



Caring for Your Home

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Maintaining Your Home Is So Important

It saves money in the long run and assures the longevity of your beautiful home. Taking care of your home on a schedule, like changing a furnace filter or restoring cracked sealant, will let you enjoy your new home to the fullest for years to come.

We will identify some key maintenance tips to assist you while you're living in your new home.

For more information on your home warranty or maintenance, please reach out to your Customer Care team at 1-844-457-8184.

Countertop / Natural Stone Products

Kitchens are the main focal point of the home. Granite countertops should be sealed with a quality sealer at least once a year to prevent staining, discolouration, and to maintain the sheen/shine. Marble or Granite countertops are porous and no two pieces are alike.

It's important to remember that variegations, fissures, and/or veining will be a part of these natural stone products which add to the characteristics of the stone.

Always review the manufacturer specifications— always review the manufacturer specifications regarding your countertop product:

- Don't use abrasive or acidic cleaners.
- Clean the countertop immediately after spills or meal prep. Use mild soap and water to clean, and be sure to dry right after.
- Don't cut directly on the countertop, use a cutting board and avoid placing sharp objects on the countertop.
- To protect the countertop from extreme heat/cold, use hot pads and trivets.
- Avoid sitting and dropping heavy objects on countertops as excessive loads could cause cracking.
- Avoid standing water at joints and openings at sinks and faucets.





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Flooring

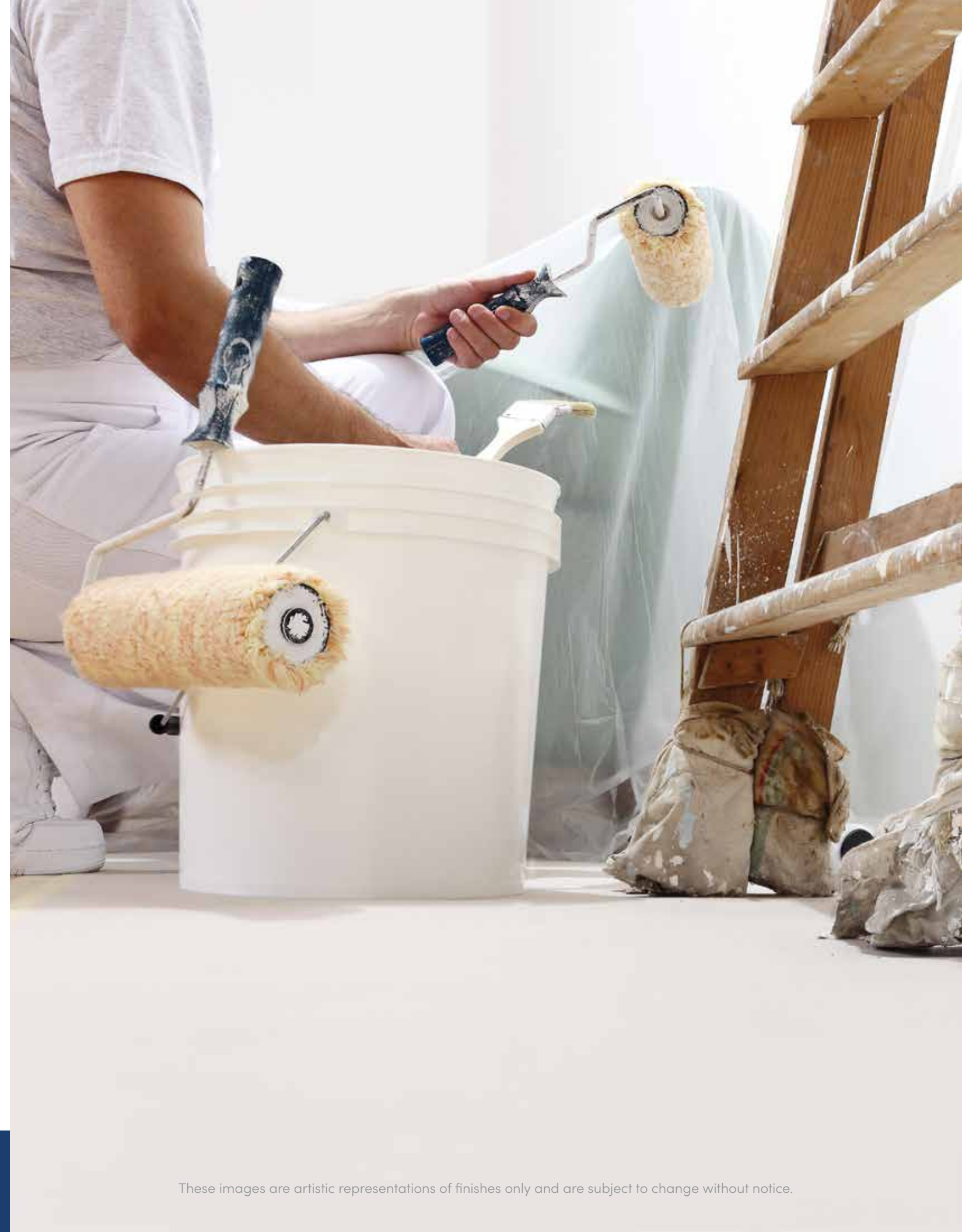
We all love a clean space! The floors in your home are one of the main areas that require consistent maintenance.

- Use a mat at entry doors to catch debris.
- Use dry mop or duster to clean.
- Refrain from using wet mops and steamers. Too much water can cause the floor to buckle or warp.
- Maintain a constant humidity level of 30% to 45% to prevent excessive contraction, buckling, squeaking, warping, and gapping.
- Use a humidifier in the winter months and a dehumidifier in the summer months.
- Do not walk in sports cleats or high heels as these can cause dents.

Paint / Drywall

Scrubbing flat paint could cause the finish to wear down, making the sheen appear patchy in spots.

- Dust your walls. When dust and dirt accumulate on your walls, it will shorten the life of your interior wall paint.
- Try to clean with a melamine-foam-based product, like the Magic Eraser, on your stains. If your wall is dark, this may leave behind a white residue, so you'll need to follow up by gently blotting the area with an absorbent white towel.
- Nail pops refer to drywall nails being exposed above / below the surface of the drywall. Drywall cracks refer to a separation within the drywall. Both are common occurrences as the natural materials in your home dry.





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Exterior Hose Bib

Winterize hose bibs to prevent the pipes from freezing and protect your home from flooding or other water damage.

- Locate the shutoff valve that services the hose bib and turn it off.
- Remove any hose that is attached to the exterior pipe.
- Turn the hose bib and leave it on for the entire winter. Consider placing a protective cap on your exterior hose bib. If there is a bleeder valve, open it as well to drain excess water from the line. Close/tighten it back when there is no more water.

Heating and Cooling

Change your furnace / air conditioner filter regularly

- Ensure all vents and room doors are open and free to allow for even airflow distribution.
- Remove all flammable objects from around the furnace and trim any shrubs or bushes around the air conditioning unit.

Heat Recovery Ventilators (HRV) or Energy Recovery Ventilators (ERV) also require maintenance:

- Unplug the unit.
- Clean the unit's interior walls with a clean damp cloth, then wipe dry.
- Open the unit and remove the filter.

Note: Some units will have multiple vents, be sure you removed all filters. Some filters are meant to be cleaned while others should be replaced each time.

- If there's build up or dust, use the hose attachment from your vacuum cleaner or use a handheld vacuum to remove any debris.
- For a deeper clean, wash the filter with the garden hose outside. Avoid the pressurized setting on your hose so you don't accidentally damage the filter.
- It's recommended to use a professional HVAC specialist to service your furnace yearly.





Controlling Moisture

Condensation occurs naturally when warm moist air meets cold surfaces. Condensation may occur on windows, toilets, and water supply lines and is not an indication of water penetration/leak.

TIP: Regularly check and maintain your indoor humidity (30%–45%). High humidity levels can potentially lead to mold concerns.

- Wipe away excess water from window frame, sill, glass, etc. Ensure even air circulation by opening windows and/or blinds and keeping heat vents clear.
- Turn on the hood fan when cooking and using small appliances such as a kettle or toaster.
- Keep the fan on auto if heat/air conditioning unit is off (Check seasonal temperatures outside when selecting indoor humidity range). Use the fan when taking a shower/bath.
- Use Energy Recovery Ventilator/Heat Recovery Ventilator where applicable.
- Consider keeping a dehumidifier in the basement to assist with humidity in the summer months and a humidifier in the winter months if required.

Electrical

- GFCIs are sensitive safety devices installed to protect against electrical shock, especially in wet areas such as bathrooms and kitchens. These devices can be tripped and reset easily.
- Circuit breakers protect electrical wiring from overloading. If you notice a circuit has shorted, you can reset this at the main panel.
- Do not use extension cords or converters for appliances.

TIP: Do not overload or bypass electrical circuits as this may result in injury or fire.

- Smoke Detectors will need to be cleaned regularly to prevent dust from entering the unit and causing a false alarm.

Refer to Brookfield's Residential's 'Don't Overload Your Home!' electrical handout.





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Plumbing

- If you will be away from home for more than a week, turn off the main water shutoff.
- Regularly inspect basement floor drains and grates, bathroom sinks, eavestroughs, downspouts, and other drains for deposits that may cause water to back up and/or drain slowly.
- Check for physical damage or calcium buildup.
TIP: Use CLR cleaners to keep drains clean and unobstructed.
- Regularly check caulking and seals around bathtubs, shower enclosures, and entry door seals for damage and or wear and tear to prevent leaks. Replace sealant/caulking approximately twice a year to prevent staining and mildew.
- Purchasing a water softener can prolong the use of plumbing fixtures.

What Not To Flush

We don't often think twice about what we're flushing down the toilet – because why would we? – but chances are there are a number of things that we're tossing into the commode that could do some serious damage.

- Do not flush dental floss. It may look small and harmless, but dental floss is not biodegradable and can wrap around things, which causes clogging.
- Do not flush grease, oil, or fat down the toilet or sink. Grease may go down like a liquid, but will eventually cool, congeal, and build up inside pipes.
- Do not flush disposable wipes or paper towels. The fibers that make up the disposable wipe are considerably thicker than toilet paper. Even three-ply paper breaks down very easily in water, but wipes will not break down.
- Do not flush feminine products. These products are designed to be absorbent and they'll expand past the point where they can pass through the pipes.
- Do not flush hair. It may be a natural fibre that comes from our bodies, but hair can wreak havoc on your pipes. Not only can it clog drains, but it can also trap other things leading to unpleasant odours and slow drains.

Sodding

Watering frequently during the first few weeks is very important (the first 48 hours are crucial). It is best to water during the early morning or early evening. Once the lawn is established, avoid watering during the mid-day sun. On days when the temperature exceeds 28 degrees Celsius, your sod should be watered every day.

- To gauge watering, place a small can or container about 6 feet away from the sprinkler. When there is an inch of water in the can or container, it is time to move the sprinkler to the next area.
- It is important to check the wind patterns to be sure the desired area is in fact being watered.
- When sod is first laid it may turn yellowish in colour from environmental shock. This is normal. Your sod will turn green again with proper watering and maintenance.





Sealants / Caulking

- It is recommended to inspect the sealant/caulking around your sink countertops, tubs, ceramic tile, and baseboards every six months. Sealant/caulking can dry out or shrink. When this shrink or dries out, the caulking no longer provides a good seal against moisture and will need to be replaced.
- Exterior sealant/caulking is a lot like your home's interior: Your goal is a neat-looking seal over cracks and gaps. Outdoor sealant/caulking deserves some extra attention. It will have to withstand all the extremes that nature can dish out.
- Sealant/Caulk won't stick well to dirty surfaces. On siding and trim, dig out any loose paint, caulking or other crud, then sweep them with a dry paintbrush or blast them with a compressor and an air nozzle.
- You want a bead that stretches easily in the middle and sticks stubbornly along the edges. An hourglass-shaped bead accomplishes both of those goals. It stretches easily because it's thin in the middle and sticks well because it has wide 'adhesion zones' along the edges. It is recommended to smoothen a caulk bead with your finger. Not only does this make it look neater, but also shapes the bead to better withstand movement.

Grout

Let's face it, grout can be tough to clean. Grout maintenance takes time and effort. Below are some tips on how to clean and maintain your grout.

- We recommend cleaning grout with water and baking soda paste at least once a month. Rub it in the grout with a grout brush or a used toothbrush and rinse with clear water. If your grout seems a little more stained than usual, use hydrogen peroxide instead of water.
- After you've cleaned the grout with the method that works best for your home, you'll need to reseal it. (Note: epoxy grouts don't need to be sealed.) Choosing the right sealant depends on the job. For instance, surface sealants or coatings are not sufficient sealers in a bathroom. They need silicone, not water-based products. Your selection depends on several factors, such as the type of the grout, location, your intention, applying method, and budget.





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Exterior Concrete

In Canada, the climate can get harsh temperatures in the winter months:

- Use an ice melt product specially designed for concrete. Many salt products can cause erosion of the concrete which can also lead to flaking, scaling, or pitting.
- When concrete cures, it is not uncommon to notice cracks. These cracks can be visible on the porch, garage slabs, and other concrete surfaces.

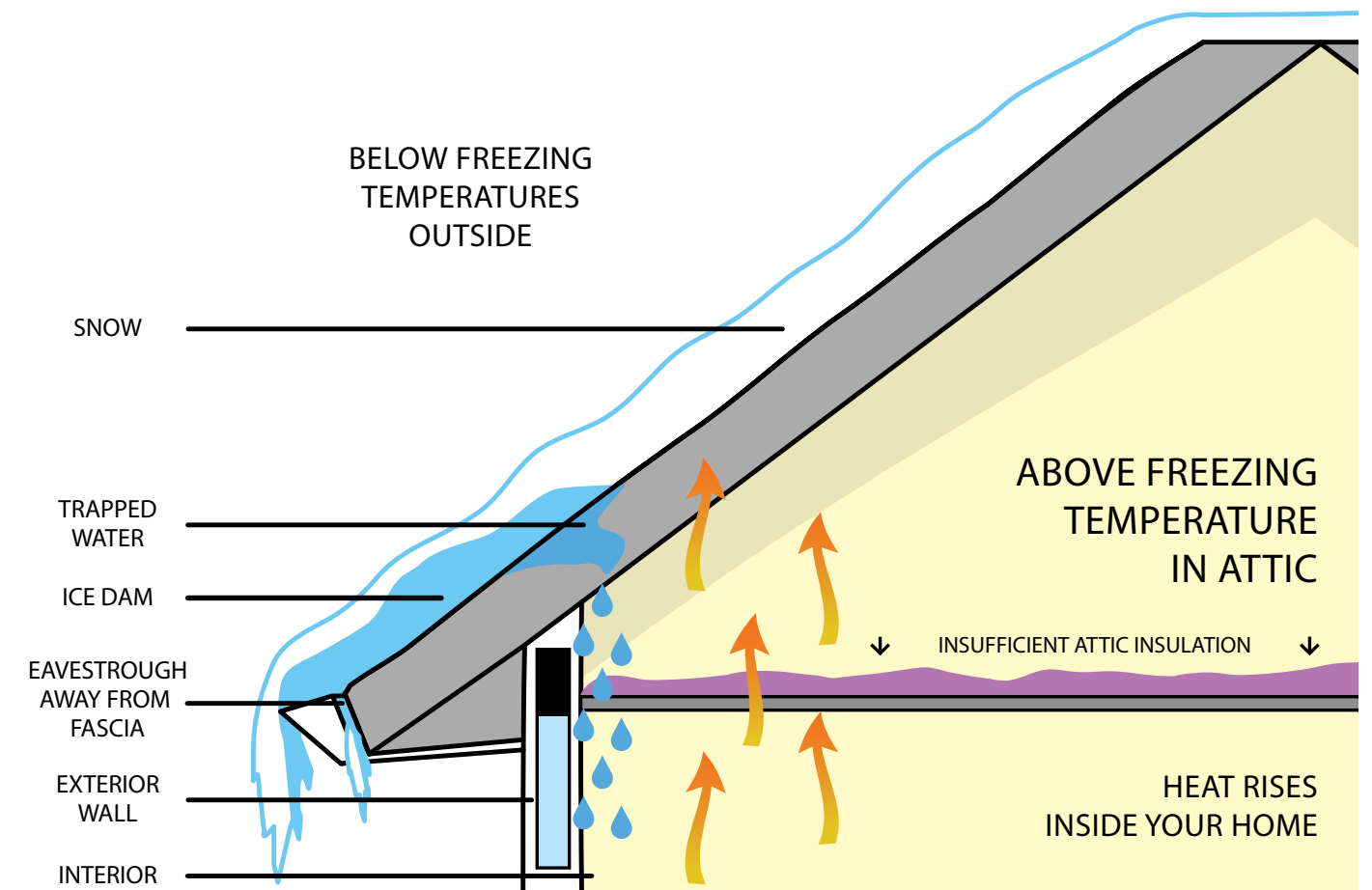
Eavestrough, Downspouts and Ice Damming

Over time, debris can build up in your eavestroughs and downspouts. It's important to clean them during each season to prevent any clogging to the system. Ice buildup can also block the flow of water to the downspouts. Ice damming occurs when water melts on the roof and refreezes where the eavestrough meets the fascia.

Note: The ice can push the eavestrough away from the fascia and create an opening.

Below are some methods to prevent ice damming:

- Remove any sticks or debris that can cause damage. This can extend the lifespan of your eavestrough.
- Repair any small holes or cracks (a patching kit can be found at any local hardware store)





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Water Softener

Water has many different minerals such as calcium and magnesium, which over time can leave deposits. Depending on where you live, water that has a large number of mineral deposits is classified as hard water. Purchasing a water softener can preserve the lifespan of clothes and fixtures in the home. Below are steps for keeping your softener healthy:

- Use pure salt with iron remover.
- Clean the resin bed once a year with an iron out solution This can be found at any water depot.
- Clean the brine tank once a year.



"A house is made of brick and mortar, but a home is made by the people who live there."

- M.K. Soni