

Checklist of things to do before leaving your home

This is a Summary of a checklist for Snow Birds leaving but many of the items apply to anyone leaving Riverwood for even a short period of time.

Three – Four weeks before departure

- Seek a Home Watch Company, trusted friend, or relative to check on your home periodically and act in your behalf. If you use a service, make sure they are bonded and insured.
- Make an appointment to have the air conditioning system serviced and filter changed (it is recommended to service an A/C unit at least once a year). If your unit requires the filter to be changed monthly make sure to have extra filters on hand for the entire duration of your trip.
- If you have a humidistat remember to have your air conditioning service professional calibrate it.
- Contact the Telephone Company to temporarily suspend service during your absence (unless you need it for your security service)
- Review your home owners insurance policy and update, if necessary.
- If you live in a non-maintained neighborhood, arrange for landscaping maintenance and make sure they have your contact information. Also check your sprinkler performance.
- Make arrangements for insect control.
- If you need help installing your hurricane shutters, make the arrangements. In Riverwood, this can be done any time after May 31.
- Contact Security Alarm Company to alert them of your anticipated departure. Make sure your contact information is up to date and give them the contact information for anyone who will have access to the home.
- Locate and check your potable water shut off valve and make sure it can be turned off and on.
- For those with pools, notify your pool service of departure and give contact information. If you plan to turn off the water to your house, make sure they know how to turn it on and off.
- Purchase Timers for lamps if needed. You may want to look at the newer products such as Smart Plugs, the Nest Thermostat, and the Ring products such as the doorbell with motion detection. These can be monitored via your computer, tablet, or cell phone.

Two weeks before departure

- Write down the make and model of all appliances in the home in case there are home maintenance or warranties on equipment that you and your home watcher will need in case of a break down. Leave a copy on the fridge and bring one with you.
- Arrange to forward mail at your local Post Office.
- Notify the Riverwood Office Staff (and your Management Company for incorporated neighborhoods) of your departure and return dates along with contact information for you and your home watch person (or company)
- Put Newspaper on vacation hold
- Arrange for Cable service to be put on hold.
- Run air conditioning on humidistat settings (if you have a humidistat) to test reliability

One (1) Week Prior to Leaving:

- Clean refrigerator and freezer. Eat food on hand.
- Vacuum upholstered furnishings to get rid of mold spores.
- Donate your indoor plants or arrange for a friend to plant sit them until you return
- Eat perishable food in the food cabinets or plan to give away or discard
- Make sure all outside furniture or items that can become projectiles such as wall décor or doormats are placed inside in case a storm comes in.
- Leave with photos and/or a video recording of the property as it was when you left it. This will be helpful in the event of an unanticipated problem such as a hurricane occurring during your absence.
- Put up storm shutters (if after May 31 or before Nov 1)

On the Day of Departure:

- Empty refrigerator and freezer; disconnect and leave door slightly ajar. If you leave the refrigerator on, turn off the ice-maker and discard any perishable foods. Leave a few ice cubes in a bowl so that you can determine if the power was off in your absence (they will melt)
- Run 1 dozen ice cubes and 2 or 3 tablespoons baking soda in the garbage disposal to clean blades.
- Empty dishwasher / clothes washer and prop open the door to prevent mold growth from residual moisture.
- Set Timers for lights and a radio to make it seem like the home is still occupied. Or you can use smart plugs and turn on lights with your cell phone or computer.
- Turn off the breaker to the Hot Water Heater. If you are going to be gone for a long time, drain and disconnect water heater. Turn off the water to the washing machine and the hot water heater.
- Cover and seal toilets with plastic wrap, If contracted a Home Watch company they will flush toilets on each visit.
- Set burglar alarm. Make sure anyone monitoring the home has the alarm code and emergency safe word.
- Empty all trash containers and/or arrange for a neighbor to take your cans out.
- Turn the maximum temperature for the air condition up to 80 degrees, If you have an humidistat turn it to the recommended "when away" setting (usually 65).
- Set off insect "bombs" or "foggers", if desired.
- Make sure all windows and doors are locked, including the overhead garage door.
- Shut off the potable water valve outside the house
- Unplug washer, dryer, computers, unused lamps, and other small appliances around the house.
- Remove valuable items when you leave.
- Don't leave the house empty-looking. Have someone open or close the drapes occasionally.
- Close all blind or window coverings to reduce the amount of time an A/C unit will have to run.
- Let your neighbors know that you are leaving and make sure they have contact information for you and your home watch while you are away.