

# 4 home interior



## attic

It's important to maintain ventilation through the attic to prevent moisture buildup.

In most homes, you can access the attic by either an attic access ladder or steps installed in a garage or larger closet.

### attic ventilation

The sources of attic ventilation – louvers and vents – help prevent moisture buildup, reduce energy usage, and increase the life span of the roofing material. Louvers and vents keep out snow and wind-driven rain in normal conditions. Sometimes, rain and snow can enter through these openings when certain negative pressures exist.

### attic storage

In some homes, the attic is available as storage. If your attic has a plywood platform, then you may use this area as such. Otherwise, your attic shouldn't be used for storage or any other purpose.



**CAUTION**

*Any damage resulting from the improper use of the attic space is the responsibility of the homeowner.*

### care and maintenance

Follow these care and maintenance suggestions for your home's attic.

### to maintain sufficient ventilation through the attic

Keep the louvered openings unobstructed year-round. Louvers obstructed by debris or ice accumulation frequently lead to leaks.

Make sure your home's vents are clear of debris.

Check vents periodically to make sure they're secure and haven't come loose in high winds.

Inspect the attic once a year for water stains on the underside of the roof sheathing.

### to prevent long-term damage to the attic

Check the attic insulation for moisture. If you find moisture, call for service immediately.



**HOME TIP**

*If you have loose-fill insulation, check to see if it has shifted due to major weather events. Use a plastic rake to move insulation from high spots to bald spots.*



**HOME TIP**

*Have a qualified person inspect the attic for mildew, rot, and fungus. These problems indicate a high humidity level in the attic. Also, inspect for evidence of pests.*

## carpeting

Your attractive, durable carpeting will look great for years with regular cleaning and maintenance.

### care and maintenance

Follow these care and maintenance suggestions for your home's carpeting.

### to clean the carpeting

Vacuum carpeting at least once a week. Vacuuming is especially important for some of the denser shear and shag patterns.

Have your carpeting cleaned professionally at least once a year to remove deep-down dirt and stubborn stains.

Dry wet carpeting immediately to avoid delamination.

To remove spots, use the manufacturer's recommended cleaning products, and follow the instructions for spot removal.



*If carpeting gets saturated, call a certified remediation company.*

### to prevent staining

Always attack stains immediately. Even half an hour after the accident can be too late.

Seek the advice of a carpeting expert to get the best stain or spot remover for your style of carpet. A number of good-quality stain and spot removers are available.



*In cases of severe staining or spotting on carpeting, don't hesitate to call a professional. The small expense will pay off in longer carpet beauty and service.*

### to preserve the carpeting

Protect your carpeting from direct sunlight, as it can cause carpeting to age.

Avoid excessive pile crushing by moving heavy furniture periodically.

Check for loose threads. Trim any loose threads, so they don't unravel.



*Loose carpeting can be re-stretched, and delaminating seams can be repaired.*

### to protect your furniture

If your carpeting becomes wet or saturated, create a barrier between the wet carpeting and the bottoms of all wood furniture. Aluminum foil or plastic coasters work well as barriers.

For more information about carpeting, visit the manufacturer's website.

## central vacuum

If a central vacuum system has been installed in your home, keep it clear of dust so it can work efficiently.

A central vacuum system allows you to vacuum your home by plugging a hose into an inlet in your wall. If your home has multiple stories, you have at least one inlet on each level. Any dirt or debris you vacuum flows through tubing to the power unit, usually located in the basement or garage.

### care and maintenance

Follow this care and maintenance suggestion for your central vacuum.

### canister and filter

Clean the collection canister and filter about three times a year. Each time you empty the collection canister, clean the filter by knocking the dust from it.

## ceramic tile floors

Ceramic tile adds a beautiful decorative touch to your home and is easy to clean and maintain.

### care and maintenance

Ceramic tile is generally easy to maintain. Follow these care and maintenance suggestions to help keep it looking new.

### general maintenance

Sweep or vacuum the floor areas to remove dust and debris before cleaning them.

Use protective mats at all exterior-to-interior entrances to tile floors.

Use protective pads on your furniture bottoms to help prevent scratching the tile.

### to care for the grout

Clean the grout used between ceramic tiles with a brush and a mild cleanser.

Use a grout sealer to make the grout more resistant to stains. This product can be purchased at most home care centers. Grout sealer can discolor the grout, though, and doesn't waterproof it.

### to care for the tile

Sweep or vacuum the floor tiles regularly to remove any abrasive particles that could damage the floor.

Wipe tile with a moist cloth, and wet mop it occasionally.

Clean the tile using a non-oil-based household cleaner that's compatible with cement grouts.

Clean and scrub tile floors with a cleaning solution using a cotton mop, cloth, sponge, or nonmetallic brush, and then rinse with clean water to remove the cleaning solution.



*Refer to the manufacturer's recommendations for maintaining your tile.*



*Never use a vacuum with a beater bar or power rotary brush head; these will damage the surface of the tile.*



*Never use cleaners that contain acids or ammonia. Cleaners with acid will damage the grout and tile glazing, and ammonia cleaners might discolor the grout.*

## exhaust fans

Exhaust fans provide ventilation to remove potentially damaging moisture from your home.

Showering, cooking, and other activities involving warm or boiling water produce a lot of moisture in your home. Moisture damages building materials and promotes mold growth.

Exhaust fans are installed in bathrooms and above the kitchen range. These fans play an important role in decreasing the level of moisture in your home.

Exhaust fans remove moisture before it causes problems. The fans also remove odors. To remove moisture from the air, run the exhaust fan at these times:

*During and after a shower or bath.*

*While cooking.*

### care and maintenance

Follow these guidelines to keep your exhaust fans working:

*Turn off the fan before performing any maintenance.*

*Make sure the fan is pulling air. To check, turn on the fan and hold a tissue near the grille; the tissue should hold tightly to the grille.*

*Clean the fan filter regularly to help maintain pulling power.*

*Clean the fan blades as needed. First unplug the fan, and then wipe the blades with a damp cloth.*

*Use a can of compressed air to blow dust out of the fan.*



*Make sure you unplug electrical appliances before you clean them.*

See also *Ranges, cooktops, and ovens* (p. 80).

## finishes

The finishes in your kitchen and bath are durable and will remain beautiful with proper care.

### enamel

Enamels are made from tile, porcelain, or vitreous china. These surfaces are hard, but they can be scratched and chipped with misuse, such as by a blow with a heavy object or by cleaning with abrasive cleansers.

### stainless steel

Stainless steel fixtures generally resist staining. They need a thorough scrubbing only occasionally. With maintenance, a stainless steel finish can last many years. Small scratches that do occur over time will usually blend in with the overall finish.

### chrome, nickel, and brass

Chrome is a hard, durable, and scratch-resistant finish. Nickel, which looks similar to chrome except with a warmer undertone, is softer and scratches more easily. Brass, like nickel, also scratches easily. Brass fixtures are usually treated with a clear protective coating to make the surface more durable.

### care and maintenance

Follow these care and maintenance suggestions for the finishes in your home's kitchen and bath.

### enamel

**When washing dishes:** Be careful with metal utensils, sharp utensils, pots and pans, etc. Scraping or banging metal utensils in a sink gradually scratches and dulls the enamel, making it susceptible to stains that become increasingly difficult to remove. A blow from a heavy or sharp object will chip the surface.

**When cleaning:** Don't use strong abrasive cleansers. Shiny new fixtures can be dulled or stained in a short period of time with strong abrasive cleansers. Improper cleaning can chip, scratch, and stain the enamel.



*Most household cleaners are mildly abrasive, but when used with plenty of water, some aren't harmful. You can use baking soda or Bon Ami®\* Powder (not Bon Ami®\* Cleanser), which are nonabrasive, to clean enamel.*

*\*Bon Ami® is a registered trademark of the Bon Ami Company.*



*To fill chips in porcelain finishes, a bottle of liquid porcelain from your local hardware store is a simple, inexpensive remedy. Follow the product directions carefully. Apply a second coat if necessary to fill a deep chip.*

### stainless steel

Clean a stainless steel finish with warm water and a nonabrasive cleanser or a commercial stainless steel cleanser. Dry completely after cleaning.

Clean a stainless steel sink occasionally by filling it full with a 50/50 solution of water and bleach. Let the solution stand for 15 minutes. Drain the solution while washing the sides and bottom of the sink. Rinse thoroughly.

Rinse a stainless steel sink after each use to remove chloride residue found in most soaps, detergents, and cleansers.

Scrub a stainless steel sink once a week; this will help keep the finish looking lustrous.

Don't allow soaps, salts, or water to dry on the finish. Wipe the surface dry after each use.

Be careful when washing dishes in the sink. Stainless steel sinks will dent when they receive a strong impact.

Don't use steel wool pads. They can remove the finish.

Don't use a stainless steel sink as a chopping block or cutting board. The knives will scratch the sink's finish, and the stainless steel will dull your knives.



*Wet sponges, cloths, and cleaning pads left on the sink surface can lead to discoloration, pitting, and rust.*

### chrome, nickel, and brass

Don't use an abrasive cleaner, which may scratch the surface and remove the finish.

Clean chrome finishes with a soft cloth and a nonabrasive wax polish. Otherwise, chrome needs very little maintenance.

Clean nickel and brass with a nonabrasive cleaner, and then buff them with a soft cloth.

Wipe water spots with a soft cloth. Don't allow water to dry on any finishes.



*There are many finishes in your home. Refer to the manufacturer's recommendations for the most up-to-date care and maintenance information.*

## locks and doorknobs

Privacy and security locks and doorknobs are easy to maintain.

### care and maintenance

Follow these care and maintenance suggestions for your home's locks and doorknobs.

### to keep the doorknobs working

Hardware for passage doors can work loose through use.

When opening and closing a door, try to avoid excessive play on the doorknob escutcheon plate.

If a doorknob or lock becomes inoperative, call a locksmith.



*Have duplicate keys made, and keep them in convenient places so you'll have access if you get locked out. When you take a vacation, it's a good idea to leave a key with a neighbor for use in the event of an emergency.*



*Keep the release pins or keys for interior doors in a handy place. They're used to unlock an interior door from the outside.*

### to minimize wear and tarnishing

Clean the hardware on a regular basis per the manufacturer's instructions.

Most exterior hardware is finished with a sealant. Often this sealant can wear, and the hardware will tarnish.

Tighten any exposed hardware screws.

Make sure all hardware works smoothly.

Lubricate exterior locks with a graphite product. Don't lubricate with oils, such as WD-40®\*-type lubes, as they can freeze in colder climates and foul the lock pins in any climate.

*\*WD-40® is a registered trademark of the WD-40 Company.*



*Keys used during the construction of your new home won't operate the locks after you have closed on the property.*

## main shutoffs

Your home has main shutoffs to your plumbing and electricity – the main water shutoff valve and the master circuit breaker.

### main water shutoff

The main water shutoff valve shuts off the water supply for the entire house. It can be found on an outside wall, where it's normally located next to the front hose bib or the water heater. The main water shutoff can also be found in the garage and sometimes in irrigation boxes.

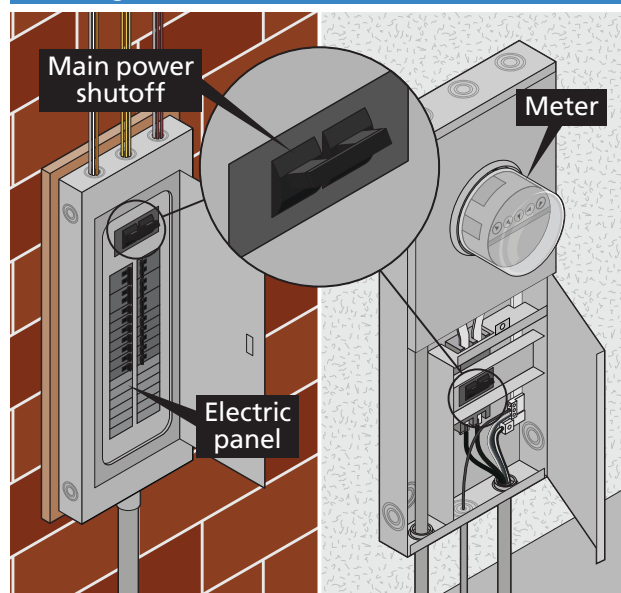
See also *Shutoff valves* (p. 95).

### main electrical shutoff

Every home has a master circuit breaker and smaller circuit breakers, which are located in the electrical panel box. When the master breaker trips, the electricity in your home is cut off. You can reset circuit breakers by pushing a switch all the way to OFF and then back to the ON position.

See also *Circuit breakers* (p. 13).

Locating the main electrical shutoff



*Read and follow all warnings on the main shutoffs.*

## smoke and carbon monoxide detectors

The smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors installed in your home are essential to your health and fire safety, so make sure they're working to protect you and your family.

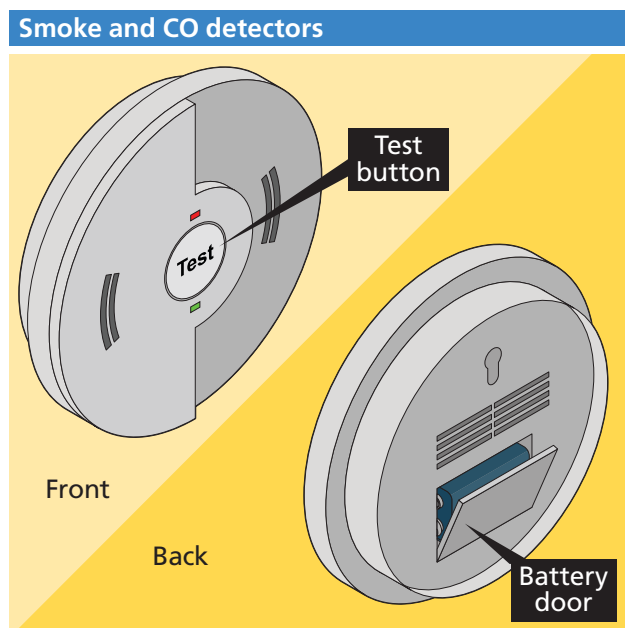
With proper maintenance, smoke and CO detectors can help to protect you and your family in fire emergencies. Each unit can detect both smoke and carbon monoxide. The detectors are hardwired to your electrical system. They also include battery backups.

### care and maintenance

Follow these care and maintenance suggestions for your home's smoke and CO detectors.

### to test the detectors

Check your smoke and CO detectors every month by pushing the test button on each one. The alarm should sound when you push the test button. If you hear only a chirp or nothing at all, you need to replace the battery.



*Read the manufacturer's instructions to find out exactly how to test your detector.*

### to keep the detectors working correctly

For your safety, it's important to keep the detectors clean and in proper working condition. Dust can make a detector less sensitive to heat and smoke and can cause it to give a false alarm. Remove dust by taking the top off a detector and vacuuming the inside using the drapery-cleaning attachment of a vacuum cleaner. You can also use a can of compressed air to blow out any dust.

### the backup battery

Each smoke and CO detector is hardwired to your electrical system. Each detector also includes a 9-volt battery backup so that if the electricity is cut off, the detector will still work. When you need to replace the battery, a detector will chirp. Keep replacement batteries on hand.

Follow these steps to change the battery. If these steps aren't followed, a false alarm may sound and continue chirping.

1. Disconnect the hardwire harness.
2. Remove the old battery.
3. Press the test button to discharge any latent energy.
4. Install the new battery.
5. Reconnect the wire harness.



*Replace all smoke and CO detector batteries each year during the change to daylight saving time. This will help keep your detectors fully operational.*



*In most homes, when one smoke or CO detector isn't working properly, all of the detectors will chirp. To find the detector that isn't working properly, look for the one with the red light indicator.*



*Your home may be equipped with a fire sprinkler system. Check your manufacturer's literature for details.*

**if you have a fire sprinkler system**

The pipes supplying the sprinklers are filled with water under pressure from your home's water supply. In the case of fire, the heat will open the sprinkler head, and water will spread over the fire. All sprinkler heads operate independently; heads throughout the home won't all open at one time. Remember that sprinkler pipes are full of water, so don't turn your heat off in cold weather; frozen sprinkler pipes can crack.

Don't obstruct the sprinklers. To prevent obstructing the sprinklers:

*Don't hang anything from a sprinkler or sprinkler pipe.*

*Don't paint sprinklers or piping.*

*Don't install ceiling fans or other objects that might affect the spray pattern of a sprinkler head.*

*Visually inspect all sprinklers periodically to make sure they aren't obstructed. Inspect all water supply valves periodically to make sure they're open.*

## specialty interior doors

Bifold, bypass, and sliding pocket doors are convenient and conserve space in your home.

The mechanics of these doors are more complicated than those of a hinged door. When operating these doors, gentleness is important, so don't apply up or down pressure to open or close them.

**bifold doors**

Bifold doors are frequently used for closets, laundry rooms, and pantries. A single bifold door is made up of two door segments that fold into each other when slid along the track. To open this type of door, gently pull the door toward you, and the door will open itself.

**bypass doors**

Bypass doors, also known as sliding doors, are two door segments that glide on a track, bypassing each other. Your closet and shower doors may be bypass doors. To open this type of door, gently push the movable segment in the appropriate direction, and the door will open itself.

**sliding pocket doors**

Sliding pocket doors slide into the wall, helping to save space in any room. These doors are usually used as room dividers, such as between a dining room and a kitchen, or in an area with limited space. To open this type of door, gently push a sliding pocket door in the direction the door moves, and the door will open itself.

**care and maintenance**

Bifold, bypass, and sliding pocket doors are installed in matched sets. If you remove the doors for any reason, be sure to put each section back in its original position. The following guidelines will help you care for these interior doors.

**to maintain bifold doors**

If these doors become difficult to operate or jump from their tracks, find their adjustment areas, which are located on the rear sides of the doors. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to adjust the doors.

Check the top corner brackets for loosening of the set screws.

Avoid getting paint on the top spring-loaded pins during any repainting.

**to maintain bypass doors**

If these doors become difficult to operate or jump from their tracks, find their adjustment areas, which are located on the rear sides of the doors. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to adjust the doors.

Avoid getting paint on the door track or rollers during any repainting.

Be careful when opening bypass doors. Bumping the doors forcefully against the door-opening returns can jump the doors off the top tracks.

**to maintain sliding pocket doors**

If these doors become difficult to operate, it's likely they have jumped from their tracks. Check the rollers to see if they're broken or off the track. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to adjust the doors.

If a roller is loose, simply tighten or replace the screws. If a roller is broken, you'll have to replace it.

Don't drive nails into the pocket area of a sliding door. The protruding nail can damage the surface of the door. Use adhesive-type hangers for pictures on walls that contain a sliding pocket door.

## vinyl flooring

The vinyl flooring in your home is made of wear-resistant materials that are easy to clean and maintain.

Vinyl floors are very durable. The clear, nonporous wear layer keeps spots and spills out while sealing in your floor's natural beauty. Vinyl floors recover quickly from most indentations and are flexible under the impact of normal household traffic.

**care and maintenance**

Follow these care and maintenance suggestions for your home's vinyl flooring.

**general maintenance**

Use the manufacturer's recommended maintenance products, and follow the instructions to maintain the flooring.

Remove spills immediately.

Never use a vacuum with a beater bar, as it can damage the floor.

Equip all furniture and appliances with glides or furniture caps to protect the floor.

Place rugs at the entrances to rooms to reduce dirt and grime being tracked in.

Avoid using rolling casters, as they can damage the floor.

Don't drag heavy items, such as furniture, as they can cause scuffs and tears.

**to clean vinyl flooring**

Dust or vacuum your floors. Mop using a mild cleaning solution, such as liquid dish detergent, weekly.

Don't use detergents, abrasives, paste wax, solvent-based polishes, or any "mop and shine" products on the flooring.

Remove loose dirt with a broom, dust mop, or vacuum daily.

Wipe up spills immediately. If a spill dries, remove it with a damp sponge, cloth, or mop.

Damp mop occasionally to prolong the period between cleanings.

Give floors a thorough cleaning when they're dull or can't be refurbished. To clean, use a good detergent diluted as recommended by the manufacturer. Loosen the dirt with just enough pressure using a mop, cloth, or floor scrubber. Then, take up the cleaning solution, rinse the floor, and let it dry.

Buff your floors lightly, or apply a thin coat of vinyl dressing if they lose shine.



*High-heel shoes or furniture legs without floor protectors will cause damage to vinyl flooring.*



*Don't use abrasive cleaners or bleaches on vinyl floors.*



*Use care when moving heavy appliances, furniture, or chairs to avoid tearing the flooring.*

For more information about vinyl flooring, visit the manufacturer's website.

**walls and ceilings**

Your home has been built with quality walls and ceilings.

**care and maintenance**

Follow these care and maintenance suggestions for your home's walls and ceilings.

**interior walls and ceilings**

The interior walls and ceilings in your home have been built with quality drywall and paint products. They'll last for the life of your home if you care for them properly.

Remove most spots by gently cleaning with a mild soap. Don't scrub painted walls. This may stain flat paint, which stains easily.

Check your walls and ceilings for signs of condensation and/or mold growth; if you detect any, call for service immediately.

Don't wash newly painted surfaces for the first few months; the paint needs time to dry and set.

Vacuum acoustical ceilings gently to remove dust.

Keep the filters for your heating and cooling units clean, use the exhaust fans over your range and in the bathrooms, and vacuum dust promptly as it collects to help avoid having to repaint frequently.



*It is common for some sound to transfer between neighboring units.*



*Don't overload closet rods.*



*Ceiling outlets, which are sometimes installed in garages and attics, typically can't support light fixtures or ceiling fans that weigh more than 50 pounds.*



*Most latex paints can be stored for two years without risking deterioration; however, exposure to extreme heat or cold may shorten the paint's life span. Avoid using latex paint when the wall or ceiling surface temperature is above 90°F or below 45°F.*



*Ceiling drywall is not designed to support any weight. Locate a ceiling joist in which to attach hardware for heavy hanging plants, lamps, and macramé.*

### to repair the surface

As new homes go through a normal shrinkage process, minor cracks, and possibly nail or screw pops, will appear. Don't make any repairs in the drywall until you're ready to repaint the room.

### Cracks

Fill any cracks with an elastomeric caulking, which is available from any paint or hardware store.

### Indentations

Fill indentations in the surface of drywall with two or three applications of the joint compound used for drywall taping, which is available at any hardware store. Smooth out the compound with fine sandpaper and repaint the area.

### Nail pops

A nail pop looks like a small dent (concave) or bump (convex) on the surface of the wall. It occurs when the point of attachment between the drywall and the wood framing fails. Despite the name "nail pop," this common drywall issue can occur with both nails and screws, the two types of fasteners used in drywall installations. Happily, popped nails and screws don't diminish a wall's strength – they're just unattractive.

### to fix a nail pop

To fix a nail pop, follow these steps:

1. Use a hammer to drive the popped nail back into the wall. Then, drive a new nail into the wall, lapping the head of the new nail over the head of the old one. If your drywall has screws instead of nails, re-tighten the popped screw back into the wall using a screwdriver.



*Make sure the nails (or screw) are set into the drywall just enough where they aren't protruding from the surface. A good way to check is to run a putty knife over the nails (or screw) and listen for a clicking sound.*

2. Apply a spackling compound over the nails (or screw) using a putty knife; follow the spackle manufacturer's instructions. Make sure you spread the paste evenly across the surface. Spackle is available from any paint store or home care center.



3. Smooth out the surface with fine sandpaper once the spackle has dried. The wall should be smooth to the touch.



4. Use a cloth to wipe away any dust from sanding.



5. Redecorate the surface using paint, wallpaper, or other wall décor.



## wood flooring

The wood flooring in your home adds an inviting and charming atmosphere. With proper care, you can ensure that it retains its long-term aesthetic value.

Real wood flooring can be made from a number of different types of wood, such as beech, maple, and oak. Your floors will range in durability depending on the type of wood used. All wood expands and contracts as the weather changes; it can shrink in extreme dryness or swell in extreme humidity. The benefits of wood floors lie in their stylish appearance and their ability to last a lifetime with good care.

### care and maintenance

Use the manufacturer's recommended products, and follow the instructions for routine care and maintenance. Also, follow these care and maintenance suggestions for your home's wood flooring.

### general maintenance

Vacuum, sweep, or dust mop your floor once a week, or more if needed.

Protect your floors from dirt and sand, as they can scratch the finish. Placing rugs at the entrances to the room can help minimize the amount of dirt and sand.

Don't drag heavy objects, such as furniture, across the floor.

Use pads under furniture legs, such as felt stick-on pads. Narrow-legged furniture often will damage wood flooring by leaving indentations in the surface.

Preserve the original color of the wood flooring by closing curtains or blinds to protect it from direct sunlight.

Keep animal nails trimmed, and avoid walking on wood floors with spike-heeled or stiletto-heeled shoes, or with shoes that have heel taps or sharp objects protruding from the soles.

Keep wood floors within a certain temperature range. Check your manufacturer's recommendations to make sure extreme heat and cold don't damage your floor.



*Direct sunlight can cause your floors to fade and can delaminate the finish.*

### to clean the floor

Vacuum wood floors with a special bare-floor attachment; beater bars can damage the flooring.

Don't wash or wet mop wood flooring; liquid can cause warping, swelling, and other problems. If you have to use water to clean, try using a damp cloth.

Avoid using alkaline substances, such as ammonia, to clean wood floors, as they may cause dark spots on the finish.

Don't use wax-based products. See the manufacturer's instructions for approved cleaners.

For more information about wood flooring, visit the manufacturer's website.