

# Snowbird's Check List from Florida Power and Light

## Mold and Mildew

Florida's warm, humid summer weather creates the perfect environment for mold, mildew and bacteria to grow. Since pests and organisms attack organic materials, it is important to do a thorough job cleaning, vacuuming and disinfecting your home before you vacate.

### QUICK CLEANING CHECKLIST:

- In the kitchen, clean kitchen appliances, cabinets and countertops with sudsy water and dry all surfaces. Don't forget the toaster or toaster oven, crumbs attract unwanted summer pests
- Dispose of fresh or perishable foods, including cereals, crackers and pasta
- Clean out refrigerators and freezers and toss opened condiments
- If you unplug the refrigerator, be sure to leave door propped open
- Clean dishwasher interior and filter and leave door open
- Thoroughly clean bathroom fixtures and all surfaces and wash all bath towels
- Remove any plastic wrappings or bags around clothing
- Think about purchasing a damp rid product for the closets which help absorb moisture

## Appliances

- Cable or satellite boxes: Unplug or turn off to avoid paying for energy you aren't using.
- Water heater: Turn off the circuit breaker to the water heater.
- Small appliances and electronics: Unplug. For security reasons, you may want to place timers on indoor lamps.
- Dishwasher: Empty and leave the door open.
- Washing machine: Leave the lid open.
- Dryer clean the lint filter
- Refrigerators:
  - If you prefer to keep your refrigerator on, set it at its warmest setting and then pull it out slightly from the wall
  - If you prefer to keep your refrigerator off, make sure to clean the interior with a solution of 1 tbsp. of baking soda in 1 quart of water, dry thoroughly and leave doors open. Turn off the circuit breaker to the refrigerator. Remove all food from the freezer and refrigerator, and leave the door(s) propped open.
  - Empty ice trays and if you have an automatic ice maker, switch it to the "off" position.

## **A/C settings and mold prevention**

- Change your A/C filter. If it is washable, then wash it. An accumulation of dirt plus the summer heat and humidity can lead to mildew and mold growth, which can spread through the house. The control of your home's temperature and humidity is a must. Keep in mind that a dark, cool, stagnate, and moist environment is prime breeding ground for mold. If your home is not equipped with a humidistat, consider installing one and set it between 45 and 55 percent. Your thermostat can be set between 80 and 84. Do not prevent all natural light from entering your home. Allow some to filter through your window treatments. When it comes to overhead fans, turn them off.
- As stated, run you're A/C while you are gone.
- For programmable or smart thermostats: Set your A/C to run at 72 degrees for just two hours each morning before sunrise and at 88 degrees for the remainder of the time.
- For non-programmable thermostats: Set your A/C to run at 80 to 84 degrees while you are away.
- Set the controls of your humidistats and/or dehumidifiers to 45 to 55 percent to maintain acceptable humidity, since some humidistat sensors are inaccurate by as many as 10 percentage points.
- Open your closet and cabinet doors, just to keep fresh air moving in and out of those areas.
- Close or cover all drains and toilets. Use plastic wrap or Press and Seal. This will keep the drains from drying out and stop sewer gas to entry the house.

## **Hurricane preparedness**

- Make arrangements for awnings to be put down and secured prior to your departure, the hurricane season, runs from June to November, as do most tropical storms
- Put away (inside) all outside furniture, ornaments, trash receptacles, rugs, mats and hanging planters. Even tropical storms will turn those items into projectiles.

## **Safety and security**

- Make sure all smoke alarms are working and have fresh batteries.
- Turn off the main water valve. Close or cover all drains kitchen and bathroom sinks, bath tub/shower and toilets. Use plastic wrap or press-n- seal, this will keep the drains from drying out and stop unwanted sewer gas from entering the house.
- Ask someone to check on your property every few weeks for problems that could pop up, such as storm damage.
- Make sure all doors and windows are locked.
- Close your drapes and blinds. This will help keep strangers from peeping in to see what you own and check for signs you may be away. Stop mail and newspaper deliveries

**Supplied by resident: Jerry Sergeant**