

DISCLAIMER

This guide is intended for general guidance. Details are accurate to the best of our knowledge at time of printing.

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HANDOVER GUIDE



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CONGRATULATIONS ON PURCHASING YOUR
NEW **SUMMERFIELD HOME**

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

CONGRATULATIONS!

We hope that you will enjoy many happy years in your property. This guide gives important information that will help you care for your new home and carry out DIY maintenance safely.

To maintain the condition of your home we strongly recommend that you get professional help and advice if you are not confident that you can carry out any maintenance work to a satisfactory standard.



CONTACT US

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EMERGENCY COVER

We are committed to ensuring that you enjoy your new home. As part of our commitment we have arranged emergency cover for 2 years from the date of legal completion so you can get assistance in the following situations:

- Plumbing and drainage. A blocked external drain on your property, unless caused by misuse, or a major water leak that could damage the property.
- Electricity supply. If you experience a sudden failure of the electricity system that affects all lights or sockets on one or more levels.
- Heating system. If your primary heating system breaks down suddenly between October 1st and March 31st, if there is no alternative form of heating and the appliance has been serviced correctly.
- Hot water. Where the domestic hot water system fails and the heating appliance has been serviced correctly.
- Security. If your home is rendered insecure by the sudden failure of external locking mechanisms, doors or windows. Damage, vandalism and lost or broken keys are excluded.

Please note: if the emergency service is used and the cause of the problem is down to you as the homeowner, you may be charged.

**EMERGENCY
HELPLINE
0330 1242261**



SHRINKAGE & MOVEMENT

As the materials used to build your home lose moisture it is normal for them to shrink and for small cracks to appear.

- Joists and other timbers may also dry and shrink, which may result in the features listed below. These do not indicate any faults with your home and are commonly encountered as new homes dry out:
- Baths or shower trays may need to be resealed around the edges if they drop slightly. Use a good quality silicone sealant.

- Screw heads may be exposed in plasterwork. If this happens tighten the screw, fill the hole and then touch up the paintwork.
- There may be slight movement of door frames and windows. The door keep or window handles may need adjustment to maintain smooth operation.
- Small gaps may occur between the bottom of skirting boards and the floor. This is normal shrinkage rather than a structural problem and is unseen beneath floor coverings.

MOISTURE CONTROL

A significant volume of water is used to construct a new home. Allowing the structure to dry out as slowly as possible will reduce the risk of shrinkage cracks and movement of timbers. The drying out period usually lasts around six months but can be up to eighteen months, depending on the weather conditions when your home was built.

Provide a low level of heating at all times while your home is still drying out. Ensure there is adequate ventilation so that evaporated water can escape without causing condensation.

Use extractor fans and cooker hoods when bathing or cooking and leave the fans running for a minimum of 15 minutes until any water vapour or steam has disappeared.

WALLS

DRILLING INTO WALLS

You will probably need to drill into walls at some stage, for example to fit curtain poles or hang pictures. Always be wary of concealed pipes or electrical cables. Using a cable detector - readily available from DIY stores - is highly recommended.

Plasterboard should bear the weight of light items such as pictures secured with picture hooks or masonry nails. Heavier items should be fixed into the timber studs or by using specially designed plasterboard fixings.

Pipes and cables are commonly found in the following locations, but always check using a detector before drilling any holes:

- Cables normally run above or below sockets, switches and fittings.
- Pipes typically run next to fire surrounds, above and below boilers and hobs, alongside windows and above radiators, running vertically into the ceiling or floor.
- Chipboard floors are often marked with pencil or marker pen lines to indicate the presence of pipes.
- With concrete floors, services will be embedded into the screed.

Take great care with any alterations affecting plasterboard walls as they perform an important role in containing noise and vapour. The safety of your home could be compromised by inappropriate alterations.

INTERNAL WALLS

Internal walls are normally made from plasterboard with taped joints.

EFFLORESCENCE

As your house dries, white chalky deposits may form on brickwork. This is completely normal and will not affect the performance or integrity of the bricks. Efflorescence will be washed off by rainfall and occasional dry brushing will also help. Eventually efflorescence will stop when the salts that cause it are exhausted.

WINDOWS

uPVC windows are easy to clean by using warm soapy water and drying thoroughly. Avoid using any harsh or abrasive materials. Clean the gaskets at the same time as the frames using a mild pH neutral cleaner.

Should you need to replace a double-glazed unit always employ a specialist to avoid damage to the edge seals. Double glazed window units are covered by a two-year guarantee.

WINDOW MAINTENANCE

Lubricate window hinges, garage doors and door mechanisms regularly so they continue to operate smoothly.

Wipe chrome finishes regularly with a clean, dry cloth and wash periodically with soapy water followed by drying with a clean cloth. Never use anything abrasive or acidic to clean chrome ironmongery.

THE LOFT

It is essential to maintain ventilation in the roof space so be careful not to obstruct any vents. Keep the loft hatch closed unless you need to access the roof space, otherwise warm moist air rising into the loft may cause condensation.

Under no circumstance should you store personal items in your loft if you do, it may effect the structure integrity of the roof trusses and Summerfield Homes cannot be held responsible.

FLOATING FLOORS

Floating floors comprise a chipboard top layer laid on an acoustic resilient base. Floating floors are designed to give a little under your weight and it is normal for them to move as you walk around.





BATHROOMS

Sanitaryware should be cleaned carefully to avoid damage. Details of suitable cleaning products and methods can be found on the manufacturer's website.

Clean acrylic fittings regularly with a mild, non-abrasive product. Abrasive cleaning agents can scratch the surface of acrylic surfaces while irregular cleaning can result in a deposit build up that can be difficult to clean.

Taps are easy to clean if done regularly. A non-abrasive cleaning product and a soft clean cloth will do the job perfectly. Abrasive products can scratch and eventually remove the surface material leading to corrosion.

Clean showers and screens carefully and often to maintain their appearance. Remember to descale your showerhead monthly to prevent limescale build up blocking the spray holes. Inspect the seals around baths and shower trays regularly to make sure there are no breaks.

Operating instructions for the shower will have been provided. Make sure you read these and know how to operate the shower safely.

Take particular care to avoid cleaning products that may cause slippery surfaces, particularly on shower trays and baths where people will need to stand.

KITCHEN

UNITS AND DOORS

Regular cleaning with a damp cloth and a mild detergent is all that should be needed.

WORKTOPS

Worktops of all types are easy to keep clean and maintain in good condition. Water and a mild detergent will do the job perfectly for everyday cleaning. Avoid using bleach or other harsh chemicals on your worktop as this can remove its sheen and make the surface become dull. We also recommend not using scouring powders, steel wool, metal brushes or anything abrasive to clean the surface as this will potentially leave scratches.

Never cut directly on the surface and please avoid putting heated pans directly onto the worktop. Using chopping boards and heat mats will help maintain your worktops' condition and appearance.

ELECTRIC/ INDUCTION HOBS

Hobs are easy to keep clean by applying a small amount of lukewarm, soapy water to the surface of the hob with the soft microfibre cloth. Rinse with clean water and dry the top properly with a clean cloth. Avoid using bleach, scouring pads and anything abrasive to clean the hob as this may cause damage.

CONSERVATORIES, ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS

Some alterations will need approval from Summerfield Homes. Details of these are stated in your purchase contract.

Never remove or cut into roof timbers, joists or walls without first getting advice from a suitably qualified person. The design of your home has been approved by a structural engineer and it is essential that you do not risk compromising the structural integrity of the building.

Any works within five metres of any retaining structures should only be carried out following professional advice and input from a qualified designer.

ALWAYS:

- Consult a suitably qualified professional before making any structural alterations.
- Check whether Planning and Building Regulations approval is needed.
- Make sure you have the skills needed to carry out any work safely and competently.
- Use an electrician, qualified to Part P regulations for any alterations to the electrical installation.



OUTSIDE

FENCING

Occasional painting with an exterior timber care product will maintain the appearance and performance of timber fencing. Remember to check whether your colour choice is restricted by the terms of your Legal Transfer.

GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES

Ensure your gutters are checked every six months and leaves and any other debris are removed. This will prevent overflows from blocked gutters or clogging of downpipes. Never lean ladders against gutters as this can cause distortion and damage.

Unless you have suitable access equipment we strongly recommend employing a specialist contractor for cleaning gutters or any other maintenance tasks that involve working at height.

DRIVEWAY

The surface of your driveway can become scuffed or damaged if you drive off too quickly (particularly if your drive is on a slope) or turn your steering while your car is stationary.

Keep your drive clear of weeds, mud, soil and gardening debris by brushing and washing regularly. Treat weeds immediately with weedkiller; pulling them up once established may damage the drive.

If you service your car on your drive make sure the surface is protected from spills of oil or fuel. If you use car jacks, motorcycle stands, or any other point loads make sure you use a flat board to spread the load.

Always bear in mind that your drive is intended for light vehicle use.

NEW GARDENS

Bumps and hollows will often develop on new lawns as the earth settles and compacts. These are easy to correct and your local garden centre will be able to offer advice. Maintain your grass with regular mowing, feeding and weeding. Newly laid grass will also need very regular watering.

Heavy clay-rich soils are common on new developments. These do not tend to drain freely so regular aeration with a garden fork or lawn aerator is recommended to keep grass in good condition. If you have pets, be mindful that damage can be caused by them using your lawn. If you do not follow the guidance, Summerfield Homes cannot be held responsible for dead or uneven turf.

The topsoil in your garden is likely to need feeding and enriching to create the best growing conditions for your shrubs and borders.

The larvae of insects such as cranefly can damage your lawn as they eat through roots and stems. Again, your garden centre will be able to advise you on the signs to watch out for and suitable treatments.

You may find stones in your garden even though we do our best to clear them. This is due to a natural phenomenon, often referred to as 'Frost Heaving' which usually occurs in the spring and early summer. This is because stones are better conductors of heat than soil, so the stone conducts the heat away from the warmer soil beneath it and when the water in the soil freezes it expands and pushes the rock up a little.

OUTSIDE TAPS

Taps cannot freeze if they contain no water. During the winter, turn off the supply to outside taps using the nearest stop valve and then open the tap to drain any water.

GARAGES

Garages are built with single skin brickwork/blockwork, the design is such that during winter months and persistent rain, dampness to the walls can occur and in some cases permeate to areas of the floor.

Be reminded that garages are built solely for storage of vehicles but if you decide to store personal items in the garage, they may be affected by mould which is caused by the environment. Summerfield Homes takes no responsibility for damage caused.



YOUR LAWN CARE CALENDAR

JANUARY & FEBRUARY

Keep your lawn clear of leaves and worm casts.

MARCH

Mowing usually starts in March. Don't be tempted to set the blades too low as this can damage the grass and leave yellow or white patches. Rake the lawn in dry conditions to clear any debris. A light rolling may help to compact the surface. Edge the lawn and repair any damaged areas.

APRIL

Your lawn will really appreciate feeding and weeding once the weather is warm enough for the grass to start growing. The ideal cutting height is 2.5 - 3cm (about 1 inch) but be careful not to remove more than one third of the grass height. If you use a mosskiller, rake out the dead moss two weeks after application.

MAY

You should be mowing at least once a week. You can gradually bring down the mowing height if you wish. Spot treat any weeds.

JUNE

Mowing twice a week will help thicken the grass. Use a lawn feed if needed and watch out for weeds.

JULY

Raise the cutter height during dry spells. Watering is best done early morning or late evening. Use your fork or aerating tool to spike the ground so that water can penetrate the surface.

AUGUST

A fertiliser with a high nitrogen content will help healthy growth. If you go on holiday and can't cut the grass remember to reduce the cutting height gradually during the first few cuts when you return.

SEPTEMBER

This month may decide how your lawn looks next year! Leave the grass to grow by an additional 25% of its summer length and maintain the grass at this height. Scarify the lawn with a lawn rake or scarifier. Top dressing and rolling will help to even out the surface - and remember to weed and feed.

OCTOBER

You will need to mow less frequently and gradually increase the cutter height. Keep the lawn clear of leaves and debris.

NOVEMBER

Your mowing height should be 10-15cm or half an inch above the summer cut for the final cut of the year.

DECEMBER

Sweep up any remaining leaves.

UTILITIES AND SERVICES

ELECTRICAL SUPPLY

On completion, the electricity meter reading will be recorded on your handover form. Your consumption will be measured from this reading to calculate your bills. We will advise the electricity supplier of your details and completion date, but it is a good idea to contact them to ensure your account is set up correctly.

Your electricity supply is routed from your meter to the consumer unit, which contains the main on/off switches and circuit breakers that protect individual circuits. Alongside each circuit breaker you will see a description of the circuit it is protecting. These circuit breakers are highly sensitive and can, for example, be fused by a light bulb blowing.

WIRING

Wiring connected to powerpoints and switches usually runs vertically behind the plasterboard. Avoid drilling holes within a vertical band from floor to ceiling 200mm either side of a socket or switch. We strongly recommend buying a cable detector before hanging pictures or making any holes in the wall surface.

ELECTRICAL TEST CERTIFICATE

Keep your Electrical Test Certificate in a safe place and ensure your property is reinspected within ten years.

FUSED CIRCUITS

A circuit breaker is most likely to be tripped by a faulty appliance. If this happens, unplug the appliance you suspect to be the cause and go to the consumer unit. Next, identify the circuit that has failed (the Miniature Circuit Breaker (MCB) will be in the off position). Switch the circuit back on and wait to see if the MCB fuses again. If it doesn't you have identified the faulty appliance. If the circuit continues to fuse disconnect all appliances on that circuit. Then, reconnect and switch on each appliance in turn to identify which one is the cause.

If the above procedure does not identify the cause call a qualified electrician. If the fault comes and goes do not keep switching the circuit back on. Call a qualified electrician to diagnose and correct the problem.



LOSS OF POWER

If there is a complete loss of power check with neighbours, the site office or the service provider to see whether the outage is not limited to your property and possibly due to work being carried out locally.

GAS SUPPLY

Your gas supply is routed through a stop valve to your meter. The earth cable attached to the main pipe from the meter to your home must NEVER be disconnected. It protects your pipework from becoming live if there is accidental contact with any power cables.

Details of the specific type of flue system fitted to your boiler will be made available to you. Some flue systems rely on a vent within the room to provide fresh air for efficient and safe combustion within the boiler. This vent must not be closed, covered or obstructed.

Your handover box file will contain full details of how to operate your boiler safely and will provide details of your gas supplier.

Under current regulations you are free to change your utility suppliers. See [ofgem.gov.uk](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk) for more details.

TELEPHONE

You will find the master telephone socket in your hall or lounge and additional sockets may be found in the bedrooms. You will need to contact your supplier to arrange for your line to be connected to the property. There is normally a standard connection fee.

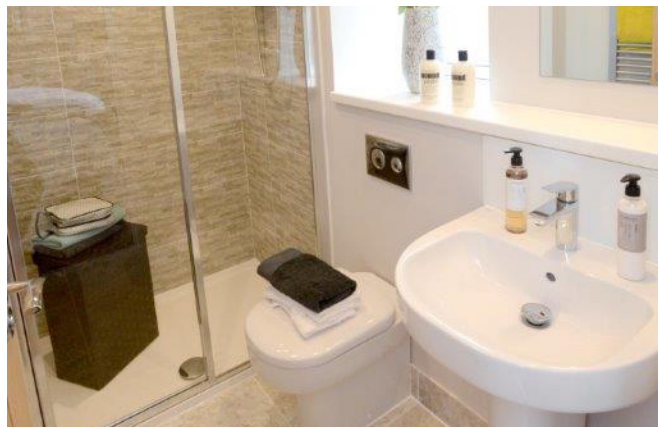
The connection, supply and equipment are your responsibility.

TELEVISION

We will pre-wire your home for the installation of an aerial, but you will need to make arrangements to have one fitted if required. We will also install sockets pre-wired for digital TV in the living room and master bedroom. It is your responsibility to arrange connection and a subscription with your chosen provider.

Remember, your existing TV licence does not automatically cover your new property. You must notify TV Licensing to ensure they update your details.





WATER SUPPLY

Your home will have an internal stop cock. There is also an external stop tap that can normally be found on the footpath leading to your property. Please make sure you know where these are located. Your property will also have a water meter.

WATER SAVING TIPS

- Showers use significantly less water than a bath.
- Don't leave the tap running when you brush your teeth.
- Check for any dripping taps and repair them immediately.
- If you like cold water leave a jug or bottle in the fridge rather than leaving the tap to run.
- Use a watering can rather than a hose pipe for garden watering.
- Water during early morning or late evening.
- Use a mulch on your borders.
- Use a bucket and sponge to wash your car, instead of the hose.

LOSS OF WATER

If there is a sudden interruption of the water supply, first check with neighbours, the site office or your provider to see if this is the result of work being undertaken onsite or in the area before contacting Summerfield Homes.

WASTE PLUMBING

Maintenance of the plumbing that drains waste water from kitchen and bathroom fittings into the underground drainage system is your responsibility.

Waste cooking oil and fat must never be poured down the sink. Only normal waste and toilet paper should be flushed down the toilet. Failure to follow these guidelines could result in a blockage of the waste plumbing or sewerage systems.

Localised blockages in the waste plumbing can sometimes be cleared using a flexible rod or sink plunger. If this fails, you can try bailing out the sink by hand and using a proprietary drain cleaner.

Alternatively, place a container below the plastic trap under the sink or basin, unscrew the trap and remove whatever is causing the blockage. Once clear, screw the trap firmly back into place. Always wear stout rubber gloves and follow the safety instructions on the packaging if you use a drain cleaner - these can be highly caustic.

Should clearing a blockage require the services of a plumber or specialist drainage company Summerfield Homes reserves the right to recover any costs from the homeowner.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

At handover you will receive an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). This will tell you about the energy efficiency of your home. The energy efficiency rating will be shown, which is calculated using the Government's Standard Assessment Procedure for Energy Rating of Dwellings.

The rating is on a scale of 1 to 100 and is a measure of how efficiently your home uses energy to heat the internal space and the hot water. The current and potential ratings are displayed graphically on the certificate on a scale from A to G, where A is the most efficient.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The EPC will also show the Environmental Impact Rating. This is a measure of how much CO2 you can expect your home to generate annually by using energy for heating and lighting. The rating is on a scale of 1 to 100 with a higher rating indicating that your home should produce lower CO2 emissions and have a lower environmental impact.

You will need the certificate if you decide to move home so make sure you keep it safe. The Energy Saving Trust can provide more information on energy ratings and efficiency. They can be contacted on 0300 123 1234.

CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

- Turn the heating thermostat down by 1 or 2 degrees. You might not feel much difference, but you will save money on your bill.
- Don't leave appliances on standby.
- Switch off lights when you leave the room.
- Never put warm food in your fridge or freezer. Let it cool first.
- Don't fill the kettle any more than needed. Remember to descale it often.
- Use a lower temperature setting on your washing machine.
- Wait until you have a full load before using your dishwasher or washing machine, or use the half load setting.
- If you have the facility for lower cost off peak electricity, run your washing machine or dishwasher during this time.
- Look for appliances with the highest (A+++) efficiency rating.
- Find an electricity supplier with a green tariff.



HEATING AND HOT WATER

HEATING SYSTEM

Where central heating is provided by a gas fired condensing boiler and radiators, the radiators will have been balanced to distribute heat appropriately around your home. Never restrict the air supply to a condensing boiler by closing or obstructing the balanced flue or the air supply passages. The following information covers the main controls used on heating systems.



BOILER THERMOSTAT

This allows the operating temperature of the boiler to be adjusted. During the winter you may want to use a higher setting to ensure sufficient heat is emitted by the radiator circuit.

PROGRAMMER

Instructions on how to adjust the programmer to set the on and off times for your system will be provided in your handover pack.

THERMOSTATIC RADIATOR VALVES (TRVS)

TRVs allow the temperature of each radiator to be adjusted individually. We recommend turning TRVs to a middle setting initially and then turning them up or down a notch at a time to achieve a comfortable room temperature. TRVs also allow you to maintain a low level of heating in rooms that are not in continuous use.

ROOM THERMOSTATS

These switch the heating on or off in an area of your home depending on the temperature in the area being controlled. You may have several thermostats located around your home. The efficient operation of thermostats can be affected by furniture or anything that restricts a free circulation of air, or nearby local heat sources such as lamps.

HOT WATER

Where a gas boiler is fitted it will provide the hot water on demand and no separate hot water cylinder is required.

SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE

Regular servicing of your heating and hot water system is essential to maintain efficiency, longevity and safety. Boilers should be serviced at least annually by a qualified engineer. The boiler warranty will be invalid if the appliance is not serviced and certified annually.

The two-year cover provided by Summerfield Homes for your heating system does not extend to routine servicing. We recommend that you take out a service care plan for your heating system.

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

Modifying your home could compromise the ability to prevent fires from spreading. We recommend that you always seek professional advice before making alterations to your home.

SMOKE DETECTORS

The interconnected mains powered smoke alarms fitted to your property feature battery back up to ensure they operate if there is a mains failure. Check the operation on your alarms regularly.

Please read the instruction leaflet provided during handover and follow the maintenance instructions carefully. Make sure you know how your detectors operate and, in particular, any audible signals that may indicate a malfunction.

Never disconnect a smoke detector.

ESCAPE PLAN

Make sure every member of your family knows at least two safe routes out of the property in the event of a fire. Practice these escape routes so that everyone is clear about how to proceed.

When the house is occupied make sure that window keys are readily accessible in the event of a fire. Where your home is fitted with fire escape windows these will be pointed out during your demonstration visit. Make sure these are clearly identifiable and that all family members know how to operate them in an emergency.





CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR

Carbon monoxide detectors emit an audible alarm at different speeds to indicate CO levels within your property. The detector in your home will be mains powered with battery backup.

Periodic beeping of the alarm may indicate that the battery needs changing. Test the operation of the detector every month by pressing the test button. Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Faulty electrical installations can cause injury and fire risks. Legislation places restrictions on the electrical alterations that you can make to your home. Many electrical works need to be approved by your local council unless they are carried out by a registered installer. For further information refer to Building Regulation Part P - Electrical Safety at www.planningportal.gov.uk.



SAFETY

SITE SAFETY

After Legal Completion you must be aware that building work may continue on the site after you have moved in.

We will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to your routine. Access to your home will be kept safe and tidy. Some noise and dust may be inevitable, but Summerfield will try to minimise disturbance and complete the development without undue delay.

Please be aware that roads, footpaths and amenity areas may be incomplete when you move in. Planning conditions and sometimes formal adoption agreements with the local authority ensure the standard of completed work and minimise risks to residents.

The rules stated previously regarding access to work areas still apply. In addition, you must observe the following precautions:

- NEVER enter construction or work areas or allow children in your care to do so.
- Anyone wishing to visit the construction area must report to the site office and must receive permission before entering the site or any work area.
- Take particular care with your pets and make sure you know where they are. There is a risk that they could become trapped in pipework or within a property being built.
- Be very careful when walking or driving around the development as construction traffic may be in motion. Before passing, be certain that the operator has seen you.



FINALLY...

We hope you enjoy your new home and have many happy years there.