

CARE & USE INFORMATION FOR YOUR NEW HOME

The following information has been gathered in response to requests from residents looking for guidelines at move-in and move-out times. If you have any questions about the use and care of items not on this list, please call the Owner.

Most of the time, manuals for appliances, etc. will be left in the home. Please refer to them first whenever there is a problem. Answers are often found in these guides.

PLEASE REPORT ANY UNSAFE OR HAZARDOUS SITUATION IMMEDIATELY

Furnace and Wall Heater Maintenance

- All tenants are responsible for cleaning or replacing the furnace filter at twice each year, preferably at the beginning of the fall or winter. Problems caused by failure to clean/replace the filter may be the tenant's responsibility.
- Dust can accumulate at furnace vents as well as at fan vents. A small broom brushed across the vent openings will clear away any dust and help the furnace or fan operate efficiently.
- Prior to the heating season, please arrange to have PG&E check your furnace/heater to be sure that it is in good operating condition. If they identify needed repairs, notify the Mills Property Management immediately. PG&E can be reached at (800) 743-5000. This is a complimentary service.

Gas Wall Heaters

- If your home has a gas wall heater, it is prudent to turn off the gas at the unit when the heater is not needed. On any gas appliance, new or older, if the pilot light goes out, you may detect a gas odor, which should dissipate in a few minutes after airing out the room. If the odor persists, call PG&E immediately.

Power, Furnace & Hot Water Heater Outages

- If the power goes out in your unit or house, first check to see if the whole area is without power. If it is out in the area, chances are PG&E already knows about it, but you can try calling them to report it.
- If the power is only out in your house/unit, check the circuit breaker box. One or more circuits may be tripped, and you may see the switches in the off position. If no switch is **off**, turn each switch **off** then **on** to reset the circuits. The second thing is to look for all GFCI plugs – these are normal electrical outlets, but have a re-set button as well, and are used more frequently these days. Re-set all GFCI plugs; they are generally found in the kitchen, bathrooms, and garage, but there could be others in the house. If this doesn't solve the problem, call PG&E at (800) 743-5000.
- If either your furnace or water heater is not working, **call PG&E first** to have them check it out and/or relight the pilot. If there are additional problems, they will inform you as to what needs to be repaired. Call the Mills Property Management with the information provided to you by PG&E.

Drains

- Avoid letting food, hair and excess soap get down the drains.
- Clogged drains caused by hair, grease and soap are the tenant's responsibility. Some dishwashers will clog from food left on the dishes when put in the machine.
- An excellent drain cleaning/clearing solution recipe is 1 cup salt, 1 cup baking soda and 1 cup vinegar, followed by 8 cups boiling water. We recommend performing this treatment monthly to avoid build-up.
- Hardware stores carry "hair catchers" to place in sink and tub drains that significantly help keep drains free of hair.

Garbage Disposals

- **ALWAYS** run water while the disposal is operating to avoid damage to the unit. Let the water run long enough to grind all the material in the disposal. Then let the water run for 10-15 seconds after turning off the disposal. Learn to recognize the sounds the unit makes when completely free of debris.
- Disposals are designed to grind up **organic material only**. Exceptions include: banana peel, artichoke leaves, celery stalks, flower stems, coffee grounds, bones or any item that is particularly tough. **NEVER** put paper, plastic, glass, aluminum foil or grease in the disposal.
- **ALWAYS** be sure to check the power switch, try the reset button (somewhere on the machine) and remove all contents before calling for maintenance. **Problems caused by users are the tenant's responsibility.**

Refrigerator Coils/Drip Pans

- Keep coils on refrigerators (especially sub-zeros) free of dust.
- Coils need free air flowing around them to operate efficiently. **Failure to keep coils clean may cause the appliance motor to burn out.** The replacement of a burned-out motor due to dirty coils may be the tenant's responsibility.
- Some refrigerators have drip pans under them. If not kept clean, the pans can start to develop a strong odor. Please take the time to get acquainted with the appliances in your unit.

Fireplaces

- Please burn only hard woods in fireplaces and woodstoves to minimize the build-up of creosote, etc. in the chimney. Creosote build-up is a fire hazard.
- Be sure a fireplace screen is in place when a fire is burning to prevent hot ashes from burning the floor or floor coverings.
- It is the tenant's responsibility to abide by "no-burn" days.
- The fireplace was cleaned before the tenant moved in – so annual cleaning of fireplace is the tenant's responsibility.

Oven Racks and Pans

- The easiest way to clean oven racks and pans is to put them in a heavy-duty garbage bag (do this outdoors), add two cups of ammonia and seal the bag. Let it sit for a couple of hours, then carefully open the bag (without inhaling the strong odor). Remove racks & pans and the grease will wipe off with little effort.

Plumbing Fixtures

- **NEVER** use abrasives on brass or gold fixtures.
- It is best to wipe fixtures clean after each use.
- If brass needs to be polished, please use a product specifically designed for use on brass.
- Many homes and apartments have low-flow toilets. We strongly recommend that you keep a plunger nearby. Low-flow toilets tend to clog or back up if too much paper, etc. is flushed. **NEVER** flush items such as baby wipes or sanitary products. **Tenants must attempt to plunge the toilet to clear clogs and avoid damage from over-flows before contacting The Owner.**

Water Damage

- Tenants must take care to avoid water damage caused by allowing water to sit on counters and floors.
- Care must be taken to ensure that shower curtains are inside the tub, and that shower doors are completely closed when taking a shower. Water on tile floors can seep through the grout and cause dry rot on the floorboards below. Water can also seep around the edges of linoleum and damage the flooring below. We recommend putting a mat, towel, or rug on the floor to step on when exiting the tub or shower.
- Water can easily be splashed into the space behind the faucet in the kitchen or bath and damage the counter surface. Please be sure to keep these areas dry to prevent damage.

Sliding Glass Doors, Screen Doors and Shower Tracks

- It is imperative that dirt and debris be regularly cleaned out of sliding door tracks. Rolling over dirt, leaves and pine needles that frequently accumulate in the tracks can damage the wheels on sliding doors, especially the heavy glass sliders. Please make it part of your cleaning routine to clear the tracks.
- Please do not use oil or WD-40 to lubricate slider doors or screens. They only attract dirt and gum up the wheel mechanisms.
- In order to minimize the growth of mold in the tracks and at the bottom of shower doors, keep the tracks clean. Use an old toothbrush and do a regular monthly cleaning, it's much easier than doing one major cleaning at move-out time!

Mildew

- Tenants must make every effort to keep mildew from forming. Negligence in this situation is hazardous to your health. Failure to report excessive mildew accumulation (after removal efforts have failed) may expose Tenants to liability for damage caused by the mildew. If significant mildew is present and growth cannot be minimized through regular cleaning, contact the Mills Property Management immediately – this could be a sign of a water leak.
- Bleach is the best product for removing mildew that forms around the edges of showers, tubs, on tile walls, around metal windows, and anywhere else there is moisture. The easiest way to remove mildew is to cut paper towels in half and fold them into one-inch strips. Dip each strip into the bleach bottle and hold your finger against it as you draw it out, to remove excess fluid. Lay the bleach-soaked strips directly on the mildew and leave them there for several hours. It works like magic. Remember to use rubber gloves, and air out affected rooms.

House Plants

- Be sure drip pans are kept under all plants. Water run-off will stain or damage most surfaces, and tenants can be held responsible for removal of stains or replacement of deck boards that cannot be cleaned effectively.

Kitchen Counters

- To avoid costly damage from nicks and cuts on counter tops, please always use a cutting board.

Ceramic Tile – Molded Tub and Shower Walls

- Dilute one-part white vinegar with five parts water for cleaning all ceramic tiles and molded fixtures.
- **NEVER** use scrubbing cleansers like Comet or AJAX on molded fixtures, as these products will permanently scratch the surfaces.

Mini Blinds

- When cleaning mini blinds, don't soak them – the finish may bubble and peel. Spray them with a mild soap & water solution and wipe them clean. Weekly dusting or wiping can save a lot of work later.

Smoke Detectors/Carbon Monoxide Detectors

- Tenants are responsible for keeping fresh batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. We recommend changing batteries at the beginning and end of Daylight-Saving Time.
- Some homes will have 10-Year Non-Removable Smoke detectors and /or Carbon Monoxide detectors. You can't change the batteries in these devices. If they start Beeping that means the battery is dying and the device needs to be replaced. Call Mills Property Management if this happens.

Wood Decks/Porches

- Potted plants and flowers add beauty and appeal to a property. If you have planters or pots, please put "feet" under them so that they are raised up off the deck a few inches to allow air flow beneath the pot and to prevent water run-off from rotting the deck.

Hardwood Floors

- **NEVER** use a mop for cleaning or applying oil. Use a soft cloth only. It is best to sweep and dust regularly.
- Kitchen areas only: once every three months, clean floors with a small amount of vinegar in water.
- Periodically clean floors with Murphy's Oil (or similar product) following the directions on the label.
- Use throw rugs in front of the sink and the stove to protect these areas from water and grease.
- Use floor protectors under chair and table legs, or place area rugs. Excessive scratching and gouging may be considered Tenant damage. Under NO circumstances should a chair mat (the plastic kind with the "points" on the bottom) be used on a hardwood floor, even if you place an area rug under the mat. Those "points" are sharp and can cause serious damage to the hardwood (we have seen it happen!).

Marble and Granite

- **NEVER** use any acidic or abrasive cleaning products, including vinegar. It is best to use warm water and a sponge with a small amount of dishwashing liquid, such as Dawn or Joy.
- Marble is a porous material. Be careful that water run-off from plants is not left standing on the surface, as it will **permanently stain** the marble.