

## Extended Absence Checklist

Homes in Southwest Florida should consider following this Extended Absence Pre-Departure Checklist "Home Watch Best Practices" to help mitigate issues while the home is unoccupied.

\*\* These services providers should be hired 3 months prior to departure and scheduled to start one service before you depart. Hiring these service providers can be a real challenge if you wait until April-May in SWFL.

\*\* **Pool Service.** Hire a pool service. Leave a hose 1/2" or larger diameter, we may need to add water during our visit.

\*\***Lawn/Landscape.** Hire a lawn care service to mow lawn and pull/spray weeds in planted areas, pool decks, driveways.

\*\***A/C Service.** Filters changed and drain line flushed/cleaned.

\*\***Pest Management.** Hire a service or spray prior to departure, place glue boards or Tero ant bait stations next to doors.

**A/C and Heat Setting.** Set the thermostat to the agreed upon temperature, **Set mode to AC, Set Fan on Automatic.** We like to see the humidity below 55% never above 60% as mold can grow.

**Refrigerator/Freezer.** Best is off. If on...turn off ice maker and empty ice bucket, remove ice cream and meat/fish.

**Pantry.** Remove open anything, cereal, chips, cookies, pet food, bread....Ants will find this open food while you are away.

**Bathroom** Leave toilet seat up. Arrange or remove items under sinks to allow for clear visual checks for leaks. Remove any items from tub or shower floors as we will be running water to keep drain traps filled with fresh water.

**Ceiling Fan.** Leave one ceiling fan on low setting to help move air around the home.

**Occupancy Lighting.** 1 or 2 lamps on timers helps to give the home a "lived in" look, all others unplugged.

**Window treatments and Blinds.** Generally all should be closed. Leaving front blinds open helps a home look "lived in".

**Clothes Washer/Dryer.** Turn off hot and cold water supply. Turn off power at breaker. Leave doors open.

**Dishwasher.** Turn off at breaker. Empty dishwasher. Leave door ajar/open slightly. Dish towel in door works well.

**Doors, Windows, Garage Door, Gates.** All should be locked/Deadbolt. Unplug or turn off garage door opener.

**Stored Vehicles.** Tires at full pressure. Interior clean, windows up. Battery maintainer on. Fan Off, Air vent to re circulate.

**Electric Panel.** Turn off all major appliances....(NOT A/C) Turn off as many circuits as you can to prevent surge damage.

**Electric Appliances.** Unplug microwave, coffee maker, toaster, alarm clocks, TV, Stereo, phone chargers, etc.

**Storm Preparation.** Bring in lawn furniture, secure loose items, leave shutter keys/cranks/remote controls out. Put all manual hurricane panels up except entry. We will close permanently mounted shutters if needed per our agreement.

**Keys.** Leave out all keys/cranks/remote controls we might need...mail box, shed, gate, shutters, vehicle.

**Mail.** Have a bin/basket/drawer for junk mail and separate bin for regular mail.

**Garbage.** Empty all garbage cans in the house.

**Water Heater, re circulation pump, solar pump.** Water Heater; If gas set to "Pilot" "Vacation" or "Off". If electric turn power off at breaker. Unplug or turn circulation pumps off. Solar pump off or unplugged. Smelly hot water is common after an extended absence as water sits in tank water heaters for an extended period of time unused. Running the hot water is the remedy, this will run the stagnant smelly water out of the water heater tank and it will be replaced by fresh water. **Water Softener.** Turn power off. Run a re-circulation cycle before you leave and when you return.

**Main Water Valve.** Best is OFF. If you have a pvc ball valve consider having it replaced with copper.

**Irrigation.** Adjust watering times to meet city or community watering restriction/codes. Does your rain sensor work?

**Supplies.** Smoke Alarm Batteries, Thermostat Batteries, Air Filters, Toilet Bowl Cleaner, Light Bulbs, Bug Spray.