

Commonly Asked Questions:

CONCRETE CARE

- Cracks are common. Throughout South Dakota's freeze/thaw cycle concrete develops cracks or imperfections. These do NOT affect the structural integrity. Unfortunately, there is no method to eliminate these occurrences. These cracks can be caulked to help further damage. The Builder only warranties cracks that exceed 1/2".
- Lifting and settling concrete due to freeze/thaw cycles are acts of nature and not cover under the builder warranty.
- Spalling and flaking are typically caused by weather, salt or not scooping snow off your driveways, sidewalks and are not covered by the Contractor, so we cannot pass on any warranty for these concerns. Most ice melts on the market state they are safe for concrete use but still cause most if not all spalling and flaking, thus all spalling and flaking is not covered under warranty.

SEALING GROUT

- Your home may shift up to a 1/4" throughout the year as it settles, and the temperature rises and falls through the seasons. Ceramic tile grout - which is cement-based - will sometimes crack or separate. This is common and can be remedied with a color-match caulk. The grout is a sealed grout that you will still need to clean & maintain but not reseal. Hardwater will also show discoloration, so water softener is recommended.
- Floors - See page 4, Section 5 & 6 in Home Builders Warranty.

SUMP PUMP

- The builder does not supply sump pumps and it is the sole responsibility of the homeowner to install the sump as soon as possible to avoid any water in the basement.

WINDOW CONDENSATION

- Condensation usually occurs on the windows first because they have the lowest surface temperature of any other interior surfaces within the house. As humidity builds, condensation forms on the glass. When the glass temperature reaches 32 degrees Fahrenheit, ice or frost will form on the glass.
- Window bucks used in the foundation walls are sometimes made of metal and will frost during the winter months. This is normal and is not a warranty defect and it will continue to happen during the cold temperatures.

NORTH FACING WINDOWS & DOORS

- North facing windows, entry doors and garage doors are not designed to eliminate 100% of cold drafts during winter months and will from time to time create a cold air draft. Also, you may see frost accumulate on the edges of the windows, window frames, entry doors, door frames, overhead doors, overhead door frames, outside corners of rooms, floor trim and all trim associated with openings. This is not a defect and not warrantable. These conditions should subside when the weather temps and wind subside.

COUNTER TOPS

- The caulking that seals the counter tops and walls may become unfixed in the months after installation. This occurs when the house settles and expands in seasonal weather conditions. We recommend giving it a few months, because in most cases the counter tops will retract and adhere back to its position, if they do not then it's considered homeowner maintenance and homeowner shall be responsible for adding additional caulking as needed.

SCREENS

- Due to harsh winter weather conditions, we suggest in the best interest of our Homeowners to remove egress window screens before the winter season. With the amount of snow that layers in this window; there is a great possibility for damage to the screens. If you are looking to purchase egress window covers, they are sold at Stan Houston.
- Screens and screen doors off their track are a homeowner's responsibility after closing and will not be covered under the Builder Warranty.

FILTERS & VENTS

- All appliance and equipment filters are the homeowners' responsibility to replace and maintain. It is recommended to change these filters every 3 months to retain proper efficiency and working order.
- Bath fans do make noise on high windy days and it's not a defect. Bath fans vent pipes also accumulate snow in snowstorms and will melt days after and is not a warranty item and considered homeowner maintenance.

OVERHEAD GARAGE DOORS

- Nonoperational garage over doors are commonly caused by the following:
 - Opener GFI outlet is tripped, and the homeowner shall reset it.
 - The wall mounted opener button's lock button is activated. Homeowner shall unlock it.
 - Use the owner's manual to trouble shoot all problems.
 - If all the above does not fix the issue, then contact the overhead door company on normal business hours not Signature. This is not an emergency and not a warranty item. This is a homeowner maintenance item, and the homeowner may be charged for a site visit from the overhead door company.

TOPSOIL

- The lot has been graded to ensure proper drainage away from the house. The builder asks that the homeowner does not alter this pattern with landscaping, fencing and/ or any other reasons that may change this pattern. If the pattern is altered in any way the builder reserves the right to void the warranty. After closing, the homeowner is 100% responsible for erosion control. This includes, but is not limited to, all wash outs from rain and downspouts.

SOD & LANDSCAPING

- Homeowners are responsible for the growth of grass or shrubs. Once the Builder grades, seeds and/or sods, and fertilizes the yard, the homeowner must water the plants and grass sufficiently, and plant ground cover where necessary to prevent erosion.

GUTTERS & DOWNSPOUTS

- Any house having a gutter coming down by the garage into a hole by the sidewalk will need to dig and trench out for drainage on the opposite side of the sidewalk so drainage can occur, and the water doesn't cause any damage to the concrete.
- Homeowner is responsible to ensure the gutter and downspout extensions are always installed, so that no damage is resulted from these not being on the house.
- Ice builds up in gutters during fall, winter and spring months and is not a warranty item. They will overflow and leak during those months until all the ice is properly melted.
- Gutters will leak after one freeze / thaw cycle due to ice expanding and contracting the gutters.
- All maintenance to gutters is homeowners' responsibility and not a Builder Warranty defect.

SNOW ON ROOF

- It is homeowners' responsibility to keep the roof free and clear of snow. Snow building on roofs will cause the melting snow to back up and run under the shingles and it is not covered under the Builder Warranty.

CLAIMS PROCEDURE

- If the homeowner has a defect, they feel is covered under our limited Home Builders Warranty, the homeowner must fill out the web-based form provided on the Builders website, and it will be handle in accordance with the Warranty guidelines if deemed warrantable.

UTILITIES

- Within 2 business days of closing of your home it is the homeowner's responsibility to switch utilities into their name. Any invoices received after this date will be forwarded to the homeowner. If utilities have still not been switched by 30 days of closing date, Signature Companies has the right to cancel all utilities.

Window Condensation

As winter nears, you may be experiencing colder weather conditions and falling temperatures. A common side effect of seasonal change is the appearance of frosty or foggy windows. Don't be alarmed. The quality of your windows' manufacturing is most likely fine. Condensation is often just an indicator your home's humidity levels are too high.

What is condensation?

Condensation is water that collects on a surface when humid air comes in contact with a colder substrate, such as glass. Due to the temperature change, water vapor is converting from a gas to a liquid. Sweaty, foggy, frosted or icy windows are all forms of condensation.

What causes condensation?

Today's tighter, more energy efficient homes can increase indoor humidity. Older homes had random gaps, which allowed for the release of warm, moist air and the replacement of cool, drier air. Newer construction methods do not allow this natural air-to-air exchange. Any internally created humidity gets trapped inside the structure. Elevated humidity then causes condensation to form on cold surfaces, such as windows.

How can I prevent condensation?

There are many different ways to control condensation in your home:

- **Check a hygrometer.**
A hygrometer is an instrument that measures moisture content. It's a relatively inexpensive device that can quickly help you identify humidity concerns that might be at the root of your condensation issues.
- **Reduce the use of humidifiers.**
If you use a humidifier in your home, try adjusting the levels. As a result, the humidifier will release less moisture into the air, which will hopefully reduce condensation.
- **Turn on bathroom and kitchen fans.**
If you've ever seen a foggy bathroom mirror or pot lid, you know that activities like showering and cooking release a lot of moisture into the air. Be sure to run hoods

and exhaust fans for a brief time after bathroom or kitchen activities.

- **Circulate the air.**
Air movement helps reduce the condensation on your windows. It's good practice to continue using ceiling fans in the winter. Be sure to set your fans to clockwise rotation — this will push warm air from the ceiling down to the floor.
- **Adjust your thermostat.**
A slight bump in your house's heating system may help raise the temperature of your windows and reduce or eliminate condensation.
- **Utilize window treatments.**
You can also use blinds, curtains, drapes and other window treatments to moderate window temperatures as well. Opening curtains while your furnace is running, for example, will allow warm air to circulate around windows.
- **Relocate your plants.**
Plants release moisture into the air. If you have several plants by your windows, try moving them to a different spot in the house to help reduce condensation.
- **Install an air-to-air exchanger.**
An air-to-air exchanger removes moisture by bringing in fresh air from the outside while sending indoor air outside, as well as potential airborne pollutants.

What are desired levels of humidity?

The chart below illustrates recommended winter humidity levels:

Outdoor Temperature: Indoor Humidity at 70° F

- -20 degrees F or below = not over 15%
- -20 degrees F to -10 degrees F = not over 20%
- -10 degrees F to 0 degrees F = not over 25%
- 0 degrees F to +10 degrees F = not over 30%
- +10 degrees F to +35 degrees F = not over 35%

These are only recommended humidity levels and may not be applicable for every household. Differences in [glass types](#) (LoE vs. clear) will allow for variances in humidity levels.

No Warranty on Concrete Scaling and Spalling:

This Documentation Hereby states that The Builder WILL NOT warranty any Concrete Scaling and Spalling in any form as our weather elements are too harsh to prevent scaling. With large amounts of Deicer supplied by the city, heavy snow fall, snow compaction, and freeze thaw cycles causing ice, there are too many variables that cause scaling for The Builder to stand behind a Scaling concrete product.

Below lists steps and processes that can be taken to help prevent scaling. As stated, these are steps that can be taken. This in no form means it will prevent scaling if you follow these steps. We will also provide you with the installers contact name and information if you would like to further discuss Scaling with them, but we will have no warranty on this issue.

Clean and reapply sealer as needed.

Cleaning your concrete driveway on occasion and keeping it sealed are the best measures you can take to keep it looking its best. How often you clean and reseal will depend on the weather conditions the concrete is exposed to and the amount of vehicle traffic it receives. Generally, you should reseal a concrete driveway every two years or so, or when the finish begins to show wear. Good commercial sealers are available from concrete material suppliers and hardware stores. Or ask your contractor for recommendations.

Avoid using deicing chemicals.

Using deicers on your concrete driveway in the winter can cause surface damage-primarily scaling and spalling-by forcing the thawing and refreezing of moisture. Products containing ammonium nitrates and ammonium sulphates are especially harmful because they will attack the concrete chemically. Rock salt (sodium chloride) or calcium chloride will do less damage, but they can harm vegetation and corrode metal. Never use any deicers, new concrete is more susceptible to the harmful effects of salt. As an alternative, use sand for traction.

Keep Snow, Ice, and Snow/Ice Compaction off your Driveway

With South Dakota weather the freeze thaw cycle on concrete can cause many problems, the biggest being scaling and spalling. When snow, ice, and salt hit the freeze thaw cycle and are not removed from a driveway promptly and before being packed on a driveway it allows for water and or salt to find its way to the top surface of the concrete. Keeping Snow, Ice, salt, and Vehicles off the driveway at all times during the winter months will help allow your new driveway to cure and seal properly.

