



Home warranty basics

What a residential systems-and-appliances plan may cover - and what to check before buying.

Start with the agreement. A home warranty is a service contract that may help pay for eligible repairs or replacements of covered systems and appliances when they break down from covered causes, often normal wear and tear. It is not homeowners insurance or a substitute for a home inspection. [1, 2]

What may be covered

Home systems

Covered parts of heating and air conditioning, electrical and plumbing systems, and water heaters may be included. A systems-only plan may exclude appliances. [3]

Household appliances

Plans may include refrigerators, ovens/ranges, dishwashers, built-in microwaves, washers, and dryers. Coverage is for specified components and qualifying breakdowns, not everything about an appliance. [3]

Optional coverage

Pools/spas, well pumps, septic equipment, extra refrigerators, or limited roof-leak repairs may require an add-on or higher plan. Inclusion and payout limits vary. Ask about each item in your home. [4]

Common exclusions and limits

Items not listed in the plan; cosmetic damage; misuse; and some pre-existing conditions may be excluded. Some plans cover certain installation or maintenance problems while others exclude them. Do not assume the same rules apply across companies. [2, 5]

Structural defects, walls, windows, doors, and full roof replacement are generally outside systems-and-appliances coverage. Damage from fire, storms, floods, pests, and consequential losses such as flooring ruined by a leak may be excluded. Limited roof-leak coverage is not a new roof. [4, 5]

This guide addresses existing-home systems/appliance service contracts. New-construction structural or builder warranties are separate products, including those offered by 2-10. [3]



How coverage works

Your cost is more than the plan price

Compare the premium, service-call fee or deductible, per-item and total payout limits, and charges for non-covered work. A covered breakdown can still leave you with out-of-pocket costs. Ask about permits, code upgrades, access/restoration, refrigerant, disposal, and modifications. [1, 4]

A typical service request

1 / Confirm the plan is active

Check the effective date, any waiting period, selected options, and cancellation or renewal terms. Real-estate purchase plans and plans bought later may start differently. [2]

2 / Contact the warranty company first

Follow its service-request process and authorization rules before hiring your own contractor or approving work. Ask how the service fee is charged and whether it applies if a claim is denied. [2, 3]

3 / Diagnosis and coverage decision

The assigned provider evaluates the problem; the warranty company applies the agreement to decide coverage. Ask about repair versus replacement, any cash alternative, and your responsibility for excluded costs. [2, 3]

4 / Keep records and follow up

Save the agreement, request number, diagnosis, invoices, photos, and correspondence. Confirm any workmanship guarantee and how to request review of a denial or unresolved repair. [2]

Before purchasing: Request the current agreement for your state, property, and plan. Confirm contractor availability, service timing, coverage caps, exclusions, start date, and renewal/cancellation rules. A warranty does not guarantee immediate service, a particular replacement, or payment of every claim.

Reference links

- [1. Old Republic: Home warranty overview](#)
- [3. 2-10: Coverage and service overview](#)
- [5. 2-10: Common exclusions](#)

- [2. American Home Shield: FAQs](#)
- [4. Cinch: Plans and coverage](#)
- [Read a 2-10 sample agreement](#)