



ENERGY STAR® CERTIFIED HOMES MAINTENANCE GUIDE: TIPS TO ENSURE TOP PERFORMANCE

Congratulations on your new ENERGY STAR certified home! To ensure your home is operating at its highest efficiency, ENERGY STAR recommends following these simple operating and maintenance guidelines.

Living in an ENERGY STAR certified home

The blue ENERGY STAR label on a new home means it was designed and built to standards well above most other homes on the market. When ENERGY STAR's rigorous requirements are applied to new home construction, the result is a home built better from the ground up, delivering better durability, better comfort, and reduced utility and maintenance costs. To learn more about the features and benefits of ENERGY STAR certified homes, visit www.energystar.gov/NewHomes.

Best Practices to Make the Most of Your Home

LIGHTING

Use ENERGY STAR certified light bulbs throughout your home. Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) provide bright, warm light while using 70 to 90 percent less energy and last up to 15 times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs. This means more money in your pocket. Homes that use incandescent bulbs waste \$400 a year on utility bills as compared to homes that install ENERGY STAR lighting throughout.



SMART THERMOSTAT (WHEN INSTALLED)

ENERGY STAR certified connected or programmable thermostats can save you \$50 annually in heating and cooling costs. You can set up and maintain a schedule of temperatures for your home to turn on A/C or heat prior to your return. Connected thermostats can also provide you feedback about the impacts of your temperature choices to see how you can save additional energy.

OUTLETS AND ELECTRONICS

Did you know that, in the average U.S. home, 25 percent of electricity used by home electronics occurs while the products are off? In the U.S. alone, "vampire power" costs consumers more than \$3 billion a year. Reduce unnecessary costs on your utility bill by unplugging electronics, such as cell phone chargers and power strips when they are not in use.

HVAC EQUIPMENT

Keep your cooling and heating system at peak performance by having a qualified contractor conduct tune-ups in the spring and in the fall. Maintaining your heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment can have a big effect on your utility bills and allows you to catch small issues before they become expensive problems. Check with your energy utilities to see if they provide rebates for annual maintenance on HVAC equipment.

Using ceiling fans with A/C can enable you to comfortably raise the thermostat around 4°F. Remember to turn off your ceiling fan when you leave a room.

AIR FILTER

Air filters are designed to catch particles, which reduce the amount of air delivered through ducts. A clean filter reduces the amount of energy your system needs to move air throughout your home. Check your air filter monthly and change it as needed (at least once every three months) to keep your HVAC system operating at peak efficiency.



AUTOMATIC VENTILATION SYSTEM

Your home was constructed with an automatic ventilation system to ensure a constant supply of fresh, filtered air. It is important to avoid tampering with this system. Discuss with your builder what type of ventilation system you have as well as how to operate and maintain it properly.



WINDOWS AND DOORS

Check the weather stripping around your doors annually and replace as needed. Weather stripping keeps drafts from coming in, but wears down over time.

During the summer months, use blinds and curtains to block unwanted heat from the sun shining through windows. On cool nights, turn off your cooling system and open windows while you sleep. Close windows and blinds in the morning to capture cool air.

During the winter months, use thermal curtains to reduce heat loss through north facing windows. Open curtains on south facing windows allow sunlight to naturally heat the home. If windows are drafty, cover them with heavy duty clear plastic sheeting or insulating drapes or shades. Also, consider replacing windows with ENERGY STAR certified models.

SUMP PUMPS (WHEN INSTALLED)

In some homes, ENERGY STAR requires a sump pump to be installed in the basement or crawlspace to keep water from accumulating around the foundation. If you have one, check it after every large rain storm and clear out any stones and other debris that may have gotten into the sump pump pit. Small stones can get stuck and break your pump if they aren't removed. In addition, look into purchasing a back-up battery for the pump that will protect your basement from water damage during power outages.

HOME EXTERIOR

Each spring and fall, clean out your gutters by removing leaves and branches. Clogged gutters can overflow and cause water damage to your home. Inspect the downspouts to ensure the water is not draining towards your home. Downspouts should direct water away from the home, based on the topography of the land. Branches should also be checked each fall and spring to see if there is interference with power lines. If you see that branches are interfering with power lines, notify your utility company. For your safety, do not attempt to cut the branches yourself.

COMBUSTIBLES - SAFETY TIPS

Be sure to store chemicals and flammable items away from gas appliances and HVAC equipment. It could be dangerous if the fumes from the chemicals mix with any particles from the gas-powered appliances.

If you have gas-powered appliances, your home is likely equipped with a carbon monoxide detector located outside the bedrooms. Smoke and carbon monoxide detector batteries should be checked at least once a year and changed as needed to ensure they are working properly. Fire extinguishers should be checked on a monthly basis to ensure they are easily accessible and have adequate pressure.

Maintenance Checklist

MONTHLY

- Check and clean HVAC filter
- Ensure all coverings, vents, and pits are clear of debris (ex. Sump pump drainage pit)
- Inspect fire extinguishers

QUARTERLY

- Replace HVAC filter
- Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- Adjust thermostat temperatures for the season

SEMI-ANNUAL (FALL AND SPRING)

- Professionally service your HVAC system
- Clean leaves and branches from gutters
- Inspect gutter downspouts to ensure water is draining away from the home
- Inspect branches overhanging power lines

ANNUAL

- Check smoke and carbon monoxide detector batteries
- Check weather stripping around doors and windows

Contact your ENERGY STAR builder for additional questions about maintenance of your home.