



**Healthy Home  
Operations and Maintenance Guide  
for staff and residents of  
Kinship House**

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Cleveland OH 44120**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION and ORIENTATION**

**Welcome to Kinship House and Kinship Village.**

**Kinship Village is a planned, older adult community in the Larchmere neighborhood, designed both to promote successful aging for all and offer a supportive environment for older adults raising children (kinship caregivers).**

**Kinship House is a nine-unit apartment building designated especially for kinship families and older adult volunteers.**

**All older adult residents of Kinship House or the adjacent townhomes are expected to volunteer at least 8 hours per week to promote the well-being of the community.**

**This guide is intended to help residents efficiently and effectively promote economic and environmental sustainability of the community.**

*In addition to this guide, you have a set of owner's manuals for the appliances in your apartment or townhome. Please keep those manuals handy and refer to them for information on operating and maintaining your appliances. Please request additional copies of those manuals from the Property Manager as needed. If anything breaks in your apartment or townhome, or if you need some other type of maintenance or repair help, please call or go to the office to request help from the Property Manager.*

## II. HOW TO KEEP YOUR HOME CLEAN AND HEALTHY

### ***A. Housekeeping and Cleaning***

It's important to take care of your home, to keep it clean and pest-free, using safe products, in order to help protect your health and maintain a pleasant living environment for all those in Kinship Village. Here are some recommendations on general housekeeping practices, cleaning products, and clothes cleaning.

#### General Housekeeping Tips

- Sweep the floors of your apartment or townhome regularly (preferably at least once a week), and mop the hard surface flooring whenever it starts to get dirty or sticky.
- Vacuum the carpet regularly. Dirt and dust get trapped in carpet, and they can trigger allergy symptoms and asthma.
- Wash any dirty dishes daily and clean kitchen surfaces with a damp cloth whenever they are dirty.
- If water or any liquid is spilled on the carpet, sop it up immediately with a dry towel or rag. Mildew and mold can develop in carpeting that stays wet too long.
- Wipe up any puddles of water from your bathroom or kitchen floor.
- If your toilet overflows and you can't get it to stop, report it to management staff immediately.

- If you see discoloration on surfaces (white, orange, green, brown, or black), see cracked or discolored grout, or smell a musty odor, it might be mold or mildew. Clean with baking soda or borax. If the discoloration does not go away or gets worse, notify the building maintenance/management staff, as mold can cause serious health problems if it is not removed.
- Open the window whenever there are odors, fumes from cleaning products or other chemicals, or excess moisture in your apartment or townhome. Also, use a fan to help air out the room.
- When you are using your stove, turn on the exhaust fan in the kitchen ceiling to remove any smoke or odors.
- Clean the filter on your microwave oven monthly, per operating instructions booklet. If you have questions about how to clean the filter, please ask the maintenance staff.
- Don't use bristle brushes or other abrasive products when cleaning, as they can leave scratch marks.
- Throw out and replace used sponges and cloths/rags if they're dirty or smelly.
- When using a cleaning product, read its label and follow the instructions for using and storing the product.
- Don't mix different cleaning products together (unless specifically recommended or unless they are benign, non-reactive, non-toxic substances).
- If you need to dispose of a container of a chemical cleaning product that is not completely used up, it should be taken to the city's hazardous waste facility. (See the next section on Trash and Recycling for more information on hazardous materials disposal.)

- Glues, adhesives, paints, and other household products often contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which contribute to indoor air pollution (as well as to outdoor smog). Try to choose products that are labeled as “low-VOC” or “non-toxic,” whenever possible.

## ***B. Cleaning Products***

Cleaning your home is important because it helps remove harmful contaminants, such as mold and bacteria. Many conventional cleaning products can also cause health problems. The use of toxic cleaning products can be a particular problem for people who have health conditions such as asthma or allergies or who have chemical sensitivities or weak immune systems. Some cleaning products can cause headaches, dizziness, skin irritation, respiratory irritation and asthma, eye irritation or worse; some contain cancer-causing substances, reproductive toxins, central nervous system toxins, and endocrine system/hormone disruptors.

Fortunately, many alternative, non-toxic cleaning products are now available. And you can find some good, inexpensive products that aren't even located in the cleaning products aisle at the store. Some very basic and multi-purpose household substances can be used as safe and effective alternative cleaning solutions for most household cleaning jobs. These substances include baking soda, white vinegar, lemon juice, and salt, as well as hydrogen peroxide and borax. Borax and baking soda are especially useful household products that can be used for a variety of purposes. For example, baking soda will clean and deodorize all kitchen and bathroom surfaces (just dissolve a few tablespoons in some warm water, or use the baking soda directly on a damp sponge). A combination of baking soda, hot water, and vinegar can clear drains. Borax, baking soda, or hydrogen peroxide can remove stains and mildew. Alternatively, using a mild soap (such as dishwashing detergent or a liquid soap) with some water will clean most surfaces adequately.

Here is one recipe for a non-toxic, all-purpose cleaner (for cleaning countertops, floors, walls, etc.). These ingredients can be used separately, as well:

- 1 quart warm water
- 1 teaspoon liquid soap
- 1 teaspoon borax
- ½ cup undiluted white vinegar

Mix ingredients and store in a spray bottle.

If you're selecting a more conventional cleaning product (from the cleaning products aisle) at the store, look for products that are labeled as non-toxic, low VOC or zero VOC, and/or biodegradable. Also look for unscented products (some people are allergic to certain fragrances) and products with recyclable packaging/containers.

*Products to avoid:*

Avoid the use of chlorine bleach unless it's absolutely necessary to use such a strong disinfectant. Hydrogen peroxide is a good alternative to chlorine bleach. *Never* use undiluted chlorine bleach or ammonia; both of these can cause major respiratory irritation. Also avoid most "anti-bacterial" and "anti-microbial" products. Use of such products can cause germs to become resistant to antibiotics.

Read product labels, including the small print. As a general rule, you should avoid all products that are labeled "Danger—Poison." (Products with "Warning" labels are also dangerous, but less so, and products labeled with "Caution" are the least harmful of the three, though they can still be hazardous.) Also avoid products that are labeled as "Corrosive," "Severely Irritating," "Highly Flammable," or "Highly Combustible." And avoid aerosols when possible; they often contain flammable substances that can contribute to indoor air quality problems.

Avoid using most “air freshener” products, especially if their labels say that they contain para-dichlorobenzene. Ingredients like this can cause headaches and other health problems. Also avoid using mothballs. Instead, store wool items in plastic bags or airtight containers, and if there is a moth problem, you can kill the moth eggs by washing the affected garments in hot water or putting them in the freezer for a few days.

### ***C. Clothes Cleaning***

The building’s laundry room is in the basement, except for the handicapped accessible unit. This information also applies if your apartment or townhome includes a washer/dryer hookup.

Before you move into your new apartment or townhome, you should wash all of your clothes (and any bedding or other fabrics you’re bringing). If the items are dirty, choose the hot water setting on the washing machine, to kill germs. Once you’ve moved in, wash your clothes and bedding regularly: either whenever you are starting to run out of clean clothes to wear, or whenever you have a full load of dirty laundry to clean, whichever comes first. When your laundry items are only slightly dirty, you can select the cold or warm water setting (this saves energy).

Choose a laundry detergent that is labeled as phosphate-free, biodegradable, and/or non-toxic. Also consider selecting an unscented product. Examples of such products include borax and Arm & Hammer’s Washing Soda. Only a small amount of detergent is necessary. Do not use more than the amount recommended in the instructions on the box/container.

When you have finished drying your clothes, please clean the lint out of the dryer’s lint filter. This will help the dryer work better for the next person who uses it (and it also prevents the lint from becoming a fire hazard).



### III. TRASH AND RECYCLING

Recycling is encouraged. Please put all recyclable materials in a can or bag, separated from the trash. Before putting recyclable bottles and cans into a bin, please rinse them out with water, so that they don't attract pests.

At least once a week, or every evening if there are any pets in your apartment or townhome, you should deposit your trash in the collection center. You should wash out your recycling can and trash can as often as necessary to remove sticky residue that might attract pests.

Materials that **cannot** be recycled include: juice boxes, light bulbs, Styrofoam, ceramic dishes, coat hangers, waxed cardboard, mirrors, and window glass. Do not put these types of items or any trash into recycling bins.

All of the recyclables listed above can be put into the main recycling bin of the campus. Items do not need to be separated according to the different types of recyclable materials. They just need to be kept separate from garbage.

If you collect plastic bags in a large plastic bag, many supermarkets will accept them for recycling.

### IV. HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL

Hazardous waste materials may not be thrown in the garbage. They must be dropped off at the appropriate city facility for safe disposal or recycling, so that they don't contribute to contamination of the air, water, or soil.

Hazardous waste materials include:

- chemical cleaning supplies
- batteries (all types)

- fluorescent lamps/light bulbs
- paint, paint thinners, primers, stains and other finishes
- toxic glues and adhesives
- medical/biohazard waste (including needles)
- pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizer
- computers, TVs, and other electronic equipment
- printer/copier ink/toner
- used motor oil
- compressed gases

These and most other hazardous materials can also be dropped off at a neighborhood recycling center. If you have hazardous materials to dispose of and cannot arrange to drop them off at this facility, let the Property Manager know so that another arrangement can be made for the proper disposal of the material.

## **V. PEST CONTROL**

It is important to keep your apartment or townhome free of pests (such as cockroaches, rodents, etc.), as pests can carry disease. If you find bugs, ants, rodents, or other pests in your rental unit, report it to the building's maintenance staff right away.

Please do not use toxic pesticide products, such as Raid spray. Most pesticides are poisons, and they are often poisonous to humans, as well as to pests. Studies have linked some pesticides to cancer, birth defects, neurological disorders, and immune system disorders, as well as allergies.

Pesticides should only be used as a last resort and in very small amounts. As a general rule, avoid products that are labeled "Danger—Poison." If ants are in your apartment or townhome, try sprinkling borax where they are coming in; ants do not like boric acid. If you decide that you must use some chemical pest control products, consider using only baits (for cockroaches and ants). For rodents, traps should be used rather than poisons. Building management staff should be able to help you with these issues.

The best strategy is to keep pests from coming into your apartment or townhome in the first place, rather than having to get rid of them later. Many pests are attracted by grease, sweets, food, and standing water. If your apartment or townhome is clean and dry, it isn't likely that pests will want to live there. The following are some specific steps you can take to keep pests from finding food, water, or hiding places in your apartment or townhome.

### ***A. Pest Prevention Tips***

- Clean up any open, unsealed food, or crumbs. Wrap leftover food completely or place in a tightly sealed container in the refrigerator, or a closed cabinet.
- Do not leave dirty dishes out overnight.
- Clean up spills or sticky substances from all floors and surfaces.
- Keep your kitchen clean (counters, cabinets, sink, floors, stove, microwave, etc.). Clean up any grease with soapy water, and dry off any wet areas.
- Sweep, mop, and vacuum regularly.
- Rinse bottles, cans, and containers before putting them in the recycling bins. Clean out the recycling bins to remove sticky residue.
- Take your garbage and recyclables to the trash collection center at least once a week (or every evening, if there are any pests in your apartment or townhome).
- Minimize clutter and paper piles that can provide hiding places for pests.
- If you notice any water leaks or moisture-damaged materials in your apartment or townhome, report the issue to building maintenance staff immediately.

### ***B. Bed Bug Prevention and Control***

“Bed bugs” are small, nocturnal insects that feed on blood. They are about 1/4-inch long and 1/8-inch wide. They have

flat, reddish-brown bodies with six legs, and after feeding, they become round and red. They give off a sweet, musty odor. Their eggs are white and very small, and their excrement appears as tiny brown or black spots. Bed bugs are typically found on mattresses, box springs and bed frames, clothing, bedding, furniture, or in any dark cracks, seams, or crevices in walls or floors. They can travel through water pipes, wall voids, and ducts, and can spread from room to room. Some people who are bitten by them get itchy welts on their skin.

It is critical to prevent bed bugs from being brought into the building. Here are some rules for prevention, as well as tips for getting rid of them if they do appear.

### *Preventing the Introduction of Bed Bugs*

- Before you move in and bring clothing and bedding into your new apartment or townhome, wash the items in hot, soapy water and dry them on the hottest dryer setting. Freezing the materials (at less than zero degrees for several days) is also known to kill bed bugs; ask building management whether this is an option.
- When bedding is brought into the building for washing or is removed from your unit, seal the items (e.g., sheets, blankets, pillows, and pillow cases) in a plastic bag before transporting them into or through the building, to avoid spreading the infestation to other areas.
- Used mattresses and bed frames are not allowed into the building, unless the Property Manager is certain that they do not harbor bed bugs.

- If a mattress is provided in your unit, it is encased in a permanent plastic covering, to prevent bug infestations. If you notice that the plastic covering is torn, please notify the building management staff.
- Eliminate excess clutter (particularly near beds and clothes), to reduce the number of places where the bugs can hide.

### *Getting Rid of Bed Bugs*

- Wash any infested bedding or clothing with hot, soapy water and dry it on the hottest dryer setting.
- Use hot, soapy water or rubbing alcohol to wipe surfaces where the bugs are living.
- Vacuum cracks, crevices, and other hiding places in walls, floors, and furniture where adult bed bugs or eggs are found. Dispose of the vacuum contents in a sealed trash bag.
- If a mattress with bed bugs on it is torn and/or infested, it will probably need to be thrown out, as the bugs can live inside the mattress where they can't be reached. Do not treat mattresses with insecticides (unless the Property Manager can verify that the treatment is non-toxic to humans).
- Eliminate excess clutter (particularly near beds and clothes), to reduce the number of places where the bugs can hide.
- Have building maintenance staff seal up any cracks where the bugs are living.

## **VI. SMOKING POLICY**

Smoking is not allowed anywhere inside the buildings or on the grounds, except the designated outdoor smoking area in the northwest parking lot. Smoking elsewhere on the campus is grounds for lease termination and eviction.

In the designated smoking area, you must dispose of cigarette butts in the designated container.

## **VII. HOW TO SAVE ENERGY AND WATER**

Conserving energy and water resources benefits the environment in a variety of ways. For example, using less electricity reduces power plant emissions (from burning fossil fuels), which reduces air and water pollution, and helps protect everyone's health.

In addition, the less energy and water used in the building, the less money the building owner will have to pay for these utilities. The more money the owner saves on utility bills, the more funding will be available to support services and programs that could benefit you and the other residents of the building.

### **Saving Energy**

#### **A. LIGHTS**

- Turn off lights (and any electronic equipment) whenever you're leaving your apartment or townhome or when you do not need them to be on.

- Be careful not to break the fluorescent bulbs. They contain small amounts of mercury, which is a hazardous substance. Do not throw away fluorescent light bulbs. Building staff will take them to the city's hazardous waste facility for proper disposal.
- If you are going to bring lamp(s) into your apartment or townhome, avoid using halogen lamps. Not only are halogen lamps major energy wasters, but they also pose a significant fire hazard.

## ***B. HEAT***

- Make sure that the temperature in your apartment or townhome is comfortable and the thermostat is not set too high. During cool months, usually the highest temperature that a thermostat needs to be set for is 68-69 degrees. It should be set at a lower temperature or turned off when you are not at home, during warm times of the year, and at night. If the building temperature is too hot or cold (or if your heating will not turn off), notify the building management.
- Do not leave the heat on when you have the window open, or open the window when you have the heat on. Heating and cooling the room at the same time wastes energy.
- Keep your heating/cooling registers clean and dusted.
- Do not place furniture next to the registers, as that can block the heat from entering the rest of the room.

### **C.OTHER**

- Clean the dust off your refrigerator coils twice a year. (Remove the grill at the bottom of the refrigerator and clean the coils in front and back; pull the refrigerator out to sweep and dust behind it.) If you would like to be shown how to do this, or if your refrigerator is not working properly, contact building maintenance staff.
  
- In the laundry room, clean out lint from dryer lint filters before or after each load of laundry. This helps the machines run more efficiently and prevents the lint from becoming a fire hazard.

### **D.WATER**

- When using a sink or the shower, don't run the faucet longer than is necessary for your task. When you turn a faucet off, make sure that it is all the way off.
  
- If you hear the sound of dripping or trickling water in your apartment or townhome, or notice that your faucets are leaking or your toilet is running too long after it has been flushed and you can't get it to stop, notify the building's maintenance staff right away so that they can fix the leak.
  
- Try not to take really long showers. Keep shower time to 10 minutes or less.
  
- When using the clothes washer, try to clean fairly full loads. When you must wash a smaller load, select a light-load setting, to use less water than would be used for a full load.



## VIII. GREEN MATERIALS AND SYSTEMS

This is a summary list of some of the green materials, finishes, furnishings, systems, equipment, and appliances that are featured in this building.

### *In the apartment or townhome units*

- Carpet
- Flooring
- Paint
- Refrigerator
- Showerhead
- Toilet

### *In other parts of the building*

- Carpet
- Flooring
- Insulation
- Lighting
- Paint: No-VOC, low-odor
- Windows
- The geothermal heating and cooling system

## IX. QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR STAFF AND RESIDENTS

Recommended Tips and Techniques for keeping your apartment or townhome and Fairhill Partners environmentally sensitive and sustainable.

\*Building maintenance staff will complete these items.

Sustainable living maintenance responsibilities		When to do the work				Every Few Years
		Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	
<b>Indoor Pollutants</b>						
1	Check/Replace batteries in carbon monoxide alarms*					
2	Clean or replace walk-off mats*		●			
3	Vacuum all carpets at least weekly, clean annually	●	●	●	●	
<b>Exterior Structure</b>						
4	Clean debris from gutters and downspouts*		●		●	
5	Remove excess snow from roof to prevent ice dams*	●				
6	Inspect basement/crawl space for seepage/leakage*		●			
7	Check / repair roofing and flashing for signs of wear or damage*		●		●	
8	Check / repair all cracked or missing exterior caulking*			●		
9	Check / repair air leakage inside: replace weather-stripping*					●
10	Check /repair damaged shingles*			●		
<b>Interior Durability and Finishes</b>						
11	Check /repair caulking/grout in and around showers/baths			●		
12	If paint is needed, use only low emission paint					●
<b>Lighting and Appliances</b>						
13	If replacing lights, use only ENERGY STAR labeled lighting					●
14	Check if exterior automated lighting controls are working*		●		●	
15	Use power strip to reduce phantom loads from chargers, TV, etc.					●
16	Clean lint screen and dryer vent	●	●	●	●	
17	If replacing appliances, use only ENERGY STAR labeled equipment					●

Sustainable living maintenance responsibilities		Season				Every Few Years
		Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	
<b>Heating, Cooling, and Ventilation Systems</b>						
18	Clean or replace furnace filter*	●		●		
19	Adjust thermostat for season change	●	●	●	●	
20	Have air conditioner and heating system serviced*					●
21	Remove leaves, debris around air conditioning condenser*				●	
22	Clean in and around grills and registers; vacuum inside of ducts*					●
23	Check / adjust humidity levels; Air out damp basement*	●	●	●	●	
24	Check that roof/soffit vents are open and debris-free if vented*				●	
25	Check/clean mechanical ventilation system*	●	●	●	●	
26	Check that exhaust fans are clean, unobstructed and working, including in the kitchen & bathrooms	●				
27	Check / clean air intakes and exhausts for debris*	●	●			
<b>Plumbing</b>						
28	Fix leaks immediately in pipes, appliances, etc.*	●	●	●	●	
29	Prevent pipe freezes: Turn off outdoor faucets*	●				
30	Keep water heater temperature at 120F*	●	●	●	●	
31	Check hot water heater for mineral buildup; drain, and refill*					●
<b>Your Yard</b>						
32	Check landscaping sprinklers to ensure proper flow		●			
33	Check that landscaping sprinklers do not spray on home		●			
34	Maintain landscaping to assure ongoing permeability					●
35	Keep drain system functional and make sure ground slopes away from building are maintained. *		●		●	
36	Disconnect all outside hoses by mid-November or sooner if hard freeze is predicted (< 20 degrees F)*					
37	Avoid damaging de-icers*	●				
38	Do not plant within 24" of the building			●		
39	Avoid toxic chemicals for pest control and chemical fertilizer	●	●	●	●	

## X. RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION ON GREEN HOUSING

[www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)

(general use)

<http://www.usgbc.org/leed/homes>

(specific information pertaining to LEED for homes)

<http://greenhomeguide.com/>

(general information about green home living)