

16 Fireplaces / Plumbing / Electrical

Fireplaces

16.1 Chimney serving solid-fuel burning (wood, manufactured logs, pellets, etc.) appliance does not draw properly.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Chimneys serving solid-fuel appliances shall be installed in accordance with the *Alberta Building Code* and manufacturer's guidelines.

Warranty Coverage:

2 years for defects in materials and labour related to delivery and distribution systems.

Claim Response:

Chimneys not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Homeowners should fully understand the operation of their fireplaces and the damper in particular, before ignition. Flue gasses going up the chimney must be replaced with a comparable volume of fresh (cold) air entering the room. Opening a window may help the chimney draw.

Chimneys may not draw properly if:

- adjacent buildings, trees or high winds create downdrafts
- the chimney is plugged
- the chimney is cold
- the combustion air for the appliance is restricted
- a high capacity kitchen range hood fan is running

Fireplaces shall be used and maintained by the homeowner in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

Notes:

16.2 Fireplace and/or glass finish has changed in appearance.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Variations in the finish appearance of the firebox, trim and glass resulting from normal wear and tear and oxidation (patina) is acceptable.

Warranty Coverage:

This is not a defect.

Claim Response:

None.

Remarks:

Patina of the fireplace firebox, trim and/or glass finish may change with time and use and is acceptable.

Surfaces that are subject to temperature stress will show colour change, and this is normal and acceptable.

Fireplaces shall be used and maintained by the Homeowner in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

Cleaning products not recommended by the manufacturer may adversely affect the finish of fireplaces and glass finish in particular.

Notes:

16.3 Water pipes are leaking.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Domestic water supply and drainpipes shall not leak.

Warranty Coverage:

2 years for defects in materials and labour related to delivery and distribution systems.

Claim Response:

Pipes not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Condensation on piping should not be mistaken for a leaking pipe.

Condensation on cold-water supply lines is not a defect. High indoor humidity is typically the main cause.

If a leak is detected in a water supply pipe, the water supply valve should be turned off immediately until the builder's representative can assess the condition. The homeowner has a responsibility to mitigate damages.

Damage resulting from improper maintenance by the homeowner is excluded from warranty.

See Also:

15.9 Condensation appears on water supply pipes and toilets.

Notes:

16.4 Faucet or plumbing fixture is leaking.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Faucets or plumbing fixtures shall not leak or drip when fully closed or shut off.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Faucets and plumbing fixtures are not considered a part of a delivery and distribution system.

Claim Response:

Faucets or plumbing fixtures not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Homeowners have an obligation to mitigate damages and turn off the water supply if the leak has the potential to cause damage to other parts of the home or personal property.

Damage resulting from improper use or alterations made by the homeowner is excluded from the warranty.

The quality or quantity of water from a municipal water supply, water well, or any other source may affect the operation of faucets or plumbing fixtures and is an acceptable exclusion.

Notes:

16.5 Bathtub or shower enclosure doors leak.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Bathtub and shower enclosure doors shall be installed in accordance with manufacturer’s specifications so that they do not leak.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Bathtubs and showers are not considered a part of a delivery and distribution system.

Claim Response:

Bathtub or showers not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Caulking and seals around bathtubs and shower enclosures and door seals require regular homeowner inspection and maintenance.

Notes:

16.6 Water supply is inadequate.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Water pressure delivered throughout the home from the municipality should be generally uniform. Pressure variances can be expected if one or more taps are drawn from at the same time.

Warranty Coverage:

This is not a defect.

Claim Response:

None.

Remarks:

Variations in water pressure in municipal services can occur during peak periods of demand; this is normal.

Water flow restrictors serve to conserve water and should not be misconstrued as a defect. The design of some fixtures may inherently restrict water flow.

Reduced water supply may result from curb stop, pressure reducing valve or main valve adjustments.

The quality or quantity of water from a municipal water supply, a water well or any other source may affect the water supply and is an acceptable exclusion.

Notes:

16.7 Supply and drain pipes are noisy.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Water supply and drain pipes shall be generally free of water hammering and vibration that is repetitive, consistent and readily audible in accordance with the *Alberta Building Code*.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

2 years for defects in materials and labour related to delivery and distribution systems.

Claim Response:

Plumbing pipes not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

A sudden thump of water supply pipes (commonly referred to as water hammering) may occur when a faucet or fixture is closed abruptly. This is normal and not a defect. Excessive noise may indicate that a pipe is reverberating against ductwork or framing and will require repositioning by the builder.

“Ticking” sounds due to thermal expansion and contraction of water supply and drain lines are normal.

The sound of water flowing through both supply and drainage pipes is normal and not a defect.

See Also:

17.3 Plumbing noise/vibrations are coming from water piping, stand pipes, drain lines, recirculating lines, hot tubs, toilets, etc.

Notes:

16.8 Plumbing pipes are frozen or have burst.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Plumbing pipes shall be installed to ensure they do not freeze.

Warranty Coverage:

2 years for defects in materials and labour related to delivery and distribution systems.

Claim Response:

Plumbing pipes not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

The inside temperatures must be kept well above freezing to avoid bursting water pipes. In exceptional circumstances when this is not possible, precautions such as shutting off and draining the water supply system should be taken to prevent freezing. When the colder season approaches, homeowners are responsible for disconnecting exterior hoses, shut off any associated interior valves and drain lines to exterior hose bibs.

Care must be taken to insulate correctly where water lines are located near exterior walls.

Where heat tape is required, homeowners are responsible for inspection and maintenance of the heat tape as part of regular homeowner maintenance.

Frost-free hose bibs will not protect water lines from freezing if exterior hoses have not been physically disconnected from the threaded connection; this is not a defect.

If a burst pipe is detected in a water supply pipe, the homeowner has a responsibility to mitigate damages by immediately shutting off the main water supply valve until the builder's representative can assess the condition.

Damage resulting from improper maintenance or alterations made by the homeowner is not warrantable.

Notes:

16.9 Condensation appears on water supply pipes and toilets.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Condensation on water supply pipes and toilets may occur.

Warranty Coverage:

This is not a defect.

Claim Response:

None.

Remarks:

Condensation may appear on water supply lines and toilets from time to time and is normal.

Excessive condensation from airborne moisture is the result of high relative humidity. Homeowners should vent areas of high humidity with direct ventilation to the outside or by use of exhaust fans.

See Also:

15.3 Water pipes are leaking.

Notes:

16.10 Plumbing fixtures have deteriorated or discoloured.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Plumbing fixtures shall be free of readily visible defects.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Plumbing fixtures are not considered a part of a delivery and distribution system.

Claim Response:

Plumbing fixtures not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Plumbing fixtures are mechanical devices and, as such, require periodic maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

The quality or quantity of water from a municipal water supply, water well, or any other source may affect the condition of plumbing fixtures and is an acceptable exclusion.

Notes:

16.11 Plumbing fixtures do not operate as intended.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Plumbing fixtures shall perform as intended.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Plumbing fixtures are not considered a part of a delivery and distribution system.

Claim Response:

Plumbing fixtures not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Plumbing fixtures are mechanical devices and, as such, require periodic maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.

The quality or quantity of water from a municipal water supply, water well, or any other source may affect the operation of plumbing fixtures and is an acceptable exclusion.

Notes:

16.12 Toilet takes more than one flush to empty.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Toilets shall flush waste into the sanitary sewer system as dictated by their design.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Toilets are not considered a part of a delivery and distribution system.

Claim Response:

Toilets not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Newer low-volume toilets use less water to flush waste away than older models, but their operation is more sensitive to the amount of waste and multiple flushes may be required. Some tank designs require the homeowner to hold down the flush lever for an extended period to ensure a proper flush of waste.

The efficiency of the toilet is affected by its profile and design. Often, a poorly draining toilet is indicative of a partial blockage in the drain or plumbing vent and may not be an issue with the toilet itself.

Notes:

16.13 Sewers or drains are draining slowly or backing up.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Sanitary and storm drainage systems shall drain properly.

Warranty Coverage:

2 years for defects in materials and labour related to delivery and distribution systems.

Claim Response:

Sanitary and storm drainage systems not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

It is the homeowner's responsibility to mitigate damages involving water or sewage. The builder shall be contacted immediately upon identification of a blockage, followed by the municipality. The issue may involve the municipal sewage system, which is beyond the builder's control, and is not a defect.

Sewage systems outside of municipalities require septic systems and maintenance procedures unique to those installations. Homeowners are strongly advised to completely understand the operation of their septic system, observe cautions involving the septic field, not to exceed the system's design parameters and to provide the service regimen that such systems require.

Where heat tape is required, homeowners are responsible for inspection and maintenance of the heat tape as part of regular homeowner maintenance.

Complete failure of sanitary drainage systems is considered an emergency.

Toilets have water shut off valves. Other fixtures may have shut off valves but it is a homeowner responsibility that the main water supply line should be shut off to mitigate damages to the home in cases of emergency. Homeowners should ensure items are not flushed down toilets or sinks not intended for these products; such damage is the responsibility of the homeowner.

Failure of the system due to actions of the homeowner is not a defect.

Notes:

16.14 Cracks or chips exist in porcelain, enamel, acrylic, solid composite or fibreglass plumbing fixtures.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Plumbing fixtures exposed to normal view shall be free from visible cracks or chips.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Plumbing fixtures not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Porcelain, enamel, acrylic, solid composite or fibreglass plumbing fixtures not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified unless noted during the walk-through inspection. Issues noted on the walk-through inspection are contractual matters that should be resolved by the builder and homeowner.

The homeowner is responsible for maintaining surface finishes in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Cracks or chips resulting from actions of the homeowner are not covered.

Notes:

16.15 Solid surface (i.e., manufactured marble) countertop with integrated wash basin has cracked at the drain.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Manufactured solid-surface countertops shall be installed to prevent stress cracking and shall be installed to the manufacturer’s specifications.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Wash basins are not considered a part of a delivery and distribution system.

Claim Response:

Manufactured solid surface countertops not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Manufactured marble can be damaged by impact or stress due to over tightening of drains. Care should be taken by the homeowner when cleaning or servicing to prevent cracking or chipping. Refer to manufacturer’s recommendations for use.

Crazing (fine cracking of the glaze) caused due to hot water expansion and contraction is not a defect.

Notes:

Electrical

16.16 Electrical outlets or switches do not work.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Electrical outlets and switches shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer’s specifications and the CEC.

Warranty Coverage:

2 years for defects in materials and labour related to delivery and distribution systems.

Claim Response:

Electrical outlets and switches not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

When troubleshooting a localized power loss, homeowners should check the breakers, the GFI’s (ground fault interrupter) and the light bulb or appliance.

Additions, deletions or alterations by the homeowner to the original electrical system are not warrantable.

Notes:

16.17 Electrical fixture does not work.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Electrical fixtures supplied and installed by the builder shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer’s specifications and the CEC.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour. Electrical fixtures are not considered a part of a delivery and distribution system.

Claim Response:

Electrical fixtures not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be replaced.

Remarks:

Some fixtures such as ceiling fans have wall switches and pull switches on the fixture, and all switches must be “On” to direct electricity to the fixture.

Light bulb replacement is considered homeowner maintenance and is not a defect.

When troubleshooting a localized power loss, homeowners should check the breakers, the GFI’s (ground fault interrupter) and the light bulb or appliance.

Electrical fixtures supplied by the homeowner are excluded from the warranty.

Notes:

16.18 Electric circuit breakers trip repeatedly.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Electrical circuit breakers shall be installed in accordance with the CEC.

Warranty Coverage:

2 years for defects in materials and labour related to delivery and distribution systems.

Claim Response:

Electrical circuits not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

A tripped circuit breaker does not necessarily infer an issue with the home's electrical system. Rather, the circuit breaker is performing as a failsafe device and stopping the flow of electricity until the source of the fault is corrected. Frequent tripping of circuit breakers may indicate that the circuit is overloaded.

Some appliances have special power requirements that may overload circuits, including motors that cause an electrical arc at start-up, which may cause arc-fault breakers to trip; this is not a defect.

Additions, deletions or alterations by the homeowner to the original electrical system are excluded from the warranty.

Notes:

16.19 Ground Fault Interrupter (GFI) trips frequently.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

GFI breakers and receptacles shall be installed in accordance with the CEC.

Warranty Coverage:

2 years for defects in materials and labour related to delivery and distribution systems.

Claim Response:

Electrical circuits protected by the GFI and not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

GFIs operate differently than circuit breakers. GFIs prevent electrical shocks by sensing a change or leakage in the flow of current. A drop off in current (equivalent to about 5 milliamps) will trip a relay within a few hundredths of a second resulting in power disconnection. The GFI can easily be reset once the leakage condition has been corrected.

One GFI can be wired to protect several electrical outlets within the same circuit.

The homeowner has a responsibility to test GFI circuits on a routine basis as prescribed by the GFI manufacturer.

When troubleshooting a localized power loss, homeowners should check the breakers, the GFIs and the light bulb or appliance.

Additions, deletions, or alterations by the homeowner to the original electrical system are excluded from the warranty.

Notes:

16.20 Ceiling mounted fan vibrates and is noisy.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Ceiling fans installed by the builder shall be installed according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Ceiling mounted fans are not considered a part of a delivery and distribution system.

Claim Response:

Ceiling fans not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Some vibration is to be expected in a mechanical, rotating device. The degree of fan vibration is often influenced by the length of the down-shaft and the quality of the fixture itself.

Ceiling fans will accumulate debris on the blades and may become unbalanced over time, and require regular cleaning and maintenance which is the responsibility of the homeowner.

Damage resulting from improper fan maintenance or alterations made by the homeowner is excluded from the warranty.

Notes:

16.21 Receptacle or switch cover is not flush and plumb with the wall.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Electrical receptacles and switches shall be installed so that the cover plate sits generally flush and plumb with the adjacent wall surface.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Electrical outlets and switches are not considered a part of a delivery and distribution system.

Claim Response:

Receptacle or switch cover plates not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Covers dislocated by the homeowner during alterations (including painting and wallpapering) are excluded from the warranty.

Notes:

16.22 Light fixtures are discoloured.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Light fixtures supplied and installed by the builder shall not discolour under normal use.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Light fixtures are not considered a part of a delivery and distribution system.

Claim Response:

Light fixtures not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be replaced.

Remarks:

Some light fixtures discolour (patina) as part of the normal operation of that fixture.

The use of incandescent light bulbs with a higher wattage than indicated on the fixture label may cause temperature discolouration and is excluded from the warranty. High wattage light bulbs exceeding the manufacturer’s recommendation are also a fire risk.

Notes:
