

Attention Homeowners in Preston Trace

Ready for Spring?

The recent warm weather reminds us that spring and summer will be here soon. It is the expectation of the Board of Directors that everyone is ready for the house maintenance that also comes with the warmer weather. This could include many of the following: house cleaning/ painting, deck staining, wood repairs, shrub/ tree pruning, lawn fertilizer with weed controls, and lawn maintenance. The whole neighborhood benefits from our well maintained homes and



we look forward to another year of living in a beautiful neighborhood. Another aspect of this time of year is that many residents begin to think about home improvement projects that extend beyond normal maintenance. Owners are required to submit a completed architectural change request form and receive the approval of the Board of Directors prior to starting on an exterior

improvement project. A copy of this form is included on the website. The Board will make every effort to respond in a timely manner. It is also very important that owners clean up or repair any damage that may result from a home improvement project.



A few words from Grandchester Meadows.....

COMMUNICATIONS

AND WORK ORDERS

There are two important aspects of our property management service that everyone should become familiar with and utilize. The first is our various forms of communicating with our company and your neighborhood. We will be updating your community website over the next several weeks with the help of your Board of Directors and your input. Please visit www.grandchestermeadows.com and become familiar with the content of our main page. This includes contractor referrals, work requests, local links, contact information, and government links. You will also be able to access your community site from this main page by selecting your community from the community menu. Please use the website for learning more about your neighborhood any time of day. In the event that you need additional information or you have questions not addressed on the website, please send an email to manager@grandchestermeadows.com and you should receive a prompt response.

The website is also where you should submit your work requests. Click on the hammer icon identified as "Work Request" and fill out the on line form. It is important to complete all of the required fields so that the contractor(s) can address your concerns quickly and accurately. We realize that not everyone uses the internet so you may always call us at (919) 389-7944 during normal business hours. This is also the number to call during off hours when there is an emergency.

However; work requests will still need to be submitted in writing so that we have accurate documentation of every work request. These work requests should include your name, address, phone number, and a description of the problem and should be submitted to:

Grandchester Meadows, Inc.

PO Box 37038

Raleigh, NC 27627

We look forward to hearing from you throughout the year!!



INSPECTIONS

This article is intended to help the Home Owners Association

provide proper maintenance for your home and to help you identify interior/ exterior problems that require your attention. The HOA is responsible for numerous exterior maintenance projects which are defined in the Covenants. Please refer to the Covenants for specifics about the exterior maintenance requirements of the HOA.

The HOA manager routinely inspects the property to determine future maintenance requirements but there will always be some issues that are missed or concealed. Please submit a work order request at: www.grandchestermeadows.com when you find items that may be the responsibility of the HOA to address.

Exterior Items to Inspect

Window and door frames. These can start to show wood rot on the inside portion of the wood frames which is concealed from the outside.

Roof and chimney. This will require that you inspect your attic area for recent signs of water penetration. Please pay

specific attention to the areas around your plumbing vents which exit through the roof. There are several causes of roof leaks so please try to be specific when you describe your findings.

Gutter and downspouts. These should be cleaned out routinely. Failure to do so can lead to wood rot behind the gutters.

Interior Items to Inspect

Plumbing and Hot Water Heaters. It is important to periodically check the condition of your plumbing and hot water heater. This will require that you inspect the crawl space area where the hot water heater and other main plumbing lines may be located.

Toilets and showers. Toilets should be inspected frequently to prevent slow water leaks. Toilets should not be used to dispose of unsuitable materials. Showers need to be properly caulked to prevent water leaks.

Insulation/ Ventilation. There is insulation in both the attic and crawl space areas. You should be inspecting to make sure the areas are properly insulated. Also; while you are in the crawl space you should look for moisture problems. During rainy seasons you will find some moisture in the crawl space. The best rule of thumb is to wait at least two days after rainfall before looking in the crawl space for standing water. In some cases;

additional ventilation is required and in some rare cases a sump pump is required.

WATER CONSERVATION

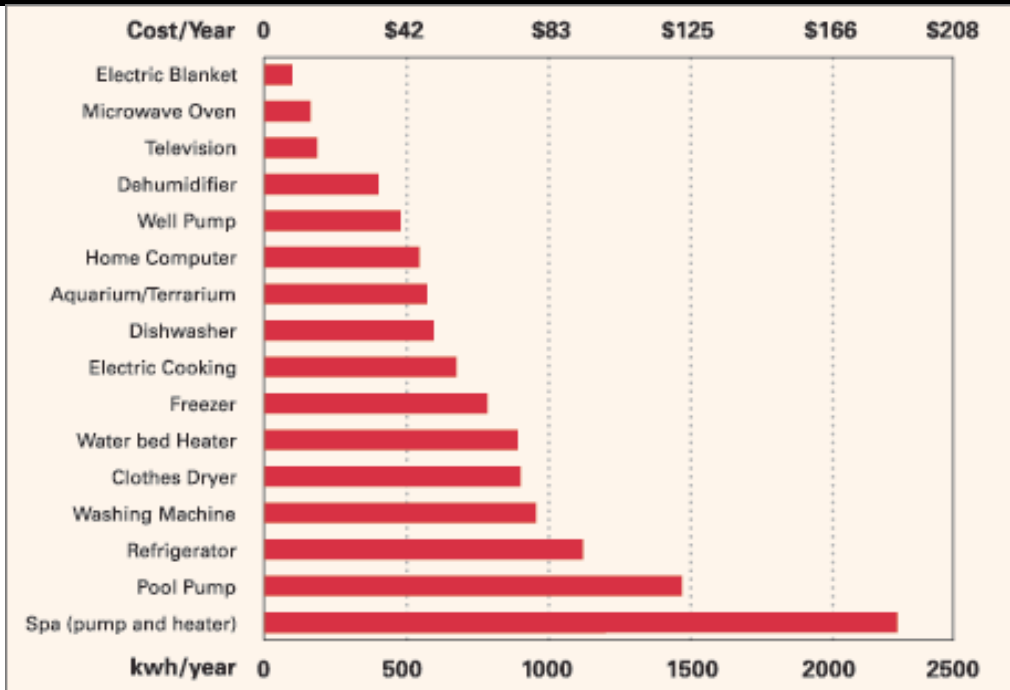
We drink very little of the millions of gallons of water that are treated every day for drinking. Generally speaking, less than 1% of the water produced by water treatment facilities is actually used for drinking. Did you know that 26% of water used inside the home gets flushed down toilets; 20% is used in showers and baths; kitchen and bathroom faucets use 15%; cleaning and washing dishes consumes an additional 3%; the laundry room uses 23%; and leaks claim 13% of the water used in the home? Studies show that indoor water use can be reduced by almost 30% with water-efficient fixtures, dishwashers, and clothes washers.

If each Cary resident saved one gallon of water a day for a year, we would save over 29 million gallons of water. That equals about 150 Olympic-size swimming pools, or 232 million 8-ounce glasses of water.

Conservation doesn't mean sacrifice, all it takes is common sense and thinking about conserving anytime you use water.

General Water Saving Tips

1. Check every faucet in the house for leaks. A single dripping faucet can waste more water in a single day than one person needs for drinking in an entire week. Don't wait to fix a drip. Do it now!
2. Cut back dramatically on water waste and save on your home energy bill by insulating your water pipes. The most important pipe sections to insulate are the first few feet of water line entering the hot water heater and those leading from the water heater to fixtures and appliances. This will reduce the time it takes water to heat up and reach a constant temperature.
3. If a water pipe were to burst in your home, would you be able to locate the master shutoff valve? You could experience flooding and property damage, not to mention immense water waste, if you don't locate the valve and mark it for quick identification. Be sure to show everyone in the family where the valve is located.



How Much Electricity Do Appliances Use?
 This chart shows how much energy a typical appliance uses per year and its corresponding cost based on national averages. For example, a refrigerator uses almost five times the electricity the average television uses. Visit www.energysavers.gov for instructions on calculating the electrical use of your appliances.

What's a kilowatt?

When you use electricity to cook a pot of rice for 1 hour, you use 1000 watt-hours of electricity! One thousand watt-hours equals 1 kilowatt-hour, or 1 kWh. Your utility bill usually shows what you are charged for the kilowatt-hours you use. The average residential rate is 9.4 cents per kWh. A typical U.S. household consumes about 11,000 kWh per year, costing an average of \$1,034 annually.

Easy low-cost and no-cost tips to save energy.

- * Install a programable thermostat to keep your house comfortably warm in the winter and comfortably cool in the summer.

- * Use compact fluorescent light bulbs with the [ENERGY STAR®](#) label.
- * Air dry dishes instead of using your dishwasher's drying cycle.
- * Turn off your computer and monitor when not in use.
- * Plug home electronics, such as TVs and DVD players, into power strips; turn the power strips off when the equipment is not in use (TVs and DVDs in standby mode still use several watts of power).
- * Lower the thermostat on your hot water heater to 120°F.
- * Take short showers instead of baths.

- * Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes.
- * Drive sensibly. Aggressive driving (speeding, rapid acceleration and braking) wastes gasoline.
- * Look for the ENERGY STAR label on home appliances and products. ENERGY STAR products meet strict efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency.
- * Visit www.energysavers.gov/ for more energy-saving ideas.



Heating and Cooling Tips

- Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable in the winter and as high as is comfortable in the summer.
- Clean or replace filters on furnaces once a month or as needed.
- Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators as needed; make sure they're not blocked by furniture, carpeting, or drapes.
- Bleed trapped air from hot-water radiators once or twice a season; if in doubt about how to perform this task, call a professional.
- Place heat-resistant radiator reflectors between exterior walls and the radiators.
- Turn off kitchen, bath, and other exhaust fans within 20 minutes after you are done cooking or bathing; when replacing exhaust fans, consider installing high-efficiency, low-noise models.
- During the heating season, keep the draperies and shades on your south-facing windows open during the day to allow the sunlight to enter your home and closed at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold windows.
- During the cooling season, keep the window coverings closed during the day to prevent solar gain.

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