4U Homes

HOMEOWNER MAINTENANCE SUMMARY

Minimum Maintenance Requirements for Warranty Eligibility

Document Purpose

This document summarizes the **minimum routine maintenance responsibilities of the homeowner** necessary to preserve the condition, performance, and durability of the home and its systems.

Every residential property requires **ongoing care and periodic maintenance**. Even when a home is newly constructed using quality materials and proper building standards, natural wear, environmental exposure, humidity, temperature variations, and daily use will gradually affect building components and mechanical systems.

Routine maintenance helps prevent small and manageable issues from developing into larger problems that may require costly repairs.

Examples of routine maintenance include:

- Replacing HVAC air filters
- Cleaning condensate drain lines
- Inspecting plumbing fixtures for leaks
- Maintaining exterior sealants and caulking
- Inspecting roofing and exterior components
- Testing life-safety devices such as smoke detectors

These tasks are considered **normal homeowner responsibilities** and are required to ensure the proper functioning of the home's systems.

Importance of Regular Maintenance

Proper maintenance protects the home from common issues that naturally occur during normal residential use.

For example:

• **Clogged HVAC drain lines** may cause water overflow, damaging ceilings or walls. This condition typically occurs when drain lines are not periodically cleaned.
• **Dirty HVAC filters** can restrict airflow, causing the system to freeze or overheat, which may lead to compressor damage.
• **Unsealed exterior joints or deteriorated caulking** may allow water intrusion during rain events, potentially causing interior wall damage.
• **Undetected plumbing leaks** may lead to cabinet damage, mold growth, or flooring deterioration if not addressed promptly.
• **Sediment buildup inside water heaters** may reduce heating efficiency and shorten equipment lifespan if annual flushing is not performed.

These conditions generally develop **over time due to lack of maintenance rather than construction defects**.

Relationship Between Maintenance and Warranty Coverage

The warranty provided by the builder is intended to cover **defects in workmanship, materials, or installation** that may occur during the applicable warranty period.

However, warranty coverage **does not extend to issues caused by lack of routine maintenance, neglect, misuse, or normal wear and tear**.

For example:

A clogged HVAC drain line that causes water damage is typically considered a maintenance issue because periodic cleaning of the drain line is a standard homeowner responsibility.

Similarly, damage resulting from deteriorated exterior sealants that were not inspected or maintained may also be considered a maintenance-related condition.

For this reason, performing the maintenance tasks outlined in this document is essential to maintain the proper condition of the home and preserve eligibility for warranty coverage.

Scope of This Document

This summary provides a **concise reference of the minimum maintenance tasks recommended for homeowners**.

Detailed instructions, maintenance procedures, and system operation guidance are available in the **4U Homes Homeowner Manual**, which should be consulted for additional information.

Homeowners are also encouraged to follow **manufacturer recommendations** for all installed equipment and appliances.

Maintaining a record of maintenance activities may be helpful for future reference and may assist in evaluating warranty requests if service is needed.

Section 1

Required Maintenance Tasks

The following maintenance tasks represent the **minimum recommended routine maintenance activities necessary to preserve the proper functioning of the home's systems and components**.

Routine maintenance helps prevent deterioration caused by normal use, environmental exposure, humidity, and mechanical wear.

Failure to perform these maintenance tasks may result in conditions that are considered **maintenance-related issues rather than construction defects**.

Minimum Maintenance Requirements

System	Maintenance Task	Frequency	Purpose / Consequence if Neglected
HVAC	Replace air filter	Every 1–3 months	Prevent airflow restriction and system overheating. Dirty filters can cause frozen coils and compressor damage.

System	Maintenance Task	Frequency	Purpose / Consequence if Neglected
HVAC	Inspect condensate drain line	Every 3 months	Detect early blockage that may cause water overflow and ceiling or wall damage.
HVAC	Clean condensate drain line	Every 6 months	Prevent algae or debris buildup that may lead to indoor water leaks.
HVAC	Professional HVAC inspection	Annually	Ensure proper refrigerant levels, electrical safety, and system performance.
Plumbing	Inspect sinks, toilets and exposed piping for leaks	Monthly	Early detection of small leaks prevents cabinet damage, mold growth, and flooring deterioration.
Plumbing	Inspect hose bibs and exterior faucets	Every 6 months	Prevent unnoticed exterior leaks that may increase water bills or cause soil erosion near the foundation.
Plumbing	Inspect under-sink connections	Every 3 months	Loose connections may cause slow leaks that damage cabinetry and interior finishes.
Water Heater	Flush water heater tank	Annually	Removes sediment buildup that reduces heating efficiency and shortens equipment lifespan.
Water Heater	Have pressure relief valve inspected by a qualified professional	Annually	Ensures safety device is functioning to prevent excessive tank pressure.

System	Maintenance Task	Frequency	Purpose / Consequence if Neglected
Roof	Visual inspection for damage or debris	Annually	Identify missing shingles, debris accumulation, or flashing issues before water intrusion occurs.
Roof	Inspect roof after major storms	As needed	Severe weather may displace roofing materials or damage flashing.
Exterior	Inspect exterior sealants and caulking	Annually	Sealants protect the home from water infiltration around windows, doors, and wall penetrations.
Exterior	Re-seal deteriorated caulking	As needed	Cracked or missing caulking allows moisture to enter the wall assembly.
Stucco	Inspect stucco for cracks	Annually	Small cracks can allow water intrusion if not sealed promptly.
Windows	Inspect window seals and caulking	Annually	Prevent water infiltration and air leakage around window frames.
Doors	Lubricate door hinges and locks	Annually	Prevent hardware wear and maintain proper door operation.
Electrical	Test GFCI outlets	Every 6 months	Ensure electrical safety devices function properly to prevent shock hazards.
Electrical	Test smoke detectors	Monthly	Confirm life-safety devices are operational.
Electrical	Replace smoke detector batteries	Annually	Maintain reliable smoke detection capability.

System	Maintenance Task	Frequency	Purpose / Consequence if Neglected
Drainage	Inspect exterior drainage around foundation	Annually	Prevent water accumulation near the structure that may affect soil stability or foundation performance.
Garage	Lubricate garage door rollers and tracks	Annually	Reduce wear and ensure safe garage door operation.
Appliances	Clean dryer lint trap and vent	Every 3–6 months	Prevent airflow restriction that may cause overheating or fire risk.

Why These Maintenance Tasks Are Important

Residential systems are subject to **normal wear and environmental conditions**, particularly in climates with high humidity and rainfall.

For example:

• HVAC condensate drain lines commonly accumulate algae in humid climates. Without periodic cleaning, this buildup can block drainage and cause water leaks inside the home.
• Exterior sealants naturally deteriorate over time due to sunlight exposure and temperature changes. Without replacement, moisture can penetrate wall assemblies.
• Plumbing connections may gradually loosen due to vibration or thermal expansion, leading to small leaks that may go unnoticed until damage occurs.

These conditions are **typical maintenance-related issues** experienced in residential homes and are not considered construction defects.

Warranty Responsibility Clarification

The builder's warranty covers defects related to **construction workmanship and material installation**.

However, the warranty **does not cover conditions caused by lack of routine maintenance, neglect, improper use, or environmental exposure**.

For example:

- Water damage caused by a clogged HVAC drain line that was not periodically cleaned
- Cabinet damage resulting from plumbing leaks that were not promptly repaired
- Interior wall damage caused by deteriorated exterior caulking
- Water intrusion through small stucco cracks that were not sealed

Because these conditions develop gradually due to maintenance factors, they are considered **homeowner maintenance responsibilities rather than warrantable defects**.

Section 2

Detailed Maintenance Guidelines

The following guidelines provide additional explanations regarding routine maintenance responsibilities and the reasons these tasks are necessary for the proper operation of the home's systems.

Residential systems naturally experience wear due to **daily use, environmental exposure, humidity, temperature variations, and mechanical operation**. Routine maintenance helps prevent small issues from developing into larger and more costly problems.

Failure to perform routine maintenance may result in damage that is considered **a homeowner maintenance issue rather than a construction defect**.

Some maintenance activities may involve equipment, electrical components, roof access, plumbing disassembly, or other technical work that requires specialized knowledge. In such cases, maintenance should be performed by a qualified professional. Homeowners should avoid performing maintenance tasks that exceed their level of experience or that may create safety risks.

HVAC System Maintenance

Proper HVAC maintenance is essential to maintain **system efficiency, indoor air quality, and equipment longevity**.

Homeowners are responsible for performing the following routine maintenance tasks:

- Replacing air filters regularly
- Inspecting condensate drain lines for blockage
- Monitoring unusual noises, odors, or reduced airflow

Air filters prevent dust, debris, and airborne particles from entering the HVAC system. When filters become clogged, airflow is restricted and the system must work harder to circulate air throughout the home.

Failure to replace air filters may result in:

- Reduced airflow throughout the home
- Increased energy consumption
- Ice formation on the evaporator coil
- Reduced cooling performance
- Compressor overheating or failure

For example, a severely clogged filter can restrict airflow enough to cause the evaporator coil to freeze. When the ice melts, water may overflow the drain pan and cause water damage to ceilings or walls.

These conditions typically develop **gradually due to lack of maintenance** and are not considered construction defects.

Homeowners should also ensure that the HVAC condensate drain line remains free of blockage. In humid climates, algae and debris can accumulate inside the drain line over time.

A blocked drain line may cause water to back up into the system, potentially leading to:

- Water leaks inside the home
- Ceiling or drywall damage
- Mold or mildew growth

Professional HVAC servicing by a qualified technician is recommended **once per year** to verify proper refrigerant levels, electrical connections, airflow performance, and overall system condition.

Plumbing System Maintenance

Plumbing systems should be periodically inspected to detect small leaks before they develop into larger problems.

Homeowners should routinely inspect:

- Under sinks
- Around toilets
- Water heater connections
- Washing machine supply lines
- Exterior hose bibs

Small plumbing leaks can sometimes go unnoticed for extended periods of time. Even a slow drip may gradually cause:

- Cabinet damage
- Wood swelling or deterioration
- Flooring damage
- Mold or mildew growth
- Increased water utility costs

For example, a loose connection under a sink may drip slowly for weeks or months before visible damage appears. By the time the leak becomes noticeable, the cabinet base or surrounding flooring may already be damaged.

Such conditions typically result from **undetected leaks rather than installation defects**.

Leaks should be repaired promptly by a licensed plumber to minimize potential damage.

Roof and Exterior Inspection

The roof and exterior envelope of the home protect the structure from weather exposure.

Over time, roofing materials and exterior sealants are exposed to:

- Sunlight and UV radiation
- Rain and humidity
- Wind and storms
- Temperature expansion and contraction

Because of these environmental conditions, homeowners should perform a visual roof inspection from ground level at least once per year, and also after significant storms. If roof access is required, inspection should be performed by a qualified roofing professional.

Inspection items include:

- Missing or displaced shingles
- Damaged flashing around penetrations
- Debris accumulation
- Signs of deterioration

Homeowners should also inspect exterior sealants and caulking around windows, doors, and wall penetrations.

Exterior sealants naturally degrade over time. If deteriorated caulking is not replaced, water may enter the wall assembly.

Water infiltration caused by failed sealants may lead to:

- Interior wall damage
- Moisture accumulation inside wall cavities
- Mold growth
- Damage to finishes or insulation

These conditions generally occur due to **normal aging and lack of maintenance** rather than construction defects.

Water Heater Maintenance

Water heaters heat and store water using either gas or electric heating elements. Over time, minerals present in the water supply naturally accumulate inside the tank as sediment.

This sediment buildup can reduce the efficiency of the water heater and place additional strain on the heating elements.

Homeowners should flush the water heater tank **once per year** to remove accumulated sediment.

Regular flushing helps:

- Maintain heating efficiency
- Extend the life of the equipment
- Prevent overheating of heating elements
- Reduce internal corrosion

Failure to flush the water heater periodically may lead to:

- Reduced hot water capacity
- Rumbling or popping sounds inside the tank
- Increased energy consumption
- Premature failure of heating components

If the homeowner is unfamiliar with the flushing procedure, the service should be performed by a qualified plumbing technician.

Equipment failure caused by excessive sediment buildup is typically considered **a maintenance-related issue rather than a construction defect**.

General Maintenance Responsibility

The examples described in this section represent common maintenance situations that may occur in residential homes.

They are provided for illustrative purposes only and do not represent an exhaustive list of all possible maintenance conditions.

Homeowners remain responsible for routine maintenance of all systems and components of the property in accordance with the recommendations provided in this document, the Full Home Maintenance Manual, and applicable manufacturer guidelines.

Section 3

Homeowner Maintenance Log (Optional Personal Record)

Routine maintenance is an essential part of responsible homeownership. In addition to performing the recommended maintenance activities described in this document, homeowners are encouraged to maintain their own records of maintenance performed on the home's systems and components.

Maintaining a simple maintenance log helps homeowners track when routine service tasks were completed and may assist in identifying patterns or recurring issues over time.

Examples of maintenance activities that homeowners may wish to record include:

- HVAC filter replacement
- HVAC system servicing
- Condensate drain line cleaning
- Plumbing repairs or inspections
- Water heater flushing
- Roof inspections after storms
- Exterior sealant maintenance
- Appliance servicing

Keeping a record of these activities may help homeowners ensure that maintenance tasks are performed at the appropriate intervals.

Importance of Maintenance Records

Maintenance records may also assist in diagnosing potential issues if service is required in the future.

For example, knowing when the HVAC filter was last replaced or when the water heater was last flushed may help a technician determine whether a system issue is related to normal wear, maintenance conditions, or mechanical failure.

In certain situations, maintenance records may also be helpful when evaluating warranty service requests. Documentation of routine maintenance may help clarify whether recommended maintenance practices have been followed.

Homeowner Recordkeeping Responsibility

Homeowners are responsible for maintaining their own maintenance records.

The 4U Homes Homeowner Care platform provides maintenance guidance and documentation but does not store or maintain maintenance records on behalf of homeowners.

Homeowners may choose to maintain records in any format they prefer, such as:

• A printed maintenance log

• Personal notes or home maintenance journals

• Digital files stored on a personal computer or device

• Copies of service receipts or contractor invoices

Homeowners are encouraged to keep copies of any service documentation provided by contractors or service providers.

Section 4

Common Maintenance Failures Observed in Homes

Residential homes contain multiple mechanical systems and building components that require routine maintenance in order to function properly over time.

When recommended maintenance is not performed, small and preventable issues may gradually develop into larger problems that can affect the condition of the home.

The following examples illustrate **common maintenance-related issues observed in residential homes**. These examples are provided for educational purposes to help homeowners understand how routine maintenance helps prevent avoidable damage.

The situations described below typically develop **over time due to lack of routine maintenance or delayed repairs**, rather than defects in construction or installation.

HVAC Condensate Drain Line Blockage

In humid climates, air conditioning systems produce condensation that drains through a condensate drain line.

Over time, algae, dust, and debris may accumulate inside the drain line.

If the drain line is not periodically cleaned, this buildup may eventually block the line, causing water to back up into the HVAC unit.

When this occurs, water may overflow the drain pan and leak into the home, potentially causing:

- Ceiling stains
- Drywall damage
- Flooring damage
- Mold or mildew growth

Because condensate drain maintenance is a routine homeowner responsibility, water damage caused by a clogged drain line is typically considered a **maintenance-related condition rather than a construction defect**.

HVAC Air Filter Neglect

HVAC air filters prevent dust and airborne particles from entering the system.

When filters are not replaced regularly, they can become clogged and restrict airflow through the system.

Restricted airflow may lead to:

- Reduced cooling performance
- Frozen evaporator coils
- Increased energy consumption

- Compressor overheating
- Premature system failure

For example, when airflow is severely restricted, the evaporator coil may freeze. When the ice melts, water may overflow the drain pan and cause interior water damage.

These conditions are generally caused by **lack of routine filter replacement**.

Plumbing Leaks Left Undetected

Small plumbing leaks can occur over time due to normal vibration, connection movement, or wear of sealing components.

Leaks under sinks or behind appliances may go unnoticed for extended periods of time.

Even a slow drip can gradually lead to:

- Cabinet deterioration
- Flooring damage
- Mold growth
- Structural wood damage

In many cases, damage becomes visible only after moisture has been present for an extended period.

Routine inspections of plumbing fixtures help identify leaks early and prevent more significant damage.

Exterior Sealant Deterioration

Exterior caulking and sealants protect the home from water infiltration around windows, doors, and exterior wall penetrations.

Because sealants are exposed to sunlight, temperature changes, and weather conditions, they naturally deteriorate over time.

When deteriorated sealants are not replaced, rainwater may enter the wall assembly.

This can lead to:

- Moisture inside wall cavities
- Interior drywall damage
- Mold or mildew growth
- Damage to insulation or framing components

Maintaining exterior sealants is an important routine maintenance task that helps preserve the weather resistance of the home.

Roof Damage Not Addressed After Storms

Severe weather events such as strong winds, heavy rain, or hail may affect roofing materials.

After major storms, homeowners should perform a visual roof inspection or arrange for a roofing professional to inspect the roof.

If damaged or displaced roofing materials are not repaired promptly, water may eventually penetrate the roofing system and cause interior damage.

Routine inspection after storms helps identify damage early and prevent more extensive repairs.

Water Heater Sediment Buildup

Minerals present in the water supply gradually accumulate inside water heater tanks as sediment.

If the tank is not flushed periodically, this buildup may cause:

- Reduced heating efficiency
- Rumbling or popping noises inside the tank
- Increased energy consumption
- Premature failure of heating components

Regular water heater flushing helps prevent sediment accumulation and extends the life of the equipment.

Summary

The examples described above represent **common maintenance-related situations observed in residential homes**.

They are provided to illustrate how routine maintenance helps prevent avoidable damage and maintain the long-term performance of the home's systems.

These examples are not intended to represent an exhaustive list of all possible maintenance conditions. Homeowners remain responsible for performing routine maintenance and addressing maintenance-related issues as they arise.

Section 5

Quick Maintenance Checklist

This checklist provides a **simple reference guide** for the most important routine maintenance activities recommended for homeowners.

These tasks help ensure the proper operation of the home's systems and help prevent common maintenance-related issues such as water damage, equipment failure, or safety hazards.

This checklist is intended as a quick reminder only. Detailed guidance and maintenance procedures are available in the **4U Homes Full Maintenance Manual**.

Monthly

✓ Test smoke detectors

Smoke detectors should be tested monthly to ensure they are functioning properly. These devices are essential for occupant safety and early fire detection.

✓ Inspect plumbing fixtures for leaks

Check under sinks, around toilets, and near exposed plumbing connections for any signs of moisture or dripping. Early detection of leaks can prevent cabinet damage, mold growth, and flooring deterioration.

✓ Check HVAC system performance

Verify that the HVAC system is operating normally and that airflow from vents appears consistent. Unusual noises, reduced airflow, or abnormal odors may indicate that maintenance or service is needed.

Every 3 Months

✓ Replace HVAC air filter

Air filters should typically be replaced every 1–3 months depending on household conditions such as pets, dust levels, and system usage.

Regular filter replacement helps maintain proper airflow, improves indoor air quality, and protects HVAC components from excessive wear.

✓ Inspect under-sink plumbing connections

Check plumbing connections beneath sinks to ensure fittings remain tight and dry. Slow leaks may develop over time and can damage cabinetry if not detected early.

Every 6 Months

✓ Clean HVAC condensate drain line

HVAC systems produce condensation that drains through a condensate line. In humid climates, algae and debris may accumulate in this line.

Periodic cleaning helps prevent blockage that may cause water to overflow and damage ceilings or walls.

✓ Test GFCI outlets

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlets should be tested every six months to ensure they are functioning correctly. These safety devices help protect occupants from electrical shock.

✓ Inspect exterior faucets and hose bibs

Check exterior faucets for leaks or loose connections. Undetected leaks can increase water usage and may cause soil erosion or moisture accumulation near the foundation.

Annually

✓ Flush water heater

Annual flushing removes mineral sediment that accumulates inside the water heater tank. This helps maintain heating efficiency and extends equipment life.

✓ Inspect roof condition

Perform a visual inspection of the roof for missing shingles, damaged flashing, or debris accumulation. Roof inspections are particularly important after storm seasons.

✓ Inspect stucco and exterior walls

Check exterior surfaces for cracks or deterioration. Small cracks should be sealed promptly to prevent water infiltration.

✓ Inspect and reseal exterior caulking

Exterior sealants around windows, doors, and wall penetrations should be inspected and replaced when deteriorated to maintain the weather resistance of the home.

✓ Schedule HVAC professional inspection

A qualified HVAC technician should inspect the system annually to verify proper operation, electrical safety, refrigerant levels, and airflow performance.

✓ Lubricate garage door components

Garage door rollers, tracks, and hinges should be lubricated periodically to ensure smooth operation and reduce mechanical wear.

Important Warranty Notice

Routine maintenance is the responsibility of the homeowner.

Failure to perform the maintenance activities described in this document may result in damage, deterioration, or system malfunction that **may not qualify for warranty coverage under the applicable warranty program**.

The builder's warranty is intended to cover defects in workmanship and materials. It does not cover conditions resulting from lack of maintenance, normal wear, environmental exposure, misuse, or neglect.

Homeowners are encouraged to maintain records of maintenance activities and to follow manufacturer recommendations for all installed equipment and appliances.

For detailed maintenance procedures, homeowners should refer to the **4U Homes Systems Care Guide**, available through the **4U Homes website**.