

Countertops and Cabinets

5.1 Laminated countertop has developed a bubble.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Laminated countertops shall not have localized bumps or swells.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Countertops not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Laminate surfaces are dependent upon adhesive bonds over a broad area. On occasion, the glue bond may require localized pressure to permanently re-establish the bond.

Hot appliances or pots can compromise the laminate adhesive resulting in swells. Such actions are beyond the builder's control and are not warrantable.

Notes:

5.2 Seal between sink and countertop has allowed water to come in contact with the substrate resulting in swelling under the laminate.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Sinks shall be installed in accordance with manufacturers' guidelines to ensure seals inherent in the product perform as intended.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Countertops and/or seals not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Drop-in sink templates require close tolerances for gaskets to compress evenly and tightly. Sink gaskets or sealants should be installed according to manufacturer's instructions. Homeowners are responsible for regular maintenance of gaskets and sealants.

Homeowners have a responsibility to minimize countertop exposure to standing water.

Homeowners have a responsibility to mitigate damages immediately upon identifying an issue with the seal between sink and countertop within the warranty period.

Notes:

5.3 Laminated countertop seam has swelled due to water penetration.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Laminated countertop seams are not water tight.

Warranty Coverage:

This is not a defect.

Claim Response:

None.

Remarks:

Laminate countertop seams are susceptible to damage from standing water. Care should be taken to ensure that countertops are kept free of standing water at joints or penetrations to the countertop.

Homeowners have a responsibility to minimize countertop exposure to standing water. Joints in laminate countertops are, by nature, a discontinuity of surface and as such are susceptible to damage from standing water.

Laminated countertop seam swells resulting from improper homeowner maintenance or abuse are excluded from the warranty.

See Also:

5.5 Laminated countertop seam is excessively wide.

Notes:

5.4 Laminated countertop edge has delaminated.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Edges of laminated countertops shall not delaminate.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Countertops not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Within the warranty period a delaminated edge can be rectified with additional adhesive and pressure. Homeowners have a responsibility to mitigate damages (i.e., tape the edge in place) to avoid further delaminating or damage of the laminate strip until the builder can affect a permanent repair.

Notes:

5.5 Laminated countertop seam is excessively wide.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Laminated countertop seams shall be installed tight. Gaps should not exceed 3/64 inch (1mm).

The gap between adjacent surfaces (i.e., countertop and ceramic tile backsplash) shall be sealed to prevent water entry along the junction.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Countertops not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Repeat claims related to this defect will be evaluated by warranty providers on a case-by-case basis.

Remarks:

Typically, seam gaps within 3/64 inch (1.0 mm) in width can be sealed with appropriate seam filler.

Caulking is an acceptable repair for separations at the backsplash.

The gap between the back of a countertop and an outside wall can open and close with thermal bowing in a cold climate.

See Also:

5.3 Laminated countertop seam has swelled due to water penetration.

Notes:

5.6 Cracks exist in countertop surface.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

The surface of countertops shall not crack during normal and typical use.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Countertops not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Care should be taken to prevent cracking or chipping. Sitting, walking upon, or dropping heavy objects on countertops can create excessive loads that can cause cracking. Damages resulting from excessive load, impacts, or heat stresses beyond normal and typical uses for the counter are excluded from the warranty.

Granite and stone countertops have natural fissures or voids that are part of the character of the surface and are not considered defects.

Notes:

5.7 Scratches or chips exist on laminate or solid surface countertops.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Countertop surfaces exposed to view under normal lighting conditions shall be free from readily visible chips and scratches.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Chips and scratches on laminate or solid surface countertops 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.

Chips and scratches resulting from actions of the homeowner are not covered.

Remarks:

Damage resulting from normal wear and tear is not a defect.

Granite and stone countertops have natural fissures or voids that are part of the character of the surface and are not considered defects.

The homeowner is responsible for maintaining countertop surfaces in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

For solid surface countertops, a repair utilizing epoxy is acceptable and when similar in colour to the original countertop. Some variation in the colour should be expected.

Notes:

5.8 A gap exists between two sections of stone in a countertop.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Stone countertops shall be designed and installed to produce a uniform seam width no greater than 1/16" (1.5 mm) between adjoining sections.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Countertops not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Visible joints between adjacent sections are acceptable providing that the joint is within the acceptable performance condition and uniform in width.

In some cases larger joint width are specified. In these cases, the tolerance is to be $\pm 25\%$ ($\pm \frac{1}{4}$) of the nominal joint width. Joint width does not include the dimension of an arris (a small chamfer, approximately 1/16" x 1/16") on the stone edge. When an arris is used, the perceived joint width may be greater than the actual width due to the seam filler occupying the width of the arris.

The colour/texture of rectified areas shall match the existing countertop sections in colour/texture as closely as possible. Colour or texture variation may exist in replaced sections; this is acceptable.

The homeowner is responsible for maintaining countertop surfaces in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Damages resulting from abuse or alterations made by the homeowner are excluded from the warranty.

Notes:

5.9 A height variation exists between sections in a stone countertop.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Stone countertops shall be installed to produce a uniform surface between adjoining sections. Adjoining sections of stone shall not exceed a height variation of + 1/32 inch (+ 0.8 mm).

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Countertops not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Stone surfaces are generally reliant upon the stability of the substrate upon which the stone is mounted. Stability during the warranty period is the builder's responsibility.

A height variation between the front and back of a stone seam may be unavoidable due to permanent warp in the slab stock, but should still fall within the acceptable performance condition.

The colour/texture of rectified areas shall match the existing countertop sections in colour/texture as closely as possible. Colour or texture variation may exist in replaced sections; this is acceptable.

The homeowner is responsible for maintaining countertop surfaces in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Damages resulting from abuse or alterations made by the homeowner are excluded from the warranty.

Notes:

5.10 A cabinet door panel has contracted, leaving a noticeable strip of unfinished wood along a perimeter edge.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Cabinet doors shall exhibit a relatively consistent finish when viewed from a normal position and under normal lighting.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Cabinet door panels not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Fine wood cabinetry is susceptible to shrinkage caused by moisture loss.

Typically, cabinet door panels float inside a perimeter frame to reduce stress and diminish the possibility of the panel cracking. The exposure of a small strip of unfinished wood indicates that the construction detail has performed as designed to contend with humidity conditions.

The repair may involve staining the exposed strip to match; this is acceptable.

Slight variation in colour or sheen of the repair is acceptable.

This repair should take place towards the end of the warranty period so the cabinetry can experience one complete seasonal heating cycle.

Notes:

5.11 Cabinet doors do not line up with each other.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Cabinet doors shall be aligned with adjacent cabinets and filler panels on the same level to provide a generally uniform appearance when viewed from a normal viewing position.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Cabinets not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be adjusted.

Repeat claims related to this defect will be evaluated by warranty providers on a case-by-case basis.

Remarks:

Lines shall be evenly spaced in cabinetry. Alignment shall be uniform within the manufacturer's specifications.

Cabinet doors can become misaligned through normal use; most cabinet hinges provide for adjustment, and handles and pulls can be tightened as required.

Regular home maintenance includes adjusting the cabinet hardware from time to time.

Notes:

5.12 Cabinet doors or drawer faces are warped.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

When closed, cabinet doors and drawer faces shall be flush within 1/8 inch (3 mm) against an adjacent cabinetry face.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Cabinets not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Humidity levels within the home affect natural wood products including cabinet doors and drawer faces. Homeowners should carefully consider the level of relative humidity within the home especially during cold weather.

Notes:

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5.13 Cabinet door or drawer binds or rubs.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Cabinet doors and drawers shall be installed to move freely under normal use.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Cabinetry doors and drawers not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be adjusted.

Repeat claims related to this defect will be evaluated by warranty providers on a case-by-case basis.

Remarks:

Cabinet doors can become misaligned through normal use. Most cabinet hinges provide for adjustment, handles and pulls can be tightened as required. Damage resulting from abuse is excluded from the warranty.

Homeowners have an obligation to mitigate damages by informing the builder immediately.

Regular home maintenance includes adjusting the cabinet hardware from time to time.

Notes:

5.14 Cabinet doors do not close fully.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

When closed, cabinet doors shall be flush within 1/8 inch (3 mm) against an adjacent cabinetry door face.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Cabinetry doors not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be adjusted.

Repeat claims related to this defect will be evaluated by warranty providers on a case-by-case basis.

Remarks:

Cabinet doors can become misaligned through normal use and may require adjusting by the homeowner from time to time.

Damage resulting from normal wear and tear or maintenance not conducted in keeping with maintenance documentation provided to the owner by the warranty provider or builder may be excluded.

Notes:

5.15 A gap exists between cabinets and ceilings or walls.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Cabinets shall be tightly fitted to each other. Where cabinets abut walls and ceilings, visible gaps in excess of 1/8 inch (3 mm) are considered excessive.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Gaps between cabinets and ceilings or walls not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

It is a common and acceptable practice to intentionally install a gap where cabinets meet different materials or adjoining cabinetry. Appropriate trim pieces may be used and such gaps are inherent to the design and are not considered defects.

Caulk or filler is an acceptable repair for gaps up to 1/8 inch (3 mm) in width.

Notes:

Interior Stairs and Railings

5.16 Stair assembly is squeaking.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Stair assemblies shall be free from readily audible and repeatable squeaks that are apparent under normal use.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Stair assemblies that do not meet the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

See Also:

4.4 Floor squeaks.

Notes:

5.17 A gap exists between stair trim or moulding and wall.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Visible gaps due to shrinkage shall not exceed 1/8 inch (3 mm) between the stair trim and the wall.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Gaps between the stair trim and the wall not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Repeat claims related to this defect will be evaluated by warranty providers on a case-by-case basis.

Remarks:

For gaps up to 1/8 inch (3 mm) in width, appropriate caulking or additional trim is an acceptable repair.

This condition is not applicable to unfinished stairs.

Notes:

5.18 A gap exists between interior wood railing parts.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Wood railing parts shall be tightly fitted. Gaps exceeding 1/16 inch (1.5 mm) are considered excessive.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Gaps in wood railing parts exceeding the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Some wood railing designs incorporate an intentional gap as an aesthetic solution where manufactured components connect. Such gaps are inherent to the design and are not considered defects.

Damage caused by improper humidity levels within the home is excluded from the warranty.

Notes:

5.19 Stair railings and guards lack rigidity.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Stair railings and guards shall be securely constructed in accordance with the *Alberta Building Code*.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Stair railings and guards not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Even when installed in accordance with the *Alberta Building Code*, slight movement in stair railings and guards may occur under normal use; this is acceptable.

The selected design of stair railing or guard can affect rigidity.

See Also:

5.20 Interior metal stair spindles are loose.

Notes:

5.20 Colour variation, knots, or different grain patterns exist between adjacent natural wood trim or railings.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

As wood is a natural product, variations will exist among different products; this is acceptable.

Warranty Coverage:

This is not a defect.

Claim Response:

None.

Remarks:

The cosmetics of natural wood trim and railings are contractual issues and should be evaluated for cosmetics as well as the quality of installation.

The character of natural wood is often why real wood is selected over other manufactured options that are more uniform in appearance. Natural variations in colour, grain and the inclusion of whorls created by intersecting pieces of the tree are inherent in natural wood products.

The open grain in some wood surfaces tends to show a rough appearance however, the surface is considered to be uniform.

Variation in grain will affect the absorption and colour of stains and clear finishes resulting in variations in colour over the surface of trim or railings.

Over time, light itself will cause a distinction in colour between trim and railing areas. Some woods, such as birch will fade in colour while others, such as cherry, will darken.

Notes:

5.21 Interior metal stair spindles are loose.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Metal stair spindles shall not rattle while ascending or descending the stairs.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Metal stair spindles not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

The function of stair spindles is different than that of newels or handrails, so rigidity is not critical. Stair spindles are intended to prevent a person from falling through the handrail assembly, a function that is not compromised by minor play in the spindles.

See Also:

5.18 Stair railings and guards lack rigidity.

Notes:

Trim and Mouldings

5.22 Hammer marks are visible on trim.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Interior finished trim shall be free from hammer marks when viewed from a normal viewing position in normal lighting.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Trim not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Rectified areas shall closely match the original finished surface for colour, sheen, and texture; however, they may exhibit slight differences in appearance.

Notes:

5.23 Interior trim or mouldings are split.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Trim shall not have readily visible splits.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Trim not meeting the acceptable condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Filler may be used to repair splits.

Rectified areas shall closely match the original finished surface for colour, sheen, and texture; however, they may exhibit slight differences in appearance.

Notes:

5.24 Visible joints exist in interior trim, casing and baseboards.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Joints in trim, where exposed to view, shall be tightly fitted and have aligned surfaces or be filled with a compatible material to achieve the same result.

Joints greater than 1/8 inch (3 mm) are considered excessive.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Joints not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Hairline cracks are acceptable in painted surfaces between joined or adjacent pieces. Caulk and paint is an acceptable repair for joints up to 1/8 inch (3 mm) and shall be similar in colour to the original trim.

Rectified areas shall closely match the original finished surface for colour, sheen and texture; however, they may exhibit slight differences in appearance.

Notes:

5.25 Finished wood surface is rough.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Wood surfaces that are touched or grasped during normal use shall be uniformly smooth. Surfaces not touched during normal use shall appear smooth when viewed without magnification, under normal lighting conditions, and from a normal viewing position.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Wood surfaces not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

The grain structure of certain woods (such as oak) may show a rough appearance yet feel smooth. This is a natural property of wood and is acceptable.

Where a finished wood surface exhibits roughness by design or homeowner request, the condition is an aesthetic choice and not a defect.

Factory-applied finishes typically exhibit more consistency than site-applied finishes.

Notes:

5.26 Interior wood surfaces are scratched or scuffed.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Interior wood surfaces, stained or painted, shall be generally free of scratches or scuffs when viewed from a normal viewing distance under normal lighting conditions.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Interior wood surfaces 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.

Scratches and scuffs resulting from actions of the homeowner are not covered.

Remarks:

The repair shall be appropriate to the nature of the blemish.

Notes:

5.27 A gap exists between the wall and the baseboard.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Baseboards shall be installed generally flush. Gaps exceeding 1/8 inch (3.0 mm) against walls are considered excessive.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Baseboards not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Caulking is an acceptable repair for gaps up to 1/8 inch (3 mm) in width.

A gap may be more apparent when wider, inflexible baseboards are involved, as opposed to narrower baseboards that flex.

Notes:

5.28 A gap exists between the underside of the baseboard and a hard, uniform surface floor.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Baseboards shall be installed generally flush. Gaps exceeding 1/8 inch (3 mm) against uniform, hard floors, such as hardwood, laminate, uniform ceramic, and resilient flooring, are considered excessive.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Baseboards that do not meet the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

The finishing carpenter may lift the baseboard to create a more uniform appearance against hard surface floors with non-uniform finishes (e.g., slate and deeply textured ceramic tiles). In such instances, the variance along the bottom of the baseboard is not considered a defect.

Non-uniform floors, such as slate or deeply textured tiles, may exhibit gaps; this is acceptable.

Notes:

5.29 Resin is bleeding through painted finish.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Resin shall not bleed through the painted finish.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Painted finishes not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Rectified areas shall closely match the original finished surface for colour, sheen, and texture; however, they may exhibit slight differences in appearance.

Notes:

5.30 Fasteners are not properly set or filled.

Acceptable Performance Condition:

Fasteners shall not protrude above the surface.

Warranty Coverage:

1 year for defects in materials and labour.

Claim Response:

Fasteners not meeting the acceptable performance condition shall be rectified.

Remarks:

Where fasteners have been set below the surface, they shall be filled with compatible filler unless designed otherwise.

Repairs may be noticeable under normal lighting conditions and from a normal viewing distance; this is acceptable.

This guideline does not apply in unfinished rooms or unfinished spaces.

Notes:
