

WINTER MAINTENANCE

HUMIDITY CONTROL

During the winter season (with windows and doors closed and heating system continuously operating), it is imperative that the HRV be turned on to control indoor humidity levels. Failure to do so can be very harmful to the house structure, especially hardwood and laminate floors and can result in loss of warranty. The humidistat (HRV control) should be set somewhere in the indicated comfort zone; lower level (30-40 % relative humidity when exterior temperatures are very cold and a higher level (40-55% relative humidity when temperatures are milder). The amount of condensation on your windows will be a good indicator of whether your levels are appropriate; mild condensation is OK, excessive condensation is a clear sign that the setting needs to be adjusted to a lower humidity level. Also, the furnace fan switch on the thermostat needs to be in the **ON** position (continuous fan operation) to allow the HRV to properly retrieve exhaust air and supply fresh air to the house. The HRV **will not** function properly without this fan activated.

EXTERIOR HOSE CONNECTIONS

Your home is equipped with frost-free hose connections on the exterior and in the garage that do not need to be shut off in the winter season. When the hose connection is shut off during normal operation, the remaining water in the valve drains out for a brief moment and the pipe is then dry from the exterior outlet back into the connection point just inside the home (where it is heated). There is no water in the exterior portion that can then freeze and crack the pipe. However, in order for this to happen, **any hoses or attachments to the tap must be disconnected to allow the pipe to drain itself. Failure will result in freezing of the hose connection with subsequent high-pressure leakage in the wall at the hose connection when the water is turned back on** at the hose connection which will result in basement water damage. Should you suspect that you may have an exterior hose connection that was allowed to freeze as described above, be very careful and monitor the connection when first using it again.

EAVESTROUGHS

Eavestroughs and downspouts should be checked and cleaned as required to ensure they are operating properly. Kick-outs at the base of the downspouts must be properly secured in place directing water away from building foundations.

SURFACE DRAINAGE AND FOUNDATION DRAINS

To ensure dry basements, there are two major items to be aware of. Firstly, ensure that all surface water is draining away from the house foundation, (especially at downspouts as mentioned above) where there can be heavy discharges during period of rain and/or snow melt. Any areas where surface water is being directed toward foundation walls must be addressed immediately. During the winter, it is sometimes necessary to remove some ice, etc. that may be damming the downspout flows, or otherwise impeding surface water flow away from house foundation.



Also, periodically check the sump pump operation by disconnecting the pump from the automatic float and plugging it directly into the electrical outlet for a moment to check its operation.

FURNACE

The high-efficiency gas furnace in your home has intake and exhaust vents on an outside wall of the home. On the townhomes, these vents are on the outside rear wall of the home, and on all semi-detached and detached homes, they are located on the outside wall of the utility room (garage side of home). During periods of high snow build-up, snow must be removed to allow the pipes to vent furnace exhaust and to allow combustion air to be introduced into the furnace. Also, ice buildup during periods of extended cold can restrict flow from the exhaust vent. The ice must be removed from the termination point of the exhaust vent. Both situations will result in the furnace to shut off operation, since safe operation of the exhaust system is compromised.

Also, monthly replacement of the furnace filter is suggested to maintain proper airflow throughout the home. This will ensure that proper heat levels will be possible in all rooms and that the furnace blower will not be over-stressed.