

# HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

2026

**Prepared & Presented By:**



**HURRICANE PROCEDURES**

# FOR NEXTGEN CLIENT PROPERTIES

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# INTRODUCTION

To ensure the safety and quality of life of the people in Southwest Florida, this Hurricane Preparedness Manual has been produced for you.

We believe the Florida highway system has not kept pace with the rapid growth population and evacuation requirements in southwest Florida. In the event of an evacuation, the road network will not handle the traffic volumes and a deadly gridlock could be created. Due to this fact, barrier island residents will be advised to evacuate well in advance of inland residents. If you are told to evacuate, please do so immediately. However, to do this, we advise that you plan, prepare and be ready.

The hurricane season in South Florida is June 1 through November 30.

A hurricane is the most powerful storm on earth. The combination of high winds, storm surge and battering waves is deadly.

Statistics show that the majority of people living in hurricane prone areas have never experienced a major hurricane. Many residents have been through weaker storms or hurricane fringes. The result is a false impression of a hurricane's fatal potential. This leads to a lack of preparedness which could result in the loss of many lives.

# TROPICAL STORMS & HURRICANES

## OVERVIEW

Tropical storms and hurricanes are formed when several different weather conditions occur simultaneously. The two basic ingredients are warm ocean waters and favorable wind conditions. These conditions called tropical cyclones occur every year in the Tropics between late May and early November.

A tropical storm is a lesser form of a hurricane. On average, about 10 named tropical storms develop each hurricane season. About half of these strengthen into hurricanes.

A hurricane is a tropical cyclone with winds exceeding 74 MPH, originating in the tropical regions of the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea, or the Gulf of Mexico.

The center, or eye, is relatively calm. The most violent activity takes place in the area immediately around the eye, called the “eye wall”.

The hurricane can reach an altitude of 50,000 feet and can be hundreds of miles wide. It can carry a dome of water 50 to 100 miles wide and up to 30 feet high called the STORM SURGE. When this storm surge reaches a barrier island, it usually has waves of three feet or more on top of the storm surge so that a 10-foot storm surge could have waves that cap at 13 feet. If the storm surge arrives at the same time as high tide, the flood height is even higher and the flooding effect is more devastating.

## THE HAZARDS OF HURRICANES

There are 5 strengths of hurricanes. They are categorized based upon their sustained winds, with Category 1 being the weakest and Category 5 being the most powerful. Hurricanes and tropical storms present 4 distinct hazards to us.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>WIND VELOCITY</b>	<b>STORM SURGE ABOVE NORMAL</b>
Category 1	74-95 mph	5 – 7 feet
Category 2	96-110 mph	8 – 12 feet
Category 3	111-130 mph	11 – 16 feet
Category 4	131-155 mph	14 – 20 feet
Category 5	155 mph & higher	18 feet or more

**STORM SURGE:** The most dangerous hazard is the storm surge. The storm surge is a large dome of water that is pushed up on the land as the hurricane comes ashore. The shallowness of the Gulf of Mexico and strong winds will intensify the effects of storm surge on Lee County. We could experience a 24-foot storm surge with a category 5 hurricane.

**WINDS:** The winds that generate storm surge also cause damage themselves. Most vulnerable to these winds are trees, power lines, signs, manufactured homes, recreational vehicles, and homes and businesses with unprotected windows.

**TORNADOS:** As they move on shore, hurricanes can spawn numerous tornados. These tornados can occur without warning and add to the destructive potential of the hurricane.

**RAIN:** Hurricanes and tropical storms often bring very heavy rains for extended periods. From 6 to 8 inches of rain can fall in 24 hours or less producing flooding in many areas.

## **WHAT TO DO BEFORE JUNE 1**

**BE ALERT:** Know what a hurricane WATCH and WARNING means.

**WATCH:** Means a Hurricane may hit your area. Hurricane conditions are possible in the specified area of the WATCH, usually within 36 hours. Put your hurricane plan into action.

**WARNING:** Means Hurricane conditions are expected in the specified area of the WARNING, usually within 24 hours. All precautions should be taken.

**ASSEMBLE A DISASTER SUPPLIES KIT:** Only take a seven-day supply with you for each person when you evacuate.

- Cash, Cell phone
- Hygiene products
- First aid kit and essential medications
- Medical history record
- Canned food and manual can opener
- At least three gallons of water per person
- Protective clothing, rainwear, and bedding or sleeping bags
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries
- Candles
- Matches in waterproof container
- Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members
- Check cell phone battery
- Written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas and water if authorities advise you to do so
- Bucket (to flush toilets)
- Road maps
- Wet weather footwear
- Paper plates, drinking cups & napkins
- Paper towels
- Sanitary supplies

### **In addition:**

**IDENTIFICATION:** Every person should have identification on them *AT ALL TIMES*. **MEDICINES:** Make sure you have a minimum of a three-week supply.

**MONEY:** Have enough money accessible to purchase necessities. Banks will be closed, and credit cards will not be accepted until phone lines and electricity are restored.

**OXYGEN:** If you are oxygen dependent, keep at least one walk around bottle. “Special Needs” shelters will have an adequate oxygen supply to replenish your needs.

## **PREPARE FOR HIGH WINDS**

Install hurricane shutters or purchase precut ½ inch outdoor plywood boards for each window of your home. Install anchors for the plywood and predrill holes in the plywood so that you can put it up quickly.

Make trees more wind resistant by removing diseased and damaged limbs, then strategically remove branches so that wind can blow through.

## **INSURANCE**

Did you know that a typical homeowner's policy does not protect you from loss from flooding or rising waters? If you don't have flood insurance, check with your insurance agent for a price quote on your home and your furnishings. Don't wait until the hurricane warning has been issued. There is a 30-day waiting period before flood insurance becomes effective.

### **Coverage:**

Make sure you have adequate coverage. Make a checklist to assist in determining your insurance needs. Condominium owners should check if they have "Loss Assessment Coverage".

Consider increasing your coverage if it is not adequate. As stated earlier, a standard homeowner's policy does not cover flood damage caused by rising water. Also check to see if your policy has replacement cost coverage and if it has an endorsement that would pay the added expense to rebuild your home to current code requirements and pay for housing while your home is being rebuilt. Keep in mind your insurance company will probably require proof of the cost of any item for which a claim is made. Photographs and/or videotapes are good ways to provide an accurate visual record.

## **KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN A HURRICANE WATCH IS ISSUED**

Listen to NOAA Weather radio or local radio or TV stations for up-to-date storm information.

Prepare to bring inside any lawn furniture, outdoor decorations or ornaments, trash cans, hanging plants, and anything else that can be picked up by the wind.

Prepare to cover all windows of your home. If shutters have not been installed, purchase plywood to cover large windows. Note: Tape does not prevent windows from breaking, so taping windows is not recommended.

Locate a safe place to store gas grills and propane or LP gas tanks. If damaged in a storm, they become a leaking, potential bomb. They must be tied down in areas subject to flooding to prevent them from becoming floating mines.

Fill your car's gas tank.

Check batteries and stock up on canned food, first aid supplies, drinking water, medications, and flashlights.

If you plan to board your pet(s), survey the kennels to determine specific locations and requirements. Most boarding facilities require proof of up-to-date vaccinations, and a properly fitted collar with a current license (identification) and rabies tag before they will take your pet(s).

If you plan to leave your pet(s) at home, survey your home and determine the best location away from windows to place you pet) during a storm emergency, such as a utility room, bathroom, kitchen or other tiled area which can be easily cleaned. Provide access to high places such as a countertop, in case of flooding.

- NEVER LEAVE YOUR PET OUTSIDE DURING A STORM
- NEVER LEAVE A CAT WITH A DOG EVEN IF THE TWO ARE NORMALLY FRIENDS
- CONFINE AND KEEP SMALL PETS AWAY FROM CATS AND DOGS
- DANGEROUS ANIMALS SHOULD BE LEFT IN SPECIAL CRATES OR CAGES

Plan for the feeding of the animals by leaving dry type foods that are relatively unpalatable to prevent overeating. Leave water in bathtubs or other sturdy containers that will not spill. Do not leave vitamins or mineral supplements. Birds require special food dispensers that will allow them to eat daily.

## **KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN A HURRICANE WARNING IS ISSUED**

Listen to the advice of local officials and leave if they tell you to do so.

Complete preparation activities.

If you are not advised to evacuate, stay indoors, away from windows.

Disconnect all electrical appliances and equipment, except refrigeration.

Close all windows and draw blinds or drapes.

Be aware that the calm “eye” is deceptive; the storm is not over. The worst part of the storm will happen once the eye passes over and winds blow from the opposite direction. Trees, shrubs, buildings, and other objects damaged by the first winds can be broken or destroyed by the second winds.

Be alert for tornados. Tornados can happen during a hurricane and after it passes over. Remain indoors, in the center of your home, in a closet or bathroom without windows.

Stay away from flood waters. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. If you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising rapidly around you, get out of the car and climb to higher ground.

## **KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN AN EVACUATION ORDER IS ISSUED**

**BE PREPARED:** Prepare a home evacuation plan.

- Identify ahead of time where you could go if you are told to evacuate. Choose several places—a friend’s home in another town, a motel or shelter. Determine to leave early before roads become congested or impassable. Allow for three times the normal driving time.
  1. STAY WITH A FRIEND OR RELATIVE WHO HAS A SAFE PLACE.
  2. RELOCATE OUT OF THE AREA
  3. RELOCATE TO SHELTERS – A shelter should be used as a last resort only.
  4. ACT QUICKLY – LEAVE IMMEDIATELY
  5. STAY CALM
- Keep handy the telephone numbers of these places as well as a road map of your locality. You may need to take alternative or unfamiliar routes if major roads are closed or clogged.
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or TV stations for evacuation instructions. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
- Pack personal items and important papers such as insurance information, medical information, doctor information, etc.
- If you elect to go to a shelter, remember shelters are not hotels. You will not be permitted to check into and out of a shelter as if it were a hotel. They will not be able to provide you with any convenience or luxuries. Bring your family’s Disaster Supply Kit to ensure proper provisions. Weapons and liquor are not permitted in shelters. Under no circumstances are pets allowed in Red Cross Shelters. The only exceptions are dogs for the hearing or visually impaired.
- If time permits, make an inventory of all moved items to ease unpacking after the storm.
- Ensure that you have an adequate supply of waterproof bags for your important papers, cash, household inventory, insurance policies, photo albums, and other personal materials.

- Prepare your vehicle with topped-off fuel tank, oil and water. Fill tires and spare to recommended tire pressure.
- Refill your vehicle gas tank at the first opportunity.
- If you have a pool, super chlorinate it. Do not empty the water.
- Before leaving the property, check that the exterior of the building is secure.
- Lock all doors before you leave.
- Be sure to tell a friend or relative that is outside the storm area where you are going and how to get in touch with you.
- Prepare a message on your answering machine for relatives who might try to reach you.
- Moor your boat and remove or lower Bimini tops and antennas. If you leave your boat on a trailer, deflate tires and tie boat down. Remove instruments, fill the tank with fuel, and fill the oil reservoir. Remove loose seat pads and covers.
- Lastly, review all items on your list to assure that none have been overlooked.
- **Throughout – remain calm.**

## REMAINING IN YOUR HOME OR CONDOMINIUM

If you elect to stay, bear in mind that you probably will not have fire, EMS, or law enforcement support during the peak of the storm or for some time after.

If you are one of the doubters and think that you will be safe in remaining, we can only offer suggestions:

Find the safest place in your home. An interior room, closet or bathroom without windows is much more preferable than an exterior room with sliding glass doors and windows. Bring mattresses and move supplies into the safe room before the storm hits.

Make sure you have a portable radio and flashlights with spare batteries and a sturdy pair of shoes for each member of your family. There may be plenty of broken glass, nails and other debris that could injure you after the storm passes.

### CONDOMINIUM RESIDENTS:

- Although most levels of condominiums are above the storm surge, they do present unique problems and responsibilities inasmuch as wind velocity increases with height. Residents in upper floors, especially the elderly or those with mobility problems, should seek refuge on the lower floors – above the second level – before the electricity goes out and elevators are inoperative. Don't forget to take your Disaster Supplies Kit plus a chair to sit on in the stairwells or hallways.
- Before you leave your condo unit, remove all loose items from your terrace or porch such as patio furniture, plants, wall hanging, etc. Close and lock all windows, and sliding glass doors. Close shutters. Close blinds, curtains and drapes and move furniture away from windows.

From your safe area, continue to monitor the course of the storm by listening to NOAA Weather Radio or the local radio station.

Use only battery-operated lanterns in your safe room. Flames from candles can cause fires. Once the electricity goes out it is going to get hot and sticky. Try to get used to it because electricity may be out for hours, weeks or even months. The electric utility company will try to restore power as rapidly as possible.

Try to remain calm for your own benefit and for other family members. The roaring noise from hurricane force wind and rain will be extremely unnerving. Add the sound of debris crashing into your home or building and the noise will be terrifying. Prepare your family as best you can in advance for these possibilities.

Remain indoors away from windows until the "all Clear" has been given. If the "eye" of the storm passes over your area, the winds become calm and the sun may be shining, don't be lulled onto thinking the worst is over. The winds will become extremely strong again from the opposite direction. **STAY INSIDE.**

## **PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

A People with Special Needs registry is maintained by the Collier and Lee County Offices of Emergency Management to provide transportation assistance to public shelter.

People who need this special help often are elderly or have a physical disability, neurological or psychological disorder. If you are unable to respond independently to an emergency situation which requires you to evacuate your home, then you should register for assistance.

Register in advance, even if you are a short-term visitor. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE STORM APPROACHES.**

If you are in Collier County:

Contact the Collier County Office of Emergency Management at 239-774-8444.

If you are in Lee County:

Contact the Lee County Office of Emergency Management at 239-477-3600.

## **ELDERLY**

If you have elderly friends or relatives who will be evacuating with you during a storm, keep a list of their prescribed medications, and include them in your food and water storage plans. Make a plan now with elderly friends and relatives. If they live in evacuation zones, tell them you will take care of their property and pick them up. Allow time for them to gather their belongings.

## **KNOW WHAT TO DO AFTER A HURRICANE IS OVER**

After the hurricane passes, expect the worst but hope for the best. Depending on the intensity of the storm, damage will range from light to catastrophic. Many measures that you used in preparation for the hurricane will, hopefully, limit damages to your property.

Common sense should prevail when returning to a storm-damaged home. Be extremely careful when using generators, chain saws, heating and lighting appliances. The electricity utility warns that generators should never be connected to the main breaker box in your residence.

Keep listening to NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or TV stations for instructions

If you are evacuated, return home when local officials tell you it is safe to do so.

Inspect your home for damage.

Use flashlights at all times; avoid using candles.

Stay clear of downed lines in your yard or in the street.

Help keep the utility telephone lines clear for emergency calls.

All residents of Homeowner Associations should contact their own insurance carrier and report damage as soon as possible. NextGen personnel will report all common area damage to corporate office as soon as possible.

All residents of Condominiums should contact their own insurance carrier for damage. NextGen will contact corporate office with damage estimates.

## **NEXTGEN COMMUNITY MGMT PROCEDURES**

All **NextGen** office personnel will report for duty as soon as possible after the officials say it is safe to go outdoors.

All Manager's will report to their respective properties. Checking for the safety of all residents before any cleanup begins is priority.

All residents of Homeowner Associations should contact their own insurance carrier and report damage as soon as possible. **NextGen** personnel will check the grounds and report all common area damage to corporate office as soon as possible.

**NextGen** personnel are the only ones authorized to contract with cleanup vendors at Condominium Associations. Residents of condominiums should contact their own insurance carrier for damage. **NextGen** will contact their office with damage estimates.

**NextGen** will notify insurance carriers and get claim numbers and claim representative's name and phone number. All work should be authorized by claim representative prior to any contract being signed other than an emergency work order authorized by **NextGen** Management.

**NextGen** office personnel will make every effort to contact the Board of Directors of each association and give them a status report on damage and work in progress.

When possible, individual unit owners should be notified of serious damage to their units.

# LEE COUNTY EMERGENCY PUBLIC SHELTERS

## Bonita Springs YMCA

27200 Kent Road  
Bonita Springs, FL 34135

## Dunbar High School

3800 Edison Avenue  
Fort Myers, FL 33916

## East Lee County High School

715 Thomas Sherwin Ave.  
Lehigh Acres, FL 33974

## Estero Recreation Center

9200 Corkscrew Palms Blvd.  
Estero, FL 33928

## Florida Gulf Coast University Alico Arena

12181 FGCU Lake Pkwy E  
Fort Myers, FL 33913

## Harns Marsh Elementary

1800 Unice Avenue N.  
Lehigh Acres, FL 33971

## Hertz Arena

11000 Everblades Parkway  
Estero, FL 33928

## **Island Coast High School**

2125 DeNavarra Pkwy.  
Cape Coral, FL 33909

## **Manatee Elementary**

5301 Tice Street  
Fort Myers, FL 33905

## **Mirror Lakes Elementary School**

525 Charwood Avenue S.  
Lehigh Acres, FL 33936

## **N. Fort Myers Academy of the Arts**

1856 Arts Way  
North Fort Myers, FL 33917

## **North Fort Myers Recreation Center**

2000 N. Recreation Park Way  
North Fort Myers, FL 33903

## **Oak Hammock Middle School**

5321 Tice Street  
Fort Myers, FL 33905

## **South Fort Myers High School**

14020 Plantation Road  
Fort Myers, FL 33912

## **Tortuga Preserve Elementary**

1711 Gunnery Road N.  
Lehigh Acres, FL 33971

## **Collier County Shelters**

Call 239-252-8444 for more information.

BARRON COLLIER HIGH

GULF COAST HIGH

IMMOKALEE HIGH

CORKSCREW MIDDLE

IMMOKALEE MIDDLE

OAKRIDGE MIDDLE

VILLAGE OAKS ELEMENTARY

GOLDEN GATE HIGH

PALMETTO RIDGE HIGH

BIG CYPRESS ELEMENTARY

LELY HIGH

GOLDEN GATE MIDDLE

SABAL PALM ELEMENTARY

CYPRESS PALMS MIDDLE

LAUREL OAK ELEMENTARY

VINEYARDS ELEMENTARY

NAPLES HIGH

GOLDEN TERRACE INTERMEDIA

PARKSIDE ELEMENTARY

HIGHLANDS ELEMENTARY

LAKE TRAFFORD ELEMENTARY

GOLDEN GATE INTERMEDIATE

PELICAN MARSH ELEMENTARY

NORTH NAPLES MIDDLE

PINECREST ELEMENTARY

# Protect Your Boat

Hurricane season officially begins June 1<sup>st</sup>, but a smart boat owner knows to be prepared well-before this time. The key to protecting your boat and yourself during a hurricane is *planning and preparation*. It is unwise and even dangerous to wait to the last minute to make arrangements to secure your boat.

## DEVELOP A PLAN

- Develop a plan of how you will secure your boat *before* hurricane season.
- If possible, plan to remove your boat from the targeted area to a previously identified hurricane refuge.
- If you will have to leave your boat in the water, identify secure mooring locations and obtain permission from the appropriate persons if needed.
- Contact marinas or storage areas for their hurricane plan/procedures as well as your responsibilities and liabilities while your vessel is at their facilities.
- Make arrangements for someone who is knowledgeable of your plan to care for your boat if you won't be home during the hurricane season.

*Remember, there are insufficient storage areas for every boat in the county. Boaters, who act early, will fare the best.*

## PRACTICE YOUR PLAN

- Practice implementing your plan to determine how much time and work it takes.
- Check surrounding conditions where you want to secure your boat such as accessibility, water depth, bridge locations, locating aids, obstructions to navigation and objects to secure lines to or drop anchors.

## IMPORTANT PAPERS/ INFORMATION

- Make copies of important documents such as insurance policies, boat registration, lease agreements with marinas or storage areas and telephone numbers of appropriate agencies such as the coast guard or insurance agent.
- Take pre-hurricane pictures of your boat for insurance purposes and make sure your insurance policy is current.

## EQUIPMENT/ SUPPLIES

- Check that your boat is in sound condition and proper working order before the start of hurricane season.
- Create a checklist of equipment and supplies you will need to properly secure your boat such as excess rope and lines, chafing gear, anchors and/or fenders.
- Make sure your boat batteries are charged.
- Ensure the bilge pump is proper working order.
- Keep your fuel tank full.
- If possible, have your holding tanks pumped at the earliest notification of hurricane conditions.

## **SECURING YOUR BOAT**

- If you leave your boat in the water, double and triple secure all lines from several directions to account for the erratic nature of hurricane winds; cover all contact points with rags, tape, or hoses to prevent chafing.
- Remove any portable equipment such as radios and other electronics, canvas, sails, dinghies, cushions, and/or Bimini tops.
- Remove potential sources of pollution such as portable fuel containers, paint cans, sanitation devices, or cleaners that could get into the water and harm the environment.
- Latch down all items that cannot be removed.
- Seal all openings using duct tape to ensure your boat remains watertight.

## **TRAILERING YOUR BOAT**

- Make sure your trailer is in proper working condition before removing your boat.
- Securely lash your boat to its trailer.
- Place blocks between the frame and axle inside each wheel to prevent damage to the suspension from rain accumulating in the boat during the storm.
- Owners of smaller lightweight boats should partially fill their boats with water or leave in the drain plug to make their boats heavier.
- Partially deflate trailer tires to accommodate the added weight of the water.

## **SAFETY FIRST!**

*Remember, your safety should be a priority over the value of a boat!!*

- Do not stay on your vessel during a hurricane or attempt to outrun the storm.
- Stay tuned in to all broadcasts and official bulletins until the storm has passed.
- After the hurricane, return to your vessel only when local authorities have cleared your area and say it is OK to return.
- Once cleared, check your boat for damage and equipment and be aware of potential hazards left in the waterway from the storm.

### **For More Information:**

**Lee County Bureau of Emergency Management:** (239) 477-3600

**Boat U.S. Hurricane Center Webpage:** <http://www.boatus.com/hurricanes/brochure.asp>



# DISASTER SUPPLY KIT CHECKLIST



## General

- At least two weeks supply of medication, medical supplies used regularly and a list of allergies
- List of the style, serial number, and manufacturer information of required medical devices
- Flashlight  
*Do not use candles and be sure to have enough batteries*
- Radio  
*Battery operated or hand cranked radio, a NOAA weather radio*
- Cash  
*Banks and ATMs may not be available after a storm*

## Pet Care Items

- Pet food and water
- Proper identification
- Medical records/microchip info
- A carrier or cage
- Muzzle and leash
- Water and food bowls
- Medications
- Supplies for your service animal

## Clothing

- Include seasonal or rain gear and sturdy shoes or boots.

## Special Needs Items

- Be sure to include specialty items for infants, small children, the elderly, and those family members with a disability.

## First Aid

- First Aid Manual
- Sterile adhesive bandages of different sizes
- Sterile gauze pads
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Sewing needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tube of petroleum jelly
- Safety pins
- Soap
- Latex gloves
- Sunscreen
- Aspirin or other pain reliever
- Anti-diarrheal medicine
- Antacid
- Laxative
- Cotton balls
- Q-tips

## Food and Water

- Food  
*Enough for at least seven (7) days, nonperishable packaged or canned food and beverages, snack foods, juices, baby food, and any special dietary items*
- Non-electric can opener
- Paper plates
- Napkins
- Plastic cups
- Utensils
- Water (*1 gallon per person*)

## Important Documents

- Insurance cards
  - Medical records
  - Bank numbers
  - Credit card numbers
  - Copy of social security card
  - Copies of birth and/or marriage certificates
  - Other personal documents  
Set of car, house, and office keys
  - Service animal I.D., veterinary records, and proof of ownership
  - Information about where you receive medication, the name of the drug, and dosage
  - Copy of will
- \*Items should be kept in a water proof container*

## Vehicle

- Keep your motor vehicle tanks filled with gasoline

## Phone Numbers

- Maintain a list of important phone numbers including: *county emergency management office, evacuation sites, doctors, banks, schools, veterinarian, a number for out of town contact, friends & family*

## COVID-19 Supplies

- Face masks
- Disinfectant wipes
- Hand sanitizer

## 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 78 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.		