

Tips & Tricks for Snowbirds and Renters

When getting ready to leave for the summer

Inside the house

- Clean your place to discourage critters
- Put ant and roach traps out or consider a pest control service
- Plug holes around pipes under sinks with steel wool or foam insulation
- Cover/plug ALL drains, this not only keeps bugs from entering but it also helps the water to stay in the trap so they don't dry out.
- Cover toilets tightly with plastic wrap to keep water from evaporating, this will prevent sewer gases from entering the house. To keep seals moist and prevent future leaks do not drain toilet tanks.
- Run the dishwasher empty with a little bleach to clean and disinfect it. Leave the door open to prevent mold and mildew buildup.
- Place containers with **Kitty Litter** in closets. This helps to absorb moisture and odors, and may prevent mold and mildew
- Empty and turn off your refrigerator. Put baking soda in the refrigerator and freezer. Prop the doors open with a dish towel to ensure the compartments stay dry and mildew free.
- It is recommended if you have a humidistat, set the AC thermostat to 80° and the humidistat to 50%. Make sure the thermostat is set to AUTO and COOL. Check to make sure they are working properly before closing up for the summer.
- Pay attention to your electric bill, if low KW's of electric is used, you're A/C unit may not be coming on. If it's high you may have unnatural moisture in the home. Call your HVAC company to have it checked out.
- Make sure your hot water heater is turned off at the main switch. Do not drain the tank.
- **Turn off** water service to the house. Use the main shut-off on the outside of the house. Then contact **Englewood Water Department at 866-460-1080** to schedule water shut off at the street for after your departure date and then on again when you are planning to return.



- On your return make sure you turn water **ON** at the main shut-off to the house before resetting your hot water heater switch.

Outside the house

- Lower Awnings and lock all doors and windows. Consider putting a dowel stick in the track of all sliding doors and windows.
- Move tools, grills and patio furniture to the inside of the house to protect them from humidity.
- Store bicycles inside your home to protect the tires from dry rot in summer heat.
- Leave a key with a year-round neighbor so they can check on the house in the event of a major storm. Don't forget to leave phone numbers or e-mail address' so they can get in touch with you if necessary.
- Secure shed and lanais. Secure any objects that may have the potential of flying in a strong wind. Protect your property and your neighbors too

Yard Work and Household Tidbits

- Avoid insect bites. Stay out of grass and weeds at dusk and use repellent
- Avoid using chemicals. Florida's canals have enough burdens. Some plants are invasive and illegal.
- Learn about Florida-friendly vegetation. Check the libraries for "Plant Clinics" They have awesome free booklets to help you choose landscaping.
- Don't waste water. Know the sprinkler rules. Turn automatic sprinklers off for the summer. This is the rainy season and lawns don't need to be watered by sprinklers.
- Try bleach on fire ant nests and if bitten try vinegar on the bites.
- DON'T feed the wildlife. It might be illegal and can kill them
- Sort your trash and RECYCLE. Donate household goods and clothing to thrift stores.
- Power wash your driveway if it has black mold to prevent it from coming into your house on your shoes.
- Let new wood weather and dry for a year before painting or sealing

Be Kind to Your Neighbors

- Control your pets (their waste and barking). Please observe the leash law of Charlotte County
- Keep party noise down after dark
- Keep trash in secure containers, if it should get blown over as can happen on windy days, please pick it up.
- **Follow POSTED** speed limits. Remember we have a lot of walkers and bikers and very narrow roads.
- **PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS** – remember **WALK** Facing traffic, **RIDE** with traffic.
- Carry a light when walking at night and early mornings. When riding at night bikes should have a headlight and rear light plus reflectors on bikes for your safety.

General Reminders

- Remember to forward your mail to your summer residence. Start mail forward a few days before you leave so you know for sure it has started. You can obtain a forwarding address card from the post office/postal driver. You can also do it on-line. Magazines need to be contacted directly to do a Change of Address at least 6 weeks in advance of departure.
- Close blinds and curtains to keep excess sun and heat out of the house.
- Check the batteries in smoke alarms.
- Check rain gutters to be sure they are clear of debris.

If you are a Home Watcher

- Check after a storm to make sure there is no damage
- Check every once in a while for signs of forced entry or vandalism
- Are there any signs of mold/mildew? Check in dark places like closets, under furniture, refrigerator, walls, etc.
- Check HVAC to make sure it is working properly.
- Do you smell anything strange that needs to be addressed, animal holes that appear to go under the house or other signs of pests?

Suggestions to help you enjoy your stay

- Take trash out way more often than up north *
- Never leave dirty dishes in the sink *
- * Bugs are far too common down here
- Keep shells and beach collections out of the house until washed and treated with bleach

- Wear bug repellent near dusk and dawn. Grassy areas and sand harbor bugs
- Wear that sunscreen. Protect yourself from skin burns and skin cancer
- Take responsibility for reporting vandalism in the neighborhood and Clubhouse. Remember this your community.

