

House Closing Ideas

1. Monitor your electricity and water bills for unusual variances while you are away. It is recommended to turn off the main water supply at the meter to prevent leaks. I checked with Pasco County, and they said this was OK
2. Be aware of humidity during Florida summers. Set your HVAC to 85 or lower which allows the unit to run dehumidifying your home. A smart thermostat or thermometer with humidity is also helpful.
3. Schedule HVAC maintenance before you leave to ensure it runs efficiently in your absence. Change batteries in your thermostat and smoke detectors.
4. Turn off the hot water heater at the breaker box and then drain, this will save energy and help to reduce the possibility of water damage plus extend the life of your hot water heater. When you return, open an outside water spigot and then turn on water, make sure you do not turn on water heater until your tank is full and make sure all faucets are initially off. After a couple of minutes shut off your outside spigot and then open all faucets to flush out the cold water pipes. After the water looks clear turn off all cold side faucets. After your hot water tank is full and turned on generally an hour later flush this system by turning on hot water in bathtub or shower so you can see if the water is clear, run until clear.
5. Unplug non-essential appliances to protect them from power surges and reduce energy consumption. Leave only critical devices like the refrigerator plugged in if you are storing food. I don't recommend keeping your refrigerator running over the summer. If you leave your refrigerator on put a paper cup filled with water in freezer. Once frozen then put a coin on top. When you come back if coin is still on top you should be ok however if it is sunk a bit or at the bottom of the cup then the power was off long enough to melt the water and you will need to throw everything in the refrigerator out. We generally throw out what doesn't fit in our cooler that we take north. We unplug our fridge, using the ice for the cooler. After it defrosts, we wipe clean and then mist with peroxide and leave door open. You can do this at your breakers however make sure you have power to your internet.
6. We also mist our floors, counters, with peroxide.
7. I would also recommend that you buy a smart air quality device that can tell you if there is a problem when you are home or on your smartphone.
8. Clean gutters and inspect the roof for any damage or potential leaks. Ensure downspouts direct water away from your house
9. Seal pantry items in airtight containers to prevent pests.
10. Conduct a thorough pest control treatment before leaving. Inspect any potential entry points and seal them. We sprinkle 20 mule team borax on carpet and put small dishes under cabinets with borax and a small amount of sugar. The borax will kill some of the bugs and it makes them sterile. We have not had a cockroach or other insect in our house in a couple of years. First year we had

the large cockroaches as the house was not treated with the borax. Second year a couple of dead ones. Third year no live or dead bugs of any kind.

11. Consider bait traps for termites. We use Hughes and pay an annual fee of about \$350 for the traps and annual inspection. If termites are found, they will exterminate them as part of the contract.
12. Your pipe drainage and water line system can be an entry point for unwanted bugs and pests. Consider using plastic wrap to cover toilets during a long absence shut sink drains and put something over shower drains. I generally put hydrogen peroxide in the tank and bowl and pour some in every drain. Also make sure that if you are having cable or internet installed that the company seals around the cable going through your vapor barrier.
13. Hurricane season is a significant concern. Secure outdoor furniture, shutters, etc., to ensure your home is prepared for potential storms. You might want to invest in hurricane shutters
14. Review your homeowner's insurance policy to ensure it covers storm-related damage.
15. Set up automatic payments for bills to avoid missed payments and service interruptions.
16. Preparing your home for a long-term stay away requires careful planning and attention to detail. By taking these steps, you can ensure your property remains secure, well-maintained, and ready for your return. As a Florida snowbird, peace of mind is essential, allowing you to enjoy your time at home without worrying about your Florida residence. Implement these tips and tricks to safeguard your home and make the most of your seasonal migration. We basically do the same thing up north with the exception of keeping the heat set at 53 degrees and having all our water pipes blown out.