

A "SNOWBIRD'S" CHECKLIST FOR LEAVING YOUR HOME FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME

While every attempt has been made to make the following information helpful, relative and accurate, responsibility and risk for the use of this data rests with you, the homeowner. The information provided below is a suggestion only.

Item No.		Leaving ✓	Return ✓
1	Move patio furniture indoors. Bring in anything located outdoors that may blow around in a heavy wind storm.		
2	Lock patio doors. Install wood dowel in tracks to restrain sliding doors and windows.		
3	Properly dispose of any bags of garbage. Spray waste baskets and garbage cans with Lysol or other disinfectant spray.		
4	Dispose of items that have accumulated over the winter. Recycle those newspapers, bottles and aluminum cans. Take unwanted clothes to Goodwill or some other worthy organization.		
5	Stop mail or have it forwarded. Cancel newspaper subscriptions. Ask neighbors to remove any newspapers, periodicals, etc., being placed in your entryway or front porch while you are away.		
6	Remove the vacuum cleaner bag and replace with a fresh one. Replace any water filters with clean ones.		
7	Clean outdoor grill.		
8	Notify your neighbors and, if you live in a community, notify management. Give them a departure date and estimated return date. Ask several neighbors to keep an eye on your home. Make sure that at least one (better to have two or more) has keys. Ask one to check on the inside occasionally for leaks, infestations and burglaries.		
9	Turn off the water at the main shutoff. Some residents secure the valve in the "Off" position using a padlock or other device. You can also remove the handle, so it may only be operated using a wrench.		
10	Inspect or have inspected your roof for damage or leaks.		
11	Make sure your air conditioner is working properly and in good condition. Install a new air filter or clean your permanent filter. Set the thermostat at 85 degrees. (This is the recommended setting by A/C contractors.) We want to do whatever we can to avoid mold.		
12	Have your air conditioner condensation line blown out or flushed out by a professional. Algae and other debris can accumulate in this line, causing major water damage to the unit. The condensation line can be cleared by any plumber and should be done periodically if your air conditioner is used alot, but at least once per year. You should also check regularly to make sure that the condensation drain line is open. The drain is located near the foundation line of the building and can easily become clogged with dirt.		
13	If you have a humidistat (highly recommended by A/C contractors), set it at 60 percent.		
14	Some residents like to have a professional pest-control firm spray around the house before they leave. Others distribute the pesticide around the house themselves.		
15	You may want to shut off the gas main, but relighting the furnace and hot water tank may require help from the utility company.		
16	Make sure the stove is off.		
17	Make sure any food items that could rot or draw bugs are thrown away.		
18	Clean your dishwasher thoroughly, paying attention to the edges of the door. Blot up any residual water in the bottom after you run your last load.		
19	Consider what to do regarding your phone. Some phone companies offer vacation service, which has the effect of disconnecting the phone but keeping the number active so it can be reinstated when you return. However, if you have a security system that automatically telephones the monitoring office when a breakin is detected, placing your phone on vacation mode disables that part of your system.		

20	Thoroughly clean all appliances. This means everything. Don't forget the toaster, blender, mixer, microwave oven, toaster oven, and range (including oven and broiler, as well as burners and drip pans). Any food particles or residue can attract pests.		
21	Remove all perishable food from refrigerator.		
22	There are two philosophies on what to do with the refrigerator. One is to leave it empty, unplugged, making sure the icemaker water supply is off, and prop the door open. The second idea is to turn the dial to the warmest temperature setting, turn off the icemaker and fill both the freezer and refrigerator with jugs of water. Some who use this method recommend placing a dish of either activated charcoal or baking soda inside to absorb odors. If you decide on this option do not turn off the circuit breaker.		
23	If you have candles and plan to leave your refrigerator on, place the candles in the fridge so they don't soften during the summer.		
24	Cover all sinks, toilet bowls, toilet tanks, and floor drains with plastic (Seran) wrap. This prevents water evaporating from the trap, allowing sewer gases into your home.		
25	Do not put bleach tablets in the toilet tank.		
26	Shut off the breaker for the hot water heater. Some water heaters also have a "Vacation" setting that you can use instead of turning it all the way off.		
27	Turn off water valves to washing machine, dishwasher, sinks, and toilets.		
28	Turn off breakers for all circuits not needing power.		
29	If leaving a car behind prepare it for long-term storage.		
30	Make sure the washing machine is fully drained so mold will not grow.		
31	Make sure all curtains and blinds are closed to prevent anyone from seeing inside, and to keep out as much sun and heat as possible.		
32	Unplug TV's, any small kitchen appliances, stereo, DVD player, computer, power strips, or anything that has a "Sleep" mode.		
33	Put a timer on at least one light, set to come on and off to make the home appear occupied. Ask neighbors to check the bulb and replace if it burns out. Remember to leave the breaker for that outlet turned on.		
34	Make sure all windows are closed and locked.		
35	Pull furniture away from the walls and pull out loose cushions on couches and chairs. This allows air circulation that will retard mold and mildew.		
36	Open all closet doors and dresser drawers so air circulates. Leave no clothes on wire hangers and none in garment bags, unless you leave them unzipped. Rust stains and mildew are often permanent.		
37	Some people recommend leaving ceiling fans on at the lowest setting, to promote air circulation.		
38	Place ant traps near piping or where pipe holes exist in the flooring or wall.		
39	Some people like to set out containers around the interior of the house with activated charcoal to absorb odors and moisture. It has also been recommended that cat litter in containers around the house will control moisture and odors.		
40	Check or have someone check your plumbing system for leaks. Look for wet areas or water stains in your kitchen, bathroom and laundry areas.		
41	Clean all floor coverings and all surfaces to ensure that no food particles or stains attract bugs or cause mildew.		
42	Unplug TV and internet cables.		
43	Cover furniture with dust covers.		
44	Turn on security system.		
45	Do not leave anything that does not like heat, such as candles, by a window.		
46	Remove batteries from remote controls, clocks, etc. Leave batteries next to the items from which they were removed. Upon your return, inspect the batteries for leaks before reinstalling them.		
47	Bring a list of important phone numbers local to your winter home, such as the management company, utility companies, and neighbors' phone numbers.		