



**Introduction to Your
New Home
&
Home Maintenance Schedule**

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Congratulations on your new home! R&M Property Management knows this is a very exciting and overwhelming time. We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for choosing our house to make your home and also to familiarize you with ways you can help take care of your home and possibly save yourself money in utilities and deposit returns.

In the following pages, you will find a plethora of information that will help you do just that. Please take the time to review this booklet completely and remember to keep it in a place that is easily accessible. It is a good idea to mark your calendar for 30 days from your move-in date so that you can review this booklet again since this booklet has monthly maintenance items.

Introduction to Your New Home

The first half of the booklet is more of an introduction that will bring your attention to some items that we find a lot of renters do not know about. We will take you through all aspects of the house: appliances, electrical, plumbing, etc. Even if you have rented/owned several homes, please read this booklet entirely. Many things in the home have changed due to code updates or desire to make your life easier/better.

Appliances

Dishwasher

To begin with, newer energy-efficient dishwashers only heat water for a certain amount of time regardless of the temperature it reaches. To ensure your dishes are being washed at the optimal high temperature, it is best to run the hot water in your kitchen sink until it is hot before starting the dishwasher. Since your dishwasher pulls its water from the same line, this helps greatly in achieving the desired temperature.

Secondly, dishwashers now require a drying agent to get the dishes completely dry. We have found that Jet Dry does a good job.

Finally, to aid in getting the dishes completely clean and dry you need to make sure that you use the sanitize heat setting and the heated dry option. If you are having any issues with your dishwasher, please call management for assistance.

Kitchen Sink Disposal.

Your disposal needs to be cleaned regularly in order to prevent bad odors as well as plumbing issues. The handiest and best solution to accomplish this is to put some vinegar in an ice tray and let it freeze. Then remove the vinegar cubes and run them through your disposal. This will freshen and sharpen the blades. If the blades freeze up there is a red reset on the bottom of the disposal you need to press and in the very bottom center there is a spot to insert an Allen wrench and manually rotate the blades. Please call management if you need assistance.

Dryer Vent

R&M homes have a recessed box in the cavity of the wall which allows you to get your dryer closer to the wall without putting unwanted kinks in the flex hose which attaches it. You will notice that the opening where the flex hose from your dryer connects to the box is now an oval pipe. This is the same ductwork from before just squeezed to fit into the box. You will use the same circular flex duct and squeeze it to fit around the oval duct. You will need to use a worm-drive hose clamp to conform it completely to the oval.

The receptacle (outlet) that we use for the dryer is set by code (we cannot change it.) You will need to put a cord on your dryer that fits the existing receptacle.

As stated by many sources, dryer lint can be the number 1 cause of house fires in the United States. You will need to clean the dryer vent on a monthly basis to keep lint from building up. You can accomplish this by a standard house hold vacuum cleaner with a long extension.

Microwave

The microwave in your home re-circulates the air and fumes from cooking. The microwave we use has two filters to make sure the air is filtered completely. On the bottom of the microwave, there are two metal grease filters that need to be taken out and cleaned regularly. These filters can be removed by sliding them to the rear and using the tabs to pull down an out. Soak them in hot water and detergent and then rinse clean.

The charcoal filter that needs to be replaced on a yearly basis will be taken care of by management.

Range (Stove)

You have an electric range in your kitchen. The electric ranges are run on 220 and has its own breaker in the breaker box. Please keep your range clean to prevent fire hazards and immediately let management know if there are any issues.

Electrical

Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupter (AFCI) Breaker

AFCI is a specific duplex circuit breaker designed to help prevent fires by detecting an unintended electrical arc and disconnecting the power before the arc starts a fire. All of the circuit breakers in your breaker box are now AFCI breakers. These breakers have advanced electronics inside that detect sudden bursts of electric current in milliseconds; long before a standard circuit breaker would. While this helps in the detection of arc faults, these breakers can also indicate false positives, identifying normal circuit behaviors as arc faults. For instance, a lot of old appliances pull too many amps for them, or plugging a vacuum cleaner in while it is still in the on position, lightning strikes, or even static electricity can cause an AFCI breaker to trip. You will notice more tripped breakers than before than you did in older homes and this is normal for these types of breakers. If a breaker trips, you can turn it back on at the breaker box without notifying management. If it continues to be a problem, please notify management.

Breaker Boxes

Your house will have either one or possibly two breaker boxes depending on the position of your garage. If you have two breaker boxes, the main service disconnect breaker will be in the breaker box on the exterior of your home towards the alley. The main service disconnect breaker turns off and on power to the rest of your breakers (hence it can turn off power to your entire home.) If you are searching for a tripped breaker, make sure to look in both boxes. If a breaker trips, you will find it in the middle position. It will not go all the way to off. You will need to flip the breaker all the way to the off position then back to on to reset the breaker. Your main breaker box, with most of your breakers, will always be in your garage. Do not ever put anything in the way of the breaker box that will prevent you or us from getting to it if needed.

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI)

GFCI is an electrical outlet that is designed to disconnect quickly enough to prevent injury caused abnormalities in the current. You will find these in all wet areas: kitchen, baths, garage, and exterior outlets. If an outlet does not work in one of these locations, look for the closest GFCI receptacle. If the red light is on, the GFCI is tripped. You need to press the reset button to correct it.

Test your GFCIs every month. This is done by pressing the test button on the GFCI. You should hear a click and see a red light. If not, you probably have a bad GFCI. After you test the receptacle make sure you press the reset button and the red light goes off.

Tamper (Child) Resistant Receptacles (outlets)

Every electrical outlet inside and outside of the house is now required to be a tamper resistant plug. They have spring-loaded shutters that close off the contact openings or slots of the receptacles. When a plug is inserted into the receptacle, both springs are compressed and the shutters open allowing for the plug to be inserted. Both springs must be compressed at the same time or else the shutters do not open. This prevents a child from inserting an object just into one side and getting electrocuted. Sometimes when these receptacles are new they are a little harder to open and take a while to loosen up. If there is evidence of purposeful tampering with these outlets, the renter will be charged to replace them.

Wattage on Light Bulbs

Pay close attention to the wattage on your light bulbs. Whatever the bulb's wattage is that you take out make sure you do not use a larger watt light bulb. Most new fixtures will not work with too large wattage bulbs anymore. This is a government restriction put in place to save electricity.

Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Detectors

All smoke detectors in new homes are now dual purpose; they are smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Carbon monoxide is a clear and odorless gas, so if the detectors are going off and you do not see or smell anything, you still need to get out of the house. The detectors are hard wired into your home and have battery back-ups in case of a power outage. As a renter, you will be responsible for making sure these are cleaned/dusted regularly so that they can do their job. You will also be responsible for replacing the batteries when needed. Your smoke/carbon monoxide detectors all have 9-volt batteries in them. Every month you should brush or vacuum the smoke detector free of dust on the exterior. Then, you will need to test the detector in 2 ways. First is by simply pressing the test button on the smoke detector. The detector should go off in a couple of seconds, if not you will need to replace the battery. If this does not fix the problem you probably have a faulty detector. Secondly, you will want to test the detector with real smoke. You can do this by either lighting a match and holding it underneath the detector for a few seconds or by purchasing and using an aerosol can of smoke from your local hardware store. Please call management if you need assistance.

Fire Extinguisher

You should purchase a fire extinguisher for your home immediately. The extinguisher should be inspected monthly. This is a simple task and only requires that the gauge shows adequate pressure and has no visible signs of wear and tear.

Structured Wire (Smart) Panel

In your utility room or master closet you will find a white panel approximately 15" x 29". This panel is your structured wire panel. This is where all of your Cat 5 wires for your phones and data connections are run as well as the coaxial cables for the televisions. Whoever you get for your internet and television service will need to have access to this panel to hook everything up. Most people put their modem and wireless router for their internet in the panel as well.

General

Attic Stairs (Disappearing Stairway)

The set of pull down stairs in the garage is probably larger and heavier than you are used to. You might need to have assistance when lowering and raising your stairs. We use a Heavy Duty stairway that is rated to hold up to 300 pounds. Please be careful.

Ceiling Fans

All of the ceiling fans come with a switch on the side of the fan that changes the direction it spins. During the summer months you want the fan to rotate counterclockwise. This will push cool air down to the floor. In the winter months, you want the fan to spin clockwise (always use a low speed in the winter) which will push the warm air that rises to the ceiling back down to the floor. By using fans and not relying on your a/c or heater as much you can reduce your heating and cooling bills.

Garage Door

Your garage door has a few features you need to be familiar with. You will notice on the bottom of both sides of the garage door there are black sensors with red and green lights. Do not worry about the red light. It does not mean it is not working. The red and green lights are so the installers make sure they get one transmitter and one receiver. These are there to protect valuables, people and animals from getting hurt beneath the garage door. If something breaks these sensors the lights will blink and it will cause the garage door to reverse and go back up. These sensors sometimes get banged around over time and you might need to adjust the sensors back to where they see each other. Also, sometimes the beams can be broken by rain, blowing debris, or during certain times of the day and year, the sun. The aforementioned reasons seldom happen but should be kept in mind.

On the wall button in the garage you will find three buttons. The larger button is the operating button that moves the door up and down. There is another button with a picture of a light bulb on it; this button allows you to turn the light on the opener on and off without opening the door. The last button is a lock button that while engaged will not allow the door to be opened by a remote.

Lastly, you should know that even if the opener is not working you can always get out of the garage door using the built-in bypass mechanism. The bypass disconnects the door from the powered carriage, but it stays on the track. Once you disconnect it, you can then lift the door manually. When power is restored, you can reconnect it. To disconnect the door manually, locate the red cord hanging from the bracket on the chain. Pull on the cord until the lever it is attached to locks in the down position. Now you can raise and lower the door. Please be sure to use both hands and **DO NOT** let go of the door in the up position; it is free moving now and could possibly come crashing down. When you get the remotes to working again, you will need to pull the red cord upwards until the latch goes back into the upward position. Then, press the button to move the door and it will grab the latch when it goes by. If you need assistance, please call management.

Floor Coverings

All floor coverings (carpet, tile, etc.) should be maintained on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. You need to vacuum, sweep, and mop floor covering (depending on type) to prolong their life and prevent being charged for damages. If a stain occurs that you can treat and remove, please do so as soon as possible. If a stain you cannot fix or a tear occurs, you need to notify management as soon as possible so that we can work with you to find a solution to prevent further damage. On a monthly basis, you need to do a thorough inspection and report any possible problems.

Loose Screws

There are many items in your home that have screws which can come loose over time. This is not a major issue and you as a tenant can make sure all screws stay tightened to prevent items from breaking or falling apart. This includes, but is not limited to: door knobs, towel bars, toilet paper holders, electrical receptacle plates, audio/data/phone receptacle plates, door hinges, cabinet hinges and cabinet pulls. If you need assistance, or there is a consistent issue with a specific area, please call management.

Granite

Granite is a natural product and requires some special considerations, but simple care and maintenance will keep the granite countertops looking beautiful. You need to dust surfaces frequently, blot up spills immediately (granite is porous), and clean with a neutral cleaner because too much cleaner may leave a film. Make sure to never use vinegar, ammonia or other cleaners containing acids.

Window Tracks

For proper operation and to prevent water penetration you need to vacuum the window tracks as needed (especially after large dirt storms). The tracks need to be completely cleaned and should allow the window to go fully down.

Aerators on Plumbing Faucets and Shower Heads

One of the main causes of decreased water pressure is clogged aerators. The main culprit especially around here is hard water deposits. You need to take all aerators and shower heads off and soak in CLR to their instructions. Then rinse and put back up. The water softener in the home should greatly decrease this problem.

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioner (HVAC)

Heat/Air Pump

R&M uses heat pumps in all of our all-electric houses. With a heat pump, your thermostat will have another setting that you are not used to seeing - EMHT. It stands for EMergency HeaT. This is a supplemental heating source. When it gets extremely cold outside a heat pump might not be effective at heating your home to a desired temperature on its own. If this happens, go to your thermostat and turn the EMHT setting on. It will warm your house faster than using just the heat pump. The downfall is it consumes a lot more electricity, so your bills will be higher. We recommend using the EMHT setting only when the heat pump does not heat to your comfort level.

If your heat pump or air conditioner do not come on you can check a couple of things first. The first and simplest is to make sure that the thermostat is set to a cooling setting, with the set temperature lower by at least 4 degrees than what the house is currently. Next, there is a breaker in the breaker box

that will have air conditioner written on it; make sure that breaker is not tripped and is in the on position. If those do not work, please contact management for assistance.

Furnace

The furnace, which heats your home, will be located in the attic. Do not put any items on the furnace platform, because this will restrict airflow to the unit and it will cause fire hazards.

We use gravity condensation lines to make sure the built-up condensation drains from the unit. The main line can get clogged up, and the unit can start to spill the condensation out. We protect the ceiling from leaks by putting a stainless steel catch pan under the unit. The pan (in cases where the main line is clogged up) will catch the built-up condensation; it has a drain line of its own which we run into the ceiling of your garage. It is in a conspicuous location so that if water is ever running out of this drain, you can easily see it and contact management immediately to prevent damages.

Return Air Register Filters

The main reason the furnace drainage line gets clogged is not changing the return air register filters regularly. The filters can get so dirty that they will prevent the unit from working properly. The unit will be starving for air and will actually suck the dirt and fibers out of the filters into the coils of the furnace. The drain line will then get clogged up and not allow the condensation to drain.

Return air filters are in the return registers instead of in the furnace itself. This keeps you from having to get into your hot attic and possibly fall through the ceiling and allows more filters to purify the air in your home leading to better air quality and longer filter life. It is the responsibility of the renter to change these filters. You need to check your filters on a monthly basis. If they are not dirty you can go up to, but never exceed 2 months before changing all of your filters. You need to use a low-cost fiberglass filter. The high efficiency filters will reduce the airflow to the unit causing problems. The two best places to buy filters will be:

Robert Madden Industries, 6021-43rd Street, Lubbock, Texas 79407, 806-797-4251 Or

Online at www.discountfilters.com under hvac-filters

You will have 2 different registers with filters. One is located in the master bedroom and the second is in the common hallway to the spare bedrooms. In most cases the filter in the hallway is 20"x20"x1" and filter in the master bedroom is a 14"x14"x1".

Forced Air Registers (Balance the Home)

We do everything we can to make sure you do not have hot and cold spots in your home. However, there are certain factors that we cannot control. For instance, the further the space is away from the furnace the longer the duct work will be and this will lead to airflow loss. The parts of the home that face north and west will also be warmer due to the sun (especially rooms with large windows.) You can lower the effect of these issues by "balancing the system." This is achieved by moving the lever on the forced air registers (vents in each room). In the rooms that are in the center of the home and on south or east facing side you can close the registers off more but not completely. You will need to fully open the rooms that are located on the north and west sides of the home (especially the rooms on the outer most parts of the home.) This will force the air flow more readily to the rooms that need it more. Of course, you will have to fine tune this method through trial and error to get the best seasonal balance.

Bathroom Exhaust Fans

From safety to odor control, there are many reasons why having bathroom exhaust fans in your home is an important necessity. The primary purpose for having an exhaust fan is to remove the moisture and fumes of cleaning agents from the bathroom. You need to run the fan for a minimum of 15 minutes after taking a shower in your bathroom. This will help remove moisture and reduce the possibility of mold build-up.

Landscaping and Sprinkler System

Yard Maintenance

Mowing, edging, etc. of the front, back, and side yards is the responsibility of the tenant. Management will check the condition of the yard periodically. If there is an issue with upkeep, management will give you, the tenant, a written warning. If the issue is not remedied within one week of the warning, management will fix the issue and charge you \$75.00.

Drainage and Grade of Yard

You, as the tenant, need to make sure to never alter the grade/slope of the yard so that water stays against your home. The number one reason for foundation problems is too much water next to the foundation. If you ever notice water staying against the house or standing continuously within 5' please contact management so that we can remedy the issue.

Sprinkler System

Your house comes equipped with a sprinkler system. The schedule will be set and maintained by management. If you ever have issues of any kind with the sprinkler system, or if your sprinkler is still running when it is raining or freezing, please contact management for assistance.

Plumbing

Inspect for Leaks

You should check every faucet and appliance that uses water in your home to make sure it is not leaking. If it is, please let management know immediately to minimize damages. If it is a major leak, you can always shut off all of the water to your house out at the water meter in your alley.

Separate Sprayer in sink

Your kitchen sink has a separate sprayer on an extendable hose. The hose that pulls out is draped beneath the sink inside the cabinet. The main problem you might encounter is the sprayer or hose not coming out when you try to pull it. This is normally because the hose is twisted around plumbing or products you have placed under the sink. Please keep the hose clear of obstructions.

Refrigerator Line

The water line to your refrigerator in the kitchen is first run under your kitchen sink. We do this as a convenience feature so that if you want a reverse osmosis system, you can put it under your kitchen sink and get clean filtered water to your kitchen sink and to your refrigerator. Now you have 2 cutoff valves on your refrigerator line. One is at the refrigerator location and the other is under the kitchen sink, so if you turn on the valve at the refrigerator and still do not get water check the valve under the kitchen sink.

Water Heater

Time/Temperature Relationship in Scalds

Temperature	Time To Produce a Serious Burn
120 degrees Fahrenheit	More Than 5 Minutes
125 degrees Fahrenheit	1 ½ to 2 Minutes
130 degrees Fahrenheit	About 30 Seconds
135 degrees Fahrenheit	About 10 Seconds
140 degrees Fahrenheit	Less than 5 Seconds
145 degrees Fahrenheit	Less than 3 Seconds
150 degrees Fahrenheit	About 1 ½ Seconds
155 degrees Fahrenheit	About 1 Second

Water temperatures above 125 degrees Fahrenheit can cause severe burns or death from scalding. R&M Property Management sets the water heaters in their homes at 135 degrees Fahrenheit. To prevent injury or damage to the home, do not adjust this setting. If you have any issues with the temperature of your water, please contact management.

Unused Plumbing

All plumbing drains into the sewer. If the plumbing is unused for a long period of time the water will evaporate from the P-trap. The water in the trap is the only thing keeping the sewer gases from coming into your home. You will need to flush all plumbing with hot water and baking soda to keep the sewer gases from rising into your home.

Exterior Faucets

During winter months it is a good idea to place insulated faucet covers on your exterior faucets. The covers will keep them from freezing up. These can be purchased at any home improvement store as well as Walmart.

Water Softener

R&M homes come with water softening units. The benefits of these units to tenants are numerous. They can extend the life of your washer, leave less hard water spots on everything, are better for your skin, and allow you to use less soap for dishes, clothes, and showers.

As a tenant, you must either grant management access to your water heater closet (located in the garage) on the second Wednesday of every month to check and refill salt for the unit, or agree to refill the salt yourself. If you chose to do so yourself, you will absorb the cost of the salt; it can be purchased at Walmart, Sam's Club, Lowes, Home Depot, or online at: <http://ngsales.net/gemline-products.php>

The salt you need to use is "Morton System Save II".

You will simply need to fill the salt container to the top of the white tube inside (never over it). Please contact management if you have any issues.

Maintenance Schedule

Regular preventative maintenance is necessary to prevent damage to the home and appliances. It is the tenant’s responsibility to take care of the following maintenance items. Maintenance can increase the amount of your deposit you will have returned to you by allowing any problems that occur to be fixed when they are small and manageable. Your obligation is to care for your home in such a way as to prevent or minimize damage to it. This is a schedule to help you with what to do. Please call management if you have any questions/concerns.

Maintenance Schedule Spreadsheet

ITEM	MONTHLY	AS NEEDED
Check/replace Return Air Register Filters	Yes	
Dryer Lint Removal (from vent)	Yes	
Clean and Test Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Detectors	Yes	
Test and Reset all GFCIs	Yes	
Clean Kitchen Sink Disposal	Yes	
Clean Microwave Grease Filters	Yes	
Check Pressure of Fire Extinguisher	Yes	
Inspect Home for Leaks	Yes	
Flush Unused Plumbing	Yes	
Check Floor Coverings	Yes	
Check Grading and Drainage	Yes	
Tighten Loose Screws	Yes	
Check/refill water heater (or allow management access to do)	Yes	
Clean Window Tracks		Yes
Replace Batteries in Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Detectors		Yes
Check Furnace Condensation Lines		Yes
Clean Carpet		Yes
Clean Aerators on Plumbing Faucets and Shower Heads		Yes
Winterize Exterior Faucets		Yes
Maintain Front, Back, and Side Yards		Yes