

The Components of Your House

We recognize that it is impossible to anticipate and/or describe every item in your house that needs maintenance for good house care; however we have covered many important details. The subjects covered include major components of your house, listed in alphabetical order. Not all of the items listed are found in every SJCS house.

Air Return Vents

- Location: On the first and second floors
- Purpose: Circulates air back down to the heating and cooling unit
- Maintenance: Dust will build up, simply vacuum off the dust as it appears, adjustable registers in the house allow you to establish the best flow of heat and air for your lifestyle



Bathroom

- Location: On the first and second floors
- Maintenance: Shutoff valves, when needed
- There are water shutoff valves at each sink, toilet, and tub. These valves should only be tampered with in case of an emergency or if work needs to be done to the plumbing.



Brick

- Location: Exterior of the house (if applicable)
- Maintenance: Due to normal wear and tear the bricks will need to be “pointed” (repairing and filling in the mortar between the bricks) every few years



Cabinets

- Location: In the kitchen and the bathroom(s)
- Maintenance: Recommended cleaners include, but are not limited to, lemon oil, Liquid Gold, and Old English Furniture Polish, avoid paraffin-based spray or washing cabinets with water, as both will damage the luster of the finish, hinges may require lubricant to prevent “catching”, door height can be adjusted by loosening and retightening the screws that attach the hinge to the door



Caulking

- Location: In the bathroom(s), kitchen, and around windows
- Maintenance: Due to normal wear and tear some caulking may need to be replaced, it is recommended that silicone caulk is used in areas where water is present and latex caulk should be used in areas that require painting



Compressor

- Location: Outside of the house in the back or side yard
- Purpose: Part of the air conditioning system to cool the interior of the house
- Maintenance:
 - Don't plant anything close to it, the space around it must be left accessible
 - It has an electrical disconnect switch that should only be used for air conditioner maintenance
 - It is advised that a lock be purchased to protect the electrical disconnect switch
 - Purchasing a cover to protect the equipment during the winter will keep the compressor in better shape, though a cover is not necessary
 - The compressor shutoff switch should be used only for service purposes; there is a breaker switch in the basement that should be used for the purposes of turning the air conditioning on and off



Concrete

- Location: Outside of the house in the front, back, and/or side yards
- Maintenance: Use calcium to melt ice, do not use salt, salt will gradually deteriorate the concrete



Condensation Vents:



- Location: Outside of the house
- Purpose: To take air in and out of the basement mechanical systems
- Maintenance: Do not block the vent at any time

Doors

- Location: Interior and exterior doors
- Maintenance: Wood products are subject to the natural characteristics of wood such as shrinkage and warpage caused by humidity and dryness, if locks need lubrication utilize graphite do not use waxes or oil



Drywall

- Location: Throughout the house
- Maintenance: Cracking and nail pops may become visible in the walls and ceilings that are caused by humidity and the house “settling”, repairs can be made with two or three thin coats of spackle followed by paint when dry



Electric Panel Box

- Location: In the basement
- Purpose: Includes a main shutoff that controls all of the electrical power to the house
- Maintenance: Labeled according to the location in the house and/or the appliance



Exhaust Fans

- Location: In the bathroom(s)
- Purpose: To remove unpleasant odors or moisture from the room
- Maintenance: Always utilize the exhaust fan while showering to avoid moisture build up and condensation leaks, clean the dust as needed



Furnace

- Location: In the basement
- Purpose: Heating the house
- Maintenance:
 - Electric ignition
 - Filter should be changed every month
 - To replace filter pull up, slide metal, and remove filter
 - Upon moving in become familiar with the size of the existing filter for eventual replacement
 - The black condensation bin that is mounted to the furnace should be cleaned once a year



Flooring

- Location: Throughout the house
- Maintenance:



- Tile: Vacuum or sweep regularly, individual tiles may crack over time due to the settling of the house, grout should be resealed yearly or as recommended by the product manufacturer



- Carpet: Vacuuming high traffic areas will keep the carpet clean and will also maintain the upright position of the fibers, always dab at spills, never rub it, professional or steam cleaning should be performed annually



- Wood: The wooden floors have a satin finish and should be cleaned with Murphy's soap oil, if the floor is scratched Minwax polyurethane can be used to touch up the scratched area(s), seasonal movement is a normal characteristic of wood flooring and it never stops regardless of the age of the wood

GFI (Ground Fault Protected)



- Location: In the bathroom(s) and the kitchen (Note: the outlets in the front and back yards of the house are GFI protected)
- Purpose: It regulates electrical flow from the sockets
- Maintenance: When socket does not work push the button to reset, if the light is on it is not set

Gas Meter

- Location: In the basement (there is no external reader, it must be read from inside)
- Gas Shutoff: There is a gas shutoff near the connection of each item that operates on it in the house, there is also a main shutoff at the meter, if you suspect a gas leak leave the house immediately and call the gas company for emergency service



Grass

- Location: Outside of the house in the front, back, and/or side yards
- Maintenance: Water every other day when it is not raining to help the grass grow, straw will disappear with mowing (straw holds moisture)



Gutters and Downspouts

- Location: Mounted on the exterior walls of the house
- Purpose: To collect rain and other debris that land on the roof
- Maintenance: It is advisable that they be cleaned twice a year to prevent clogging and buildup of leaves and debris



Hot Water Heater



- Location: In the basement
- Maintenance: If the unit needs service notify the repairman that they are gas direct vent and they do not have a pilot light, the default setting when you move into your house is 120 degrees and increasing that temperature can be dangerous for small children,

Kitchen

- Location: First floor of the house
- Maintenance:
 - Kitchen Sink: under the sink is the water shutoff valve for plumbing needs
 - Countertops: Protect the counters from extreme heat and utilize cutting boards to prevent damage to the surface
 - Gas Stove: Turn on the exhaust hood before turning on the stove or oven to vent any gas fumes, turn off burners and oven when not in use, do not use the oven in place of the furnace to heat your house, clean the stove after each use
 - Range Hood: Clean the surfaces when used and replace or clean the filter as needed
 - Refrigerator: Vacuum or dust the evaporator coil located behind or underneath the refrigerator at least once a year
 - All appliances come with warranty cards that should be filled out and mailed in, failure to do this may result in the negation of your warranty



Light Fixtures

- Location: On the ceilings throughout the house
- Type: CFL bulbs utilized throughout



Plumbing



- Location: Throughout the house
- Maintenance: The main water shutoff is in the basement and it is important to know the location of the shutoff for emergencies, heat should be set no lower than 55 degrees Fahrenheit if you will be away for an extended period of time to prevent the freezing of pipes

Roof



- Location: On top of the house
- Maintenance: Flat roofs should be silver coated every other year, do not walk on your roof unless it is absolutely necessary, you should always call a roofer to complete any necessary repairs or maintenance

Security Alarm



- Location: At the front door (if provided)
- Maintenance: Please call the security alarm company in order to activate service



Siding

- Location: Exterior of the house (if applicable)
- Maintenance: The siding should be cleaned by the use of a pressure washer when it appears dirty, grimy, or moldy – wash from the bottom up to prevent streaking



Smoke Detector/Carbon Monoxide Detector

- Location: In the basement as well as all floors in the house
- Purpose: All smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are hard wired into the electrical system
- Maintenance: Whenever battery chirps it should be replaced, there is a battery backup that should be replaced during daylight savings time



Sump Pump



- Location: In the basement (if provided)
- Purpose: Functions to reduce the amount of water penetration into basement by pumping out of the house
- Maintenance: Do not allow debris to fall into the sump pump or its pit

Telephone/Cable Lines



- Location: The lines are prewired throughout the house; the wires terminate in the basement in two bundles of gray and black colored wires (gray: telephone) (black: cable)
- To activate service the homeowner must contact a service provider for rates and installation

Thermostat



- Location: Inside the premises on the first floor
- Purpose: To regulate the temperature in the house
- Maintenance: This device is programmable, the air conditioner works more efficiently when left on the automatic setting (do not turn it on and off repeatedly, it will short circuit your compressor)

Toilets

- Location: In the bathroom(s)
- Maintenance: Overflowing or clogged toilets are to be avoided by never flushing hair, grease, lint, diapers, sanitary products, etc. down the toilet



Washer and Dryer Hookups



- Location: In the basement or the first floor
- Purpose: The dryer hookup is specifically for a gas dryer and it is not equipped for an electric dryer, the dryer vent connection is installed to make installation of the vent hose easier, there is a hot and cold water connection for the washer machine and a waste line

Water Spigot



- Location: Outside of the house in the front, back, and/or side yards
- Maintenance: The valves should be shutoff in the winter from inside the basement

Windows

- Location: Throughout the house
- Description: All of the windows are vinyl, if your house is in a historic area there will be historic approved wooden windows all street facing sides of the house
- Maintenance: To access the exterior of the window first open the window slightly and push back the snaps on either side of the window then tilt the top and bottom sashes inward

