do not gain entry inside fenced off areas, houses under construction, onto scaffolding or play on or around plant or machinery. The fencing is there primarily because it is a high risk area.

Until the construction of the roads and footpaths is complete, some of them may be uneven, or with raised protruding covers. Please make your family aware, particularly if there are children who ride bicycles.

During construction, there will be lorries delivering heavy materials using lorry mounted cranes. The drivers may be unfamiliar with the layout of the site and may have to offload materials onto the footpath while standing on the opposite side of the lorry. Please instruct your children to stay clear of such operations.

The precautions that Strongvox staff take will mean that under normal circumstances, the risks will be very low. Making your family aware of the dangers will give added protection. If you see anything that you think is a danger to your family, please inform a Strongvox representative as soon as possible.

Site Development

Roads and footpaths

Roads and footpaths (where applicable) will be constructed to a tarmac surface suitable for both construction and residential traffic prior to the occupation of any adjacent property. We will endeavour to ensure that during construction of the site, the roads are kept as clean and unobstructed as possible. Please note that the road surface finishes vary and you should refer to a Strongvox representative for details. Completion of the roads and footpaths finished surface is normally carried out in phases. A cul-de-sac will generally be completed once the last house within it is complete. However some major site roads may not receive their final surfacing until the site is complete. The timing of the completion of the roads will be communicated to you by a Strongvox representative. You may be asked to avoid parking in certain areas whilst these works are being carried out, however our aim is to keep the amount of disruption to a minimum and we ask for your co-operation in facilitating these works.

Please note that part of the preparatory works prior to final surfacing will involve the raising to finished level of all ironworks (gully gratings, manhole covers etc.) Care should be taken when driving, cycling or walking whilst the roads are at this intermediate stage, which should only last for a matter of a few days.

Service strip

In a number of instances the road on which you live, or alongside your property has no footpath. This is usually replaced however, by a verge reserved for the use of Statutory Service Authorities (gas, water, electricity, BT mains). In the majority of instances this service strip is either 1.8m or 2m in width measured from the front of the carriageway kerb and usually denoted by marker blocks. In certain circumstances, with the consent of the Highway Authority, the width may be reduced.

As the service Authorities can, at any time, gain access to their apparatus via this strip, only grass or drive crossovers are permitted. You should at no time therefore plant flowers, shrubs, trees etc. or convert to a hard standing. This service strip remains in the ownership of Strongvox and will, in due course, become part of the adopted Highway.

You may wish to maintain the service strip along with your front garden. It should be pointed out however, that if you have this area coloured green on your transfer plans, you are required by the contract to maintain it.

Street lighting

Street lighting and nameplates will be erected as soon as practical but in any event prior to final surfacing. It should be noted that, at the request of either the Local Authority or Parish Council, street lighting may not be provided on some of our more rural developments. You should refer to a Strongvox representative for confirmation of installation. Electricity sub-stations, gas governors or pumping stations may be required on the development. These will be clearly marked on our sales literature and are in positions that have been previously agreed with the Local Authority or the relevant Service Company.

Public open space and play areas

Any public open spaces and play areas (equipped or otherwise) within the development will be laid out as soon as practically possible. Equipped play areas are designed to strict safety standards and are approved by the Local Authority. For details of proposed siting and type of equipment, please refer to a Strongvox representative.

Final surfacing

The surface finish of individual and shared driveways is normally tarmac. Final surfacing to driveways is usually carried out in phases on occupied properties and therefore may not have been completed by the time you move in. This does however allow you to move in without the risk of damage to the final surface by removal lorries.

Communal drives

Communal drives (joint for more than one property) are indicated on site plans. Please note the hatched pink colouring on our conveyance plans that indicate the manoeuvring areas. In order to avoid any potential disputes between neighbours, parking within the manoeuvring areas should be avoided.

Landscaping

Individual landscaping to properties is designed to the requirements and approval of the Local Authority. It is normally installed prior to occupation, however during exceptional weather conditions, i.e. prolonged periods of rain, frost, or dry weather, delays in providing the landscaping and it is installed as soon as practical after the adverse weather has ceased.

After completion

We will, where possible, keep a Strongvox representative on site until after the completion of the last house on the development. Once completed we will ensure that all site and sales signage, flag poles etc. are removed as soon as possible. We will also remove any directional signage leading to the development. Any temporary car parking areas will be reinstated to their intended usage and all site sales accommodation removed.

Transfer of responsibility

Public roads, sewers and public open space will be transferred to the Adopting Authority (County, District or Parish Council) after a suitable maintenance period (normally 12 months). Up to this time liability for the maintenance of these items rests with Strongvox. After adoption, liability for maintenance is transferred to the Adopting Authority.

Security

Strongvox is aware of the need to ensure ongoing security on new developments. We encourage our homeowners to set up Neighbourhood Watch Schemes. Details of how to set up a new scheme are available online or at your local Police Station.

Warranty



Your New Home Warranty

Our Warranty Programme protects you from possible defects as follows:

0-2 years from completion

You are protected against possible defects in materials and workmanship. Please be advised that Strongvox is not responsible for factors such as normal shrinkage or condensation due to the drying out process, general wear and tear and damage arising from failure to maintain the property.

Years 3-10

At the conclusion of our Customer Care Warranty Programme, your home is covered by a third party structural warranty. Cover is provided to put right any physical damage to your home caused by a defect in one of the specified parts of the building such as:

- Foundations
- Load bearing walls
- Load bearing parts of the roof
- Ceilings
- Floor decking, screeds and staircases where these fail to support normal loads
- Below ground drainage for which you are responsible

Please see the Policy documentation provided for full details on what is covered and for full terms and conditions.

Please remember that this Warranty does not cover items such as gutters, central heating, internal plaster finishes, fixtures and fittings etc. Nor does it cover you against any claim that is insured elsewhere, or by your household insurance policy (e.g. storm damage to roof tiles).

Emergency service calls

See page 31

The Home Owner's Responsibility

Strongvox offers an industry leading warranty programme, however, some items are considered the home owner's responsibility within guidelines from the Warranty Provider. As such these items are not covered by the Warranty Programme. The following is a brief summary of the more commonly encountered issues.

Interior paint	Maintenance and touch-ups are the home owner's responsibility.
Minor dry lined and plaster wall cracking	Nail pops, panelling and coving cracks/separations due to normal shrinkage are common and may appear. They are normal maintenance issues and non-warrantable.
Wood finishes (interior and exterior)	Variations in colour and/or appearance of woods can be a feature of natural materials.
Decorator's filler (caulking and mastic)	Both interior and exterior maintenance and touch-up are considered a home owner maintenance responsibility. (Caulking involves using filler to plug cracks).
Landscaping	Trees, shrubs, bushes and turf are not covered under the Warranty and are the home owner's responsibility for care and maintenance.
Concrete cracks	Garages, patios, paths and concrete around manhole covers can develop minor shrinkage cracks during the warranty period. These cracks are normal and should be expected.
Exterior wood	This can develop minor separations, shrinkage and/or warpage. This is normal.
Exterior brickwork and mortar	Most homes will develop some degree of minor cracking during the Warranty Period which is related to normal settlement of the foundation and/or thermal expansion and contraction. Efflorescence may also appear. This is caused by natural salts coming out from the wall materials and is quite normal. This is not harmful and usually disappears over time.
Small cracks	In hard floor coverings, such as tiles can be expected.
Minor cracking	Or loss of grouting between tiles and/or other material is not uncommon.
Natural materials	Such as wood and marble will have colour and tone variations. This is a normal condition.
Minor warping	Of wood doors, kitchen cabinet doors and other wood trim, which does not affect the function is normal.
Chips, scratches, loss of finish	In tile, marble, vinyl flooring, woodwork, walls, porcelain, brick, plumbing fixtures, plastic laminate, glass, or any other materials not recorded at the time of the Home Demonstration or on the Customer Inspection Form will not be covered under the warranty programme. Also, minor fading due to exposure to light, or slight dye variations, are common.
Plumbing	Stoppages due to foreign materials being deposited in the line by occupants and not covered under the Warranty.
Water pressure	Though every effort has been made, in conjunction with the local water authority to maximise the water supplies present on our developments, low water pressure conditions may limit the simultaneous use of appliances and outlets.
Rain water goods (including gutters & downpipes)	Would not be covered under the Warranty Programme if not maintained and kept free of debris.

Warranty Procedures and Guidelines

Drying out process

During the first year of occupancy, a home is typically experiencing the first changes of the seasons and there may be some items that need adjustment as a result of the drying out process that is taking place. Literally thousands of litres of water are drawn out of the bricks, mortar, plaster, paint, wood and other construction materials during this process and some movement of these materials is inevitable. It should be noted that minor wall cracking and slight imperfections in wall and ceiling surfaces are to be expected and are a natural part of the home drying out process. Most of the constructed materials used will move slightly during this initial process and will then stabilise in their new environment. These cosmetic and maintenance issues are not covered under your new Home Warranty Programme.

More severe cracks and seam openings greater than 5mm will be repaired once at your request. We suggest that, if repairs are warranted, they will be inspected at a minimum of six months after legal completion. We do include touch-up painting with the repairs, but slight paint finish and colour variations can be expected. We do not paint entire walls or entire rooms.

Our Warranty Service Programme is designed to address your needs as early as legal completion of your new home. By applying this systematic approach, we are able to deliver service in an efficient manner. But, perhaps more importantly, if an occasional repair or adjustment is needed, the Programme allows for more effective scheduling to minimise disruption to your home life. We understand that having workers in your home can be disruptive and inconvenient and for this reason we find it works best to combine activities to avoid multiple visits and minimise inconvenience to you.

Reporting warranty service requests

If warranty service is necessary, we suggest you collate a list of items before contacting us. We ask that you follow the procedures outlined below when requesting warranty service. The procedures for assistance in an emergency are covered on page 31.

We have carefully designed our Warranty Service Programme to provide an efficient service. To be certain that we are able to administer this process, warranty service requests must be channelled through the Customer Care Team at the Head Office and not sent or delivered to site-based/Sales staff. When you send your request into our Customer Care Team, we create a care work issue and send this information to the appropriate company representative. This issue releases a task record that allows us to track the service process and maintain a history of service on your home. **So, please remember that your primary point of contact is the Customer Care Team and that all service requests should be made in writing, except in an emergency.**

The only exception – appliances

Appliance repair requests should be reported directly to the appliance Manufacturers' Service Agent. Phone numbers are provided in your appliance information leaflets. **All appliances are covered under the Manufacturers' Warranties and are not covered by Strongvox. It is important that you register your appliances immediately after legal completion.**

Requesting warranty service

On receipt of your service request, we will acknowledge receipt within three working days and then contact you again within two weeks to arrange an inspection appointment. The inspection can be scheduled for any weekday between 9.00am and 4.00pm. We regret that weekend appointments are not possible for inspections.

At this inspection, our company representative will carefully review each item on the list with you and recommend the best course of action. Following the inspection, the relevant contractors will arrange a suitable appointment to access to your home. Unfortunately, weekend appointments cannot be offered by most contractors, unless they are called out under one of the emergency categories (please see Emergency Cover Service Calls page 31).

Appliance manuals and warranties

For these items, the manufacturer provides a warranty directly to you, the home owner. Appliance instructions and warranty documentation will be provided in your Home Buyer Handover Box, either given to you during your Home Demonstration or on moving in day. In the event of a problem, you should contact the appropriate service agent directly to schedule service.

Please take the time to read the manufacturers' manuals and return the warranty cards /register online as directed immediately after legal completion/moving in. After reading the manuals, may we suggest that they are kept for reference, especially for maintenance, care tips and cleaning etc. Remember, there is a dedicated section in your Home Buyer Handover Box for appliance details. If you have to contact the service agent, please ensure you have the appropriate information to give them when you call. It is a good idea to have the model and serial numbers handy as this information will be required. The service agent will work with you directly if any repairs are needed for these products, both under warranty and after the warranty period ends. Most of the appliances supplied in Strongvox properties are guaranteed for two years. Please refer to the literature provided by the manufacturer for complete terms and conditions.



Maintenance

A guide to maintaining your new property

We cover the information you need to perform routine maintenance on your new home, especially during the first few years as your home settles and adjusts to its surroundings. Although there are many items you should inspect from time to time, not all of them require special maintenance. However, consistently performed routine maintenance operations will help ensure the function and durability for your Strongvox home for years to come. For your own safety, if in doubt on how to complete a maintenance task, always contact a qualified trades person.

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Features of Your New Home

Outlined below is information about the operation and benefits of the features in your new home.

Water meter

The water meter is located either in the footpath, immediately in front of your home. The water can be turned off at this point and the meter can also be read here. If you are unsure that you have the right meter, turn on a cold tap in the house and the dial should move.

To access the meter you may need to lever the lid with a screwdriver.

Electricity meter

This is located at the front or side of the house in a meter box and access is gained using a meter box key. (Except in the situation of flats, where they may be located in a communal cupboard).

Depending on the area in which you live you may have several tariffs – a low and normal, or tariff 1, 2 and 3 (Economy 7 or 'Heatsave'). In some instances the meter may be an LCD, in which case you will need to press a button to display the meter reading and varying tariffs.

Again depending upon the area in which you live, there may be a red coloured isolation switch which will cut off the supply before entering the house at the consumer unit (fuse box).

Gas meter

This meter is often at the same location as the electricity meter, but may also be in a box at ground level.

There will always be a stopcock located here to isolate the supply of gas to the house and again, you will need a meter box key to open the box.

Stopcocks, feeds and outlets

The stopcock for the incoming water supply is located under the sink in either the kitchen or utility room.

All feeds for washing machines and dishwashers have been fitted with taps and waste outlets into the sink waste traps. In some cases, the waste nozzles on the sink traps have a sealed plastic end and may need to be cut off.

It is advisable to fit washing machine hoses with an upward crimp and fixed with a jubilee clip to the outlet. We recommend that you arrange for a trained fitter or plumber to carry this out.

Heating and hot water systems

Programmers and boilers for most homes can be found in the kitchen or utility rooms and in some instances may be found in the integral garage. (Please refer to the manufacturer's instructions provided). Some programmers are part of the boiler itself and are inside the boiler casing. Upon completion, you will be given a boiler and programme instruction manual.

Boilers

If you have a combination boiler, you will not normally have a cylinder tank. Hot water is drawn directly from the cold water feed and heated on demand. For hot water in summer, switch to 'hot water', in winter, switch to 'hot water and heating'.

A pressure dial on the boiler gives a reading of the actual pressure within the central heating system. Loss of pressure may mean that there is air in the system and this can be remedied by bleeding the radiators. If the loss of pressure continues after the radiators have been bled, please contact the Customer Care Team so the system can be checked. As this system is 'sealed', after bleeding the radiators, the tap located on the silver filling loop must be opened and then closed to displace the air bled out of the system with water. If this is not done then an airlock will manifest itself somewhere else further along the radiator system.

Other sealed heating systems

The process explained above will also apply to householders with a Powermax or Ideal Classic unvented boiler system with IMI Tribune cylinders. The only difference is that the tap on the silver loop is located within the cylinder cupboard.

Leaks on this system should be notified to the Customer Care Team.

Vented heating & hot water systems

If you have a conventional boiler in your home you will not need to replace air bled from the radiators with more water. The hot water switch is located in the cylinder cupboard for additional hot water. Installed within the cylinder cupboard are two pumps, one at the left for the heating and one on the right for the hot water. It is worth running the central heating pump once a month for a short period in the summer to ensure that the pump does not seize due to settling of the system sediment in it.

Features of your new home

continued

Gas fires

If you have been provided with a point for future connection to a gas fire, ventilation vents must be left uncovered.

Kickspace heaters

In some house types a kickspace heater has been provided and is located within the plinth of the kitchen base units. This acts as the radiator for the kitchen and has an electrical switching which blows cool air at any time and hot air when the rest of the central heating is on. The fused switch plate for the power to this appliance is usually located above the worktop.

Running your central heating system

Your new home has been built to comply with current building regulations with regard to insulation. It can therefore work out to be more economical to run the central heating system continuously in the winter months, even whilst you are out for the day. To do this, it is recommended that the room thermostat (usually located in the hall) is set at 12 degrees, which will ensure that the boiler only activates for very short periods to maintain such a low temperature; on returning home turn up the room thermostat another 8 degrees to maintain a comfortable sitting temperature.

There are other benefits to operating your system in this way. By maintaining constant temperature there are no lows and highs of temperature, which will avoid the inevitable contraction and expansion of materials in the fabric of the house, which leads to shrinkage. Constant background heat can eliminate a lot of unnecessary condensation.

Switch plates

Sockets located below the worktops in kitchens and utility rooms will have a switchable point above the worktop. Where gas hobs are fitted, their ignition is switchable from above the worktop.

Sanitary ware

The majority of our properties have concealed cisterns and the pipework for maintenance access can be reached by the removal of the flush plate. This should only be removed by a competent person i.e. plumber.

Shower heads

These should be removed and cleaned regularly, especially in the first few months of moving in, in line with the manufacturers recommendation.

Bath seals

The bath will settle with use and the seal may require some attention. If a problem should occur, please contact the Customer Care Team. Please note the seal will only be renewed once within the first year of the warranty period only. Following this it is the home owner's responsibility.

Smoke alarm

All smoke alarms in your home are wired into the main electrical supply. The battery in each device acts as a back up in case of electrical failure. It is therefore essential to check the operation of the battery from time to time and usually the device will bleep every 2-3 seconds when the battery is failing.

In the case of a power failure, the smoke alarm will bleep intermittently for approximately one minute.

Electrical accessories

We have provided sockets for TV/stereo aerials in the lounge. You will need to check whether the local authority in your area allows external roof aerials or internal attic devices.

Light connection points/blanks and any dimmer switch plates are rated to take 250 watts.

The consumer unit (fuse box) is normally situated in the utility room, cloakroom or garage. The electricity supply for the whole house may be turned off with the large bright red main switch situated at the right hand side of the consumer unit.

All power circuits including garage supplies, where applicable, are wired through an RCD (Residual Current Device) which will trip out should a defect be identified in the earthing system. This device is a flip type switch, located under the front cover flap of the consumer unit.

There are instructions within the consumer unit on how to re-set and test the RCD and the smaller individual circuit trips.

If the trip switch operates, it may not necessarily be caused by a fault in your house, but you should walk through the house and check all appliances are safe; i.e. not overheating. If the trip will not then re-set, you should remove all plugs from their sockets and having restored power, re-plug all until you can identify which appliance is at fault.

The contents of your freezer are at risk when the power is off.

All consumer units carry a 10 year Manufacturers' Warranty and must be inspected/tested at the 10 year period.

Garages

In the majority of cases, garage walls are constructed from a single leaf of masonry, such as brickwork or blockwork approximately 100mm thick. This single masonry skin is not impervious to wind, driven rain and consequently garage interiors could become damp.

As a precaution, do not store anything in the garage that could be damaged by cold or damp.



Your New Home and the Climate

A new home undergoes a drying out process as it adjusts to its surroundings and weather conditions. During the first year of occupancy, a home experiences a range of temperature and humidity differences from summer to winter. It is generally preferable to wait until a new home has undergone a full seasonal cycle before carrying out any adjustments. You should feel confident that the drying out process is complete.

Condensation

During the first year you will probably notice moisture condensing on your windows and other surfaces directly exposed to the outside air.

This condensation in new homes is generally not serious but is at its maximum during the first winter period. When your home was built, literally thousands of litres of water went into the bricks, mortar, timber, concrete, paint etc. When your heating system is put into operation for the first time, it tends to draw moisture out of the timber, masonry and other construction materials. When the moisture-laden air comes into contact with a cold surface, especially window glass, condensation occurs. It is important that this moisture be wiped away to prevent permanent damage to the window or allow mould spores to develop on surrounding areas. Generally, during the second winter, your home will have dried out to the extent that condensation will no longer be a problem. The amount of condensation will depend a great deal upon your living habits, such as the amount of cooking, bathing, washing etc. that is done in the home.

Do not let condensation disturb you, and see that ventilation is provided whenever possible to bring the normal drying out process to its conclusion in a timely fashion. Do not however, try to accelerate the process by creating an extremely high heating temperature. This will only lead to an uneven drying which will exaggerate the effect of normal shrinkage.

To minimise problems from dampness and condensation, ventilate your home by leaving windows or, at least, the trickle vents open for as long as you can each day. Leave internal doors and the doors of built-in cupboards open a few inches to encourage air circulation during the drying out period.

Condensed vapour can sometimes cause mould spores on walls and ceilings. If allowed to persist, damage to clothes, bedding, floor coverings, decorations etc. can be experienced.

Humidity

During humid weather, timber will absorb moisture and you may find that timber doors and windows will swell, which may temporarily impair their operation. Do not be quick to request adjustment, as humidity drops, they will usually return to their original state.

As moisture is withdrawn, wood products will shrink. You may notice slight warping of doors and the interior trim may pull away slightly from its fitted position. These usually return to their original position once the house is dry.

Preparing your Home for Winter



Each winter, you should perform the following checks to ensure your home is prepared for the onset of cold weather:

Heating and hot water system

- Boiler serviced by CORGI registered engineer
- If required, turn hot water and central heating thermostats up
- Ensure flues are unobstructed

Plumbing

- Drain water from exterior taps and isolate the supply
- Remove hoses and adapters from taps and store

Windows and doors

- Check seals and vents
- Repair or replace weather stripping and exterior mastic as required

Fireplace

- Fire to be serviced as per manufacturers guidelines
- Ensure flues are unobstructed

Gutters and downpipes

- Check for and remove leaves and other debris that might cause a blockage

House perimeter

- Fill settled areas and depressions with gravel
- Lift and level paving slabs

Concrete

- Treat as necessary, repairing cracks

Water butts (where supplied)

- Clear all leaves and other natural debris
- Check operation of drain tap
- Check capacity to avoid overflowing

Winter tips

- Take precautions to prevent freezing pipes
- Be sure to disconnect all outdoor hoses and hose devices when temperature is below freezing
- Clean and adjust your doors, windows, thresholds and 'lock keeps' plates as needed to minimise draughts
- Keep gutters clean to minimise clogging. Please take care not to walk on the roof whilst doing this
- If you discover any leak in the roof, call for service
- Remember that damage caused by severe weather is not covered by our Warranty. Be sure that you have adequate home owner's insurance

Heating and ventilation

- Have central heating and hot water systems serviced annually
- For maximum efficiency, your thermostat should be kept at a consistent temperature
- Do not block or obstruct vents

Landscaping and Grading

Your garden is graded to the natural contours of the land. As the ground settles, new natural drainage channels may form. This settlement and formation of channels may take up to two years. Until complete, wet areas in your garden may be present. The backfill of gardens and/or service pipes will settle over time. This settlement may cause low areas where water may collect. To maintain even drainage, it is important to fill any depressions caused by settlement. In spite of your understandable desire to landscape your garden as soon as possible, we recommend that you delay major projects until after the first year of occupancy, at which time most settlement will have taken place and the natural drainage of the land will have time to re-establish.

Your garden may be laid to turf prior to occupancy. It is imperative that the lawn be heavily watered. Please review the specific lawn care directions that might be applicable to your particular situation.

To prevent soil erosion, plant ground cover, grass or shrubbery on slopes and banks.

Landscape care

The following pages contain information on the care of your landscaping and garden, and areas that you will be required to maintain in establishing your new lawn. It is of the utmost importance that you start to care for your new lawn immediately upon taking ownership, as this is the most critical step in having a beautiful lawn. A new lawn will require constant maintenance and hard work on your part, but the value it adds to your new home is well worth the effort.

Strongvox recommends to all customers that if unsure of how best to care for their lawn, they should seek the services of a professional to ensure it gets the proper care it needs.

Watering

All new plants, with the exception of Yews and Junipers, should be soaked with water once a week from early spring until the grounds freeze in winter. Do not water more often than this. Let the water slowly soak around the plant, then, after it has soaked in and set for a while, water again to ensure a deep watering.

Exceptions and cautions

In very hot weather, all plants may need to be watered more frequently.

If 12/12.5cm of rain falls in a week, no additional watering is needed.

Grass and seeded areas require more water than plants. When watering your lawn, it is important not to water the planting bed, as this will over water and possibly kill the plants.

Plants which 'yellow' are most likely receiving too much water. Do not water these in an attempt to Save them, as this will definitely kill them.

Fertilising

Generally, fertilise in early April and repeat six weeks later or by late May.

Pruning

We recommend that you do not prune in the first year.

Turf

Where turf has been laid it is a mixture of grass that has been grown for approximately 1 to 1 ½ years. The turf is cut into yard rolls, transported to site and laid in a manner to allow for proper growth. Please find below a list of care instructions which are extremely important to ensure the growth of your lawn.

- During the first month all areas of turf should be watered every day for one and a half hours, or until the turf is completely soaked. Do not count on mother nature: showers of rain do not typically provide enough moisture to ensure adequate growth

- After the first month, the turf should be watered for one hour, at least three times a week (more frequently during hot and humid periods)
- Turf should be mowed for the first time in three to four weeks. The first mowing should be left high and the clippings should not be caught. From this time forward, the grass should be cut and the clippings bagged as normal, unless you have a mulching mower
- We also suggest that fertiliser be applied at four weeks. It is important that a good programme of fertilisation and weed control be maintained to ensure a healthy lawn. If unsure we recommend that you consult a lawn care professional prior to fertilisation
- Gaps left by the shrinkage of individual turfs should be filled and seeded. Bald patches should be seeded. All seeded areas must be tended as per the supplier's instructions
- To prevent rutting and depressions forming, do not walk on newly laid turf for the first month. If access is required for watering etc., use planks of crawler boards to distribute your weight
- If you have any questions concerning the care of turf, we recommend that you contact a lawn care professional for advice and direction

Landscaping Tips

- Be sure to read and follow the watering instructions as listed
- At first, you'll need to water your lawn thoroughly, every day. Cut this back to three times a week at the recommended interval
- Don't water shrub beds and trees as much as the lawn area. They will drown if over watered
- Fill any depressions that develop
- Remember, plants and lawns are not covered by our Warranty



Exterior Finishes

Exterior timber is treated to slow down weathering and the rate at which moisture is absorbed into the material. Wood or wood products exposed to weather should be sealed with a protective coating, generally stain or paint. Exterior stains and paint are chosen for their durability and appearance but will fade after exposure to the elements. Fading is most noticeable if touch-ups should be necessary as a result of localised repairs. Repainting of your home every 18 months – 2 years is an inevitable home owner maintenance item and should eliminate such fading or colour contrasts.

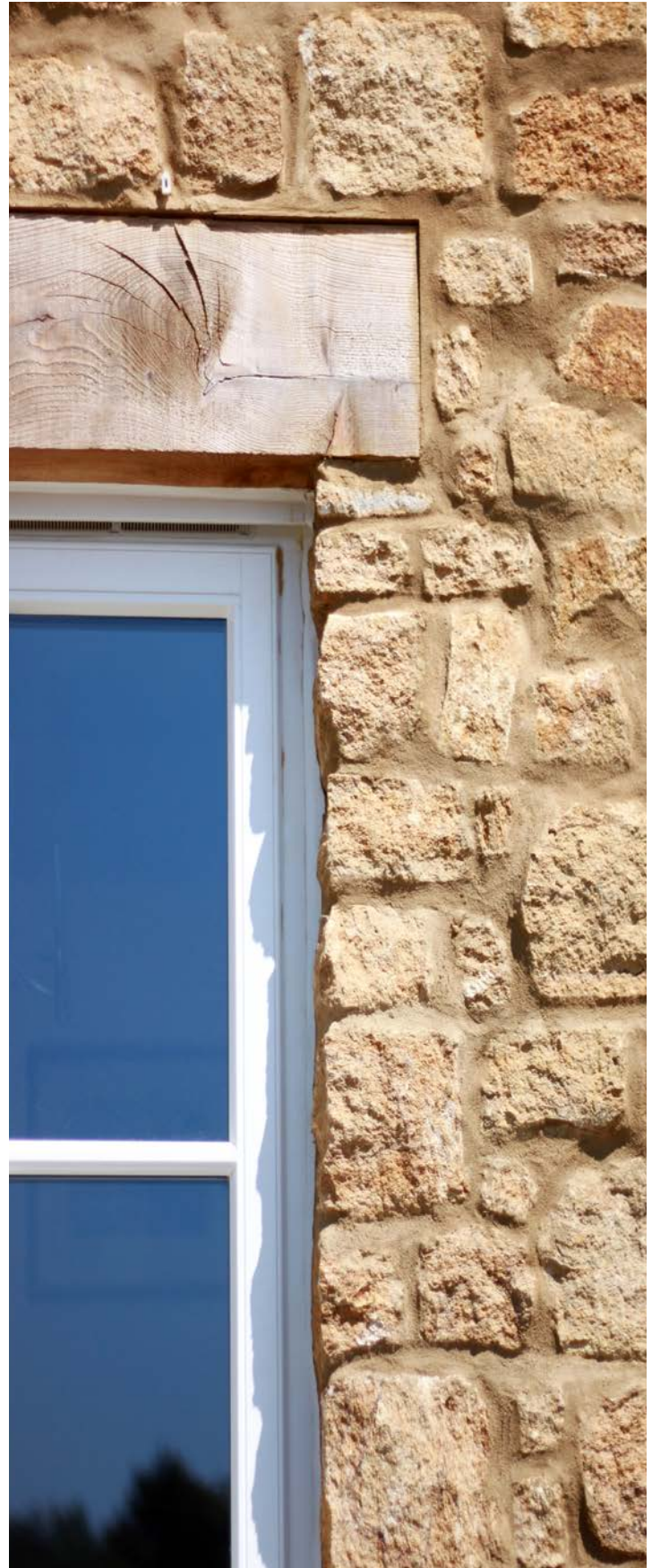
Before painting/staining:

- Clean surface thoroughly
- Repair minor cracks
- Let surface dry thoroughly
- Check original paint/stain colour
- Choose a good quality exterior paint and follow manufacturer's directions specifically for application and surface preparation

Treated wood, while being decay resistant, will normally stain and discolour unless adequately protected with a paint or stain finish. Surface cracking or checking is normal and will occur with stain or natural finish products on wood.

Because wood is a natural product, mitres, end butted joints and other jointed detail will, in time, develop separations due to the nature of wood shrinkage. This is normal during periods of change in temperature and seasons especially changing moisture conditions. After a full season, most of these occurrences should begin to minimise. Inspect the filler (caulking) mastic around windows, doors and trim once a year. If a space develops at joints, corners or ends, you should apply outdoor grade mastic to correct the situation. Use only quality products which are specifically recommended for exterior use.

Masonry and mortar generally need no exterior treatment.





Care of Macadam driveways

- At certain times, particularly hot periods, the Macadam may become softer. This does not cause long term damage and usually only occurs during the first summer after it has been laid
- If your drive surface becomes soft, take care when manoeuvring vehicles, particularly with power steering, as scuffing may occur. It is important not to turn your steering wheel whilst your car is stationary
- Macadam is not designed to withstand point loading particularly during the early months after it has been laid. Care should be taken with items such as ladders, chairs, motorbike stands and stiletto heels etc. If a pointed item is to be used on your drive, a sheet of flat plywood or hardboard should be placed beneath it to disperse the load and protect the surface
- Macadam surfaces are often covered with a sealing grit when laid, the particles of which may cause damage to your house flooring if care is not taken. Outside shoes should be removed before entering the property during the early months of occupation when grit may become attached to the soles of your shoes
- Heavy loads may cause damage to your new drive. Avoid placing heavy items on your drive particularly in the early months following construction
- Should a problem occur with the surface of your drive, repair patches can be carried out in line with building industry practice

Exterior Finish Tips

DRIVE AND CONCRETE TIPS

- Do not use salt to remove snow and ice
- Instead, use sand or even cat litter to improve slick surfaces
- Road salt may cause pitting or flaking of your garage floor, so seal your concrete surfaces each year to protect them
- Cracks and slight imperfections are normal and do not affect structural integrity
- Fill any cracks you find with concrete caulk or bitumen

DECORATOR'S FILLER (CAULKING) AND MASTIC TIPS

- Check your caulking (filler in cracks and gaps) and mastic at least twice a year
- It should be applied anywhere different materials meet and water might penetrate
- Outside, use a mastic gun and a tube of high quality outdoor mastic
- Inside, check the bathroom and kitchen areas, especially splash backs and around the bath and sink
- These should be sealed with waterproof mastic
- Remember, water damage is not covered by your warranty

Plumbing, Drains and Electrical Systems

Plumbing and drains

Plumbing installations in your new home seldom cause trouble. Tap washers will fail after considerable time and use, therefore, tap washer replacement is one of the most common of household tasks. The best preventative maintenance for plumbing failure is to avoid discarding and clogging materials into the sinks and toilet bowls. Do not pour grease down your drain and remove hair and lint from wastes to avoid clogging.

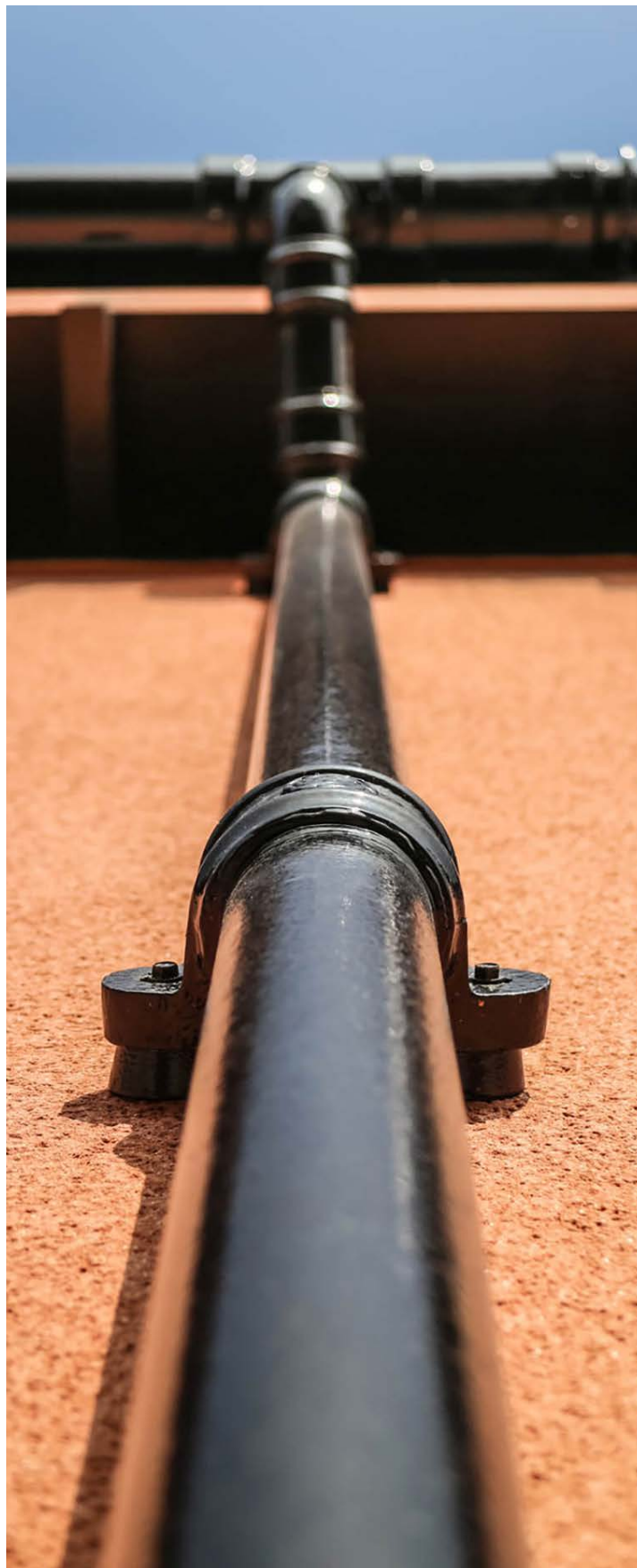
To prevent the build-up of residual grease and soap, we suggest a simple monthly maintenance routine. Run hot water through the drain, add three tablespoons of baking soda, add a little hot water, allow it stand for 15 minutes, then flush with running water. Do not use bleach or its derivative with plastic piping.

Outside taps are not frost proof unless hoses and other appliances are disconnected during freezing weather. The most common cause of burst water pipes is a frozen outside tap which has not been drained and isolated properly. Before winter, isolate the tap under the kitchen sink and drain.

Electrical systems

The wiring in your new home has been designed and installed to meet the current electrical regulations and safety standards. It is divided into circuits that carry ordinarily anticipated loads. It is a good idea to learn the extent of each of your circuits, so that you will not overload any one of them. Avoid the hazardous practice of plugging in too many plugs into one socket outlet.

Circuit breakers are used in your home and are located in the consumer unit (fuse box). A circuit breaker acts just like a fuse, but it does not have to be replaced, just reset. A circuit breaker seldom trips unless something in the circuit is faulty. Be sure you determine the cause for failure and make the necessary correction. Most electrical problems are caused by faulty bulbs, appliance or extension leads and plugs. Replace at the first sign of wear and/or damage. Be cautious of small household appliances. If you experience a slight tingling shock from handling or touching any household appliance, disconnect the appliance and repair.



Plumbing Tips

- Be sure that all family members know how to turn off the mains water supply tap
- Have central heating and hot water systems serviced annually
- Always read and follow manufacturer's instructions carefully
- Tap aerators should be cleaned when clogged as should all waste taps
- Adjust the toilet float and valve if the toilet runs constantly
- Be sure to turn off the water if it overflows

Electrical System Tips

- Be sure you know where the consumer unit (fuse box) is located
- Ensure all circuits are clearly labelled
- Circuit breakers should only be turned back on after the problem has been disconnected
- If applicable, use child resistant covers on all exposed outlets
- Test your smoke detectors



Floor and Wall Coverings

Floor coverings

Most vinyl flooring products are resilient but will scratch, tear and dent under certain conditions. Shoes with metal heels and toecaps, stones trapped in shoes tread or stiletto heels can ruin the appearance of vinyl in a short period of time.

It is recommended that you cap the legs of tables and chairs that will rest of these surfaces.

Do not use too much water on your vinyl and floor tiles, instead, frequent vacuuming and dry mopping will increase their serviceability. An occasional scrubbing will not harm vinyl coverings if dried thoroughly.

Ceramic tile and similar products will require regular cleaning to remove normal build-up of surface dust, soap and other deposits. Use detergent or non-abrasive ceramic tile cleaner.

Use only special concrete sealer or paints on concrete floors.

Carpeting maintenance requires regular vacuuming and removal of spots for longevity. Heavy objects resting on carpet should be periodically moved to avoid matting and permanent marking.

As a general rule, all floor coverings last much longer if properly maintained. Regular cleaning will reduce floor covering wear dramatically because dust, dirt, sand and grit act as abrasives, actually wearing down the floor surface and cutting the carpet fibre.

Wall covering

It is probable that most of the interior walls of your home are covered with a gypsum wallboard, known as dry lining. The dry lining is installed onto wooden or metal frames using nails and/or screws. Butt joints are covered with a special tape and then a joint compound is applied over the nail and joint areas to give the wall a smooth, even appearance.

During the first year, walls are subjected to stress as the various construction materials expand, contract and stabilise within their new environment. As a result, nail popping and minor cracking is unavoidable or inevitable. These minor defects are usually simple to repair with the use of decorator's caulk or plaster compound filler. In many cases, a new coat of paint is sufficient. It may be desirable to delay major decorating or wallpapering for the first year or until the drying out process is complete as potential nail pops or cracks could affect a newly decorated wall.

In drylined construction, you may notice artificial light will cast shadows on the ceiling and it will appear to be wavy or uneven. This is also true of some vertical surfaces, but not quite as noticeable as the ceiling. In as much as dry lining material is uniform thickness, it follows the contours of the wall or ceiling framing, which may not be perfectly true due to settling or slight movement of the stud timber. If repairs are necessary, we will paint the repaired areas. Where our original finish colour has been changed, it is the home owner's responsibility to re-decorate. When touching up paintwork, there is a strong possibility that these painted areas will not exactly match the existing paint due to fading.

Please note we will not repaint areas beyond the repair work.

Before repainting walls and ceilings, it is important that the surfaces be properly prepared:

- Clean surface, remove dirt and grease
- Repair minor cracks and nail pops with filler and sand smooth
- Let surface dry thoroughly
- Sand lightly glossed or stained surfaces
- Follow paint manufacturer's directions
- Choose good quality paint appropriate for the area you are repainting. Do not use emulsion paint on top of gloss or stain, as it will not adhere. Use washable paints in areas subject to wear and tear, e.g. kitchens.

Maintenance Tips

FLOORING CARE AND MAINTENANCE TIPS

- Read the product literature and follow all manufacturer's instructions
- Vinyl flooring may be permanently scratched by sharp or heavy objects
- Protect against damage from furniture with soft felt coasters or pads
- Almost all carpeting will fade over time
- Vacuum regularly, and try to protect it from sunlight and heavy traffic
- Hard flooring will normally have some variations in colour and grain effect
- Be sure to clean and maintain wood surfaces according to the manufacturer's instructions
- Remember that ceramic floor surfaces can crack from impact
- Be cautious with water on all floor surfaces and mop up spills immediately
- Call the flooring supplier for further care instructions and product recommendations

PLASTERBOARD REPAIR AND PAINTING TIPS

- You may have wall and ceiling cracks, but they are easy to fix by applying filler, sanding and painting
- Be sure to follow the paint manufacturer's directions
- Save your leftover paint for touching up
- Any large cracks (excess of 5mm) will be repaired once by our service contractor at your request



Kitchens, Bathrooms and Appliances

Kitchen

Cabinetry includes kitchen cabinets and built-in bathroom furniture. Your cabinets have been finished for lasting appearance and value. Cleaning of cabinet facings should be done with mild soap and water. Avoid abrasive cleaners. Sometimes, due to grease, dust and dirt accumulation, cabinets can appear dull or may have stains from moisture exposure. Commercial products are available to clean and restore the finish.

Worktops of laminated plastic are finished to withstand normal wear, but not scratching or denting. Occasionally, stains may occur that need to be removed. Soap and warm water may be used for cleaning, but may need to be rinsed twice to avoid film build-up. Abrasive cleaners should never be used.

Placing hot pots and pans on laminated plastic surfaces will result in burn marks that cannot be removed short of replacing the entire worktop. Only ceramic tile tops are generally capable of withstanding these temperatures without marking, but even for these type of tops, we would still recommend the use of protection.

Laminated plastic tops obviously require caution to avoid scratching and chipping. Major damage will be caused if the top is used as a cutting surface without protection.

Sinks and taps should be cleaned with non-abrasive materials, such as chemical cleaners without bleach.

Ceramic and plastic style sinks are affected by extremes of temperature. As with worktops, please protect the surface from direct heat sources. If disposing of boiler or near boiling water, running the cold tap into the bowl at the same time will reduce thermal movement.

Bathroom

Bathroom fixtures may be fibreglass, plastic, cultured marble, or other man-made products. Regular cleaning prevents soap scum build-up and discolouration. Use caution to prevent surface scratches, and never use abrasive cleaners.

If the surface of a fibreglass or plastic bath is scratched, specialist companies can repair and restore the affected area.

Glass bottles or metal accessories should not be placed in the bath or near the area. A dropped glass object is both a safety hazard and potentially damaging to the surface of the unit.

Grouting and mastic around the edges of baths, sinks and shower trays will crack and come out. This is an important home owner maintenance item, as spilled or splashed water can cause serious damage to a finished ceiling below a bathroom. Normally, a periodic inspection and re-grout/mastic of these areas will prevent costly repairs.

Specialities, such as mirrors, cabinets and shower doors are manufactured to perform and function with little maintenance. Normal cleaning is generally sufficient to maintain them. For safety reasons, it is recommended that all fasteners are tight and mountings secured. Normal use of shower doors may require door and track adjustments at some future time and should be checked periodically for alignment to ensure long lasting and effective service.

Appliances

Appliance manufacturers provide operating instructions and information on troubleshooting appliance problems. These instructions will provide you with valuable information on the safe operation and maintenance of your appliances.

Extractors need to be regularly checked and cleaned by vacuuming the grills and if applicable, washing the filters with soapy water. To function properly, all extractors need to be free of obstacles, dust and dirt.



Worktop Tips

- Worktops are sensitive to gouging, scratches and cuts; be careful and do not let water accumulate on the near joints
- Laminates are not heat proof. Do not put hot pans on them
- Ceramic surfaces are heat resistant but can crack or chip from impact. These can be protected by sealing the grout once a year
- Fibreglass and man-made surfaces need regular cleaning and care
- Although there are companies available offering a touch-up service for minor issues, major scratches and chips may not be repairable



Roof, Doors, Windows, Insulation and Ventilation

Roof

High winds, driving rain and snow may cause damage to the roof. After heavy storms it is advisable to check for leaks in the roof space. Any damage resulting from severe weather is not covered by the Strongvox Warranty Programme and should be referred to your insurance company.

Avoid walking on the roof; if access is required roof ladders must be used. Damage caused by window cleaners, aerial installers, etc. is not covered by the Warranty Programme.

Gutters and downpipes require regular cleaning. To avoid water damage caused by a clogged system, leaves and debris should be removed.

Doors and windows

Doors and windows have changed dramatically over the decades. Instead of wood and putty construction, it is now most common to have PVCu frames, with rubber gaskets sealing in the sealed unit window panes. Check all glazed openings for proper seals and broken glass. Once a year, clean and lubricate all moving parts. Check weather stripping for damage and tightness each autumn. Tracks of sliding doors and windows should be cleaned at least annually and lubricated as recommended by the manufacturer. Check decorator's filler (caulking/mastic) at doors, windows and all other openings and joints between dissimilar materials, such as wood and masonry. Door closures, lock sets and thresholds should be checked and adjusted as needed.

Inspect exterior doors each spring and autumn for wear to see that weather stripping is tight and secure. Some shrinkage and warping due to moisture/humidity change is normal in doors and other wood parts. Typically, warped doors will return to normal as the season changes and often, after the first year, the problem will be minimal.

Garage doors should be kept in good working order. For safety purposes, check all fittings, re-tighten if necessary and oil the mechanism.

Insulation and ventilation

One of the most important parts of your home is not generally seen. Insulation has been installed in your roof space according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Check to make sure insulation in the loft is kept dry. Watch for areas of moisture. Proper loft ventilation has been provided in your home and it is very important that the venting system functions as designed.

Proper ventilation helps cool the loft in summer and reduces condensation in the winter. Vents should be cleaned occasionally and should never be covered. Due to possible damage being caused to the roof structure and damp or cold related damage to personal possessions, the storage of items in the roof space is not recommended.

Door and Hardware Care Tips

- Doorknobs and hardware should be periodically checked for fit, function and finish
- Loose screws should be tightened
- Tight hinges should be oiled
- Hardware should be kept clean and wiped with a soft cloth. Outdoor fixtures are vulnerable to tarnishing and pitting
- Door thresholds and weather seals should be checked twice a year



Fault Finder

Every Strongvox home is subjected to extensive quality checks, both during construction and finally before we hand over the keys to you when you move in.

Heating system

BOILER

The boiler does not come on

Your gas supply will have been checked ready for you to move in. However, if the gas supply is switched off at the meter upon occupation, please contact a member of the site team.

The boiler may not be switched on at the central control. Engage the 'on' position and look for the indicator light.

The boiler or room thermostats may be set too low. Reset a more acceptable operational level.

The electrical power supply switch to the unit may be switched off; the RCD may have tripped; or the fuse may have gone. Check the power is 'on' and replace the fuse in the switch as a precaution.

The system pressure may be too low for adequate system circulation. Adjust the pressure, based on the gauge reading in line with the manufacturer's recommended levels – typically 1 bar.

On certain systems, for example those fitted with valiant boilers, a safety feature prevents the boiler operating where there is a water supply failure. Check water supply.

RADIATORS

A radiator leaks

There may be a loose radiator fitting, or the valve may have developed a leak. Bleed the radiator using a radiator key or a slot head screwdriver. Tighten slightly when the radiator is cold.

A fitting may have been accidentally damaged through children playing, or vacuuming, etc. and may require replacing. Please consult your Customer Care Team for information.

A fabricated radiator seam may have split. Please consult your Customer Care Team for information.

The radiator bleed nipple may not have been fully tightened when bleeding the radiator. Tighten using a radiator key or slot head screwdriver.

A pipe may have become damaged especially if screws or nails have been used nearby, e.g. for laying a carpet. Please contact your Customer Care Team for information.

RADIATORS

A radiator feels cold

Air may be trapped in the radiator. Bleed the radiator using a radiator key or a slot head screwdriver. Remember to switch the central heating programmer off to prevent drawing in extra air. You will then need to repressurise the system to the manufacturer's recommended levels – typically 1 bar (refer to manufacturer's instructions).

Where thermostatic radiator valves are fitted, these may be set too low. Adjust to suit the living environment.

The system pressure may be too low for adequate system circulation. Adjust the pressure based on the gauge reading in line with manufacturer's recommended levels. Check that the system safety release valves in the airing cupboard are fully closed.

The speed of the circulation pump may be set too low for the system. Adjust the pump's speed controller to a higher setting.

The circulating pump may have seized (possibly after a summer shut-down) due to system sedimentation. Free the manual restart knob on the front of the unit and rotate to clear any debris from the impeller.

No Hot Water Tips

- The boiler may not be working. Refer to 'Boiler' section overleaf.
- The controls for hot water on the system's programmer may be switched to the 'off' position, preventing the boiler from producing hot water to replenish the system. Switch to 'on'.
- The timer on the system programmer may be set to run periodically. Reset to suit your lifestyle needs.
- If you have a combination boiler, the storage tank thermostat may be set too low, or be faulty. Reset to a higher setting. This will need to be reset by a trained heating engineer. If problems persist, please contact your Customer Care Team.
- The speed of the circulating pump may be set too low. Adjust to a higher setting.
- The circulating pump may have stuck. Free the manual restart knob on the front of the unit and rotate to clear any debris from the impeller. You may then need to repressurise the boiler.
- The system control valve may be set incorrectly. Contact your Customer Care Team for information.
- When the system is being run on the immersion heating system, its thermostat may be switched off, set too low, or faulty. Adjust, or in case of the latter, contact your Customer Care Team for information.



Fault Finder

continued

Electrical system

LIGHTS

The lights do not come on

The bulb may have gone and require changing. Do not forget to switch light off before changing.

If a fluorescent strip light is in use and the tube appears to be in order, check the 'starter' block is firmly in place at the end of the unit. Alternatively, change the starter.

The main switch on the main consumer unit (fuse box) may be in the 'off' position. Switch 'on'.

There may be a problem with your wiring. The individual lighting circuit switch (also to be found in the consumer box (fuse box)) may be in the 'off' position. Switch 'on'.

Please contact your Customer Care Team for further information.

ELECTRICAL SOCKETS

One of the sockets does not work

Check that the separate fused socket on the wall is on and that the fuse in this is working.

The main switch on the consumer unit (fuse box) may be in the 'off' position for the 'ring main'. Switch 'on'.

The individual 'ring' circuit (also to be found in the consumer unit/fuse box) may be in the 'off' position. Switch 'on'.

The trip switch in the MCB (also to be found in the consumer unit/fuse box) may be in the 'off' position. Reset to 'on'.

There may be a fault with the wiring. Contact your Customer Care Team for information.

APPLIANCES

A general electrical appliance fails to work

The fuse within the appliance may have gone and requires replacing.

Refer to the stages within the 'electrical sockets' section and carry out these checks.

Refer to the appliance manufacturer's guide for further information.

An integral appliance fails to work

E.g. cooker

Ensure that the appliance has been switched on at the fused switch.

If the cooker fails to work, check to see if the automatic timer has been switched to the 'timer' position in error. Switch to 'manual'.

Check to see if the fuse within the appliance's supply switch has blown. If so, replace.

Check that the appliance has been programmed correctly.

Refer to the stages within the 'electrical sockets' section and carry out these checks.

Refer to the appliance manufacturer's guide for further information.

SMOKE DETECTORS

The smoke detectors do not function when tested

The individual circuit switch within the consumer unit may be in the 'off' position and the reserve batteries flat. Check the individual circuit switch and replace batteries.

Dust may have affected the unit's sensor in which case a gentle vacuuming should overcome the fault.

There may be a fault with the smoke detector. Contact your Customer Care Team for information.

Plumbing system

WATER SUPPLY

No supply to the property

The main water feed stop cock into the property may be closed. Check and open fully.

The water authority may have turned off the mains supply for repair work. Consult water authority.

A fault may have occurred in the external water meter. Contact water authority to check its operation.

There may be damage or a kinked pipe between the development's water main in the road and the property's incoming stop cock. Contact water authority to check the system.

LEAKS

System leak evidence of water on the ceiling, etc.

Switch off the main water supply into the property by closing the main water feed stop cock which is usually found under the sink. Turn on all taps to remove water from the system to reduce potential damage.

Consult your Customer Care Team for information.

PRESSURE DROPS IN SUPPLY

Cold supply pressure fails

The main cold water feed stop cock may not be open fully. Check and, if necessary, open fully.

A blockage may have occurred in the main cold water feed. Consult your Customer Care Team for information.

A pressure reduction valve may have failed. Consult your Customer Care Team for information.



Emergency Service Calls

In office hours

While emergencies are unlikely they do sometimes occur. In the case of an emergency, such as plumbing leaks, loss of heating or a security issue, firstly, do what you can to prevent any further damage. Then, during office hours, call the Customer Care Team and supply as much information as possible. This will help us to determine how we can best assist in resolving the situation. The Customer Care Team will contact the relevant contractor and arrange a suitable repair.

Outside office hours

In the event that an emergency should occur outside normal office hours, Strongvox has provided an emergency contact list for the contractors you should call. This list is provided in your Home Buyer Handover Box. You should also inform the Customer Care Team at your earliest opportunity on the next working day.

Please note:

- Any non-emergency calls made to the contractors under this emergency procedure or any work done outside of the items covered by the Warranty, will make you liable for resulting contractor charges.
- Damages due to severe weather conditions and third parties are not covered under the Warranty Programme.
- Calls during office hours should be made to the Customer Care Team at the Head Office as normal.

Emergency Guide

The items listed below are a guide to what qualifies as an emergency:

- Total loss of heat
- Plumbing leak that requires the entire water supply to be shut off
- Total loss of hot water
- Total blockage of the sewage system
- Total loss of electricity (not a widespread power cut)
- Roof leak that is causing damage to surrounding materials (excluding after a severe storm)
- A security issue, such as an accessible door or window that cannot be made secure (excluding up and over garage doors)

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Contacting Customer Care

BY EMAIL

customercare@strongvox.co.uk

BY TELEPHONE

01823 446194

**PLEASE NOTE: THE CUSTOMER CARE TEAM ENDEAVOURS
TO RESPOND TO ALL REQUESTS WITHIN 3 WORKING DAYS**

IN AN EMERGENCY

REFER TO PAGE 31 OR TELEPHONE

01823 444055

OFFICE HOURS



STRONGVOX
HOMES

YORK HOUSE, BLACKBROOK PARK AVENUE, BLACKBROOK BUSINESS PARK, TAUNTON, SOMERSET, TA1 2PX

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