

## Tips on how to help reduce shrinkage in your new home

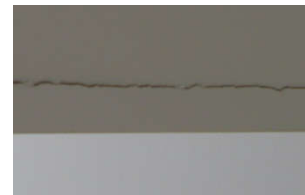
A lot of water goes into the build of a new home (traditional or timber frame) and it has also been open to the weather elements during the build process. These combined factors together with the use of various building materials and the customer's lifestyle (sleeping, breathing, showering, cooking etc) can result in some minor shrinkage appearing in the new home during the first 12-18 months of occupation.



Small circular marks where screws slightly break the painted surfaces (ie timber stud partitions, dormer windows, ceilings etc) may sometimes occur as well, which is quite normal in a new home.

Normal shrinkage is anything below the width of a pound coin - most shrinkage looks like pencil line marks and is the responsibility of the home owner to tidy

up when decorating at a later time. The same with the odd few circular screw marks; this is also the responsibility of the home owner.



If in the unlikely event a pound coin can be fitted in any shrinkage cracks (c 3mm) or there appear more than 5-6 circular screw marks in any one room (in a continuous row or cluster), then this will be looked at with a view to possibly rectifying (stairs are the most common areas for larger shrinkage cracks).

Shrinkage can occur in many places:

- Around door frames and mitres/architraves
- Around skirting boards
- Around windows particularly those with radiators under them
- Sockets/switch covers may become loose
- Ceiling and wall joints
- Taped joints above doors
- Where two different materials meet
- The staircase and around it – string area (this can sometimes be slightly more than normal)
- Bath sealant and shower surrounds

In order to help reduce shrinkage and keep it to the absolute minimum, we recommend you do the following:

- Do not over-heat the house or subject it to big swings in temperature especially during the winter months – keep heating constant and avoid fluctuations in temperature throughout the property
- Keep trickle vents open all the time to keep the home well ventilated

- Ensure passive vent, comfort cooling, dry-master, Envirovent, Vent Axia or heat recovery systems are working all the time (where fitted)
- Open windows on the night latch setting to increase ventilation especially at night time in bedrooms (where fitted)
- Open windows when possible
- Keep blinds and curtains open to avoid trapped air and condensation occurring
- Wipe any condensation off windows to avoid mould forming
- Wipe condensation of toilet cisterns
- Keep cupboard doors slightly open, ie wardrobes to allow air to circulate and avoid the possibility of mould occurring in corners. Don't over-pack with clothes and shoes especially tight in the corners and avoid putting plastic bags or items or dry cleaning bags in cupboards
- Keep en-suite doors closed when showering
- Use extractor fans where fitted and allow over-runs
- Use fan boosters where fitted
- Avoid putting damp or wet clothes over radiators
- Keep main room doors open to create a flow of air throughout the home (**BUT NOT FIRE DOORS**)
- Keep furniture away from walls slightly to allow a flow of air round it
- Keep pictures slightly away from the walls to avoid any moisture getting into them, ie corking or tissue paper on the underside of them
- The paint finish is designed to help your new home breathe and dry out gradually so we would recommend you avoid decorating for 12 months especially with vinyl paints and wallpapers which can trap moisture in the walls and means that the home can take longer to dry out. It may also result in paint bubbling and wallpaper peeling
- Where heat recovery systems are fitted (ensure that any trickle vents are closed, windows and doors closed) so that the system can work effectively
- Keep any underfloor heating on all the time (where fitted)

We recommend that any normal shrinkage that does occur (less than 3mm) is not tidied for at least 9-12 months as it will re-occur if done after a month or so. Most shrinkage can be covered by paint when decorating, however, decorators caulking and flexible filler can be used to fill the shrinkage prior to decorating, if needed. Any DIY store will be able to give advice on what products to use.

Any cause for concern can be addressed to the customer services team.