Checklist for Snowbirds

Leaving Summer Home

Winterize

Shut off water at main valve.
Turn off water heater.
Service HVAC so it works when you return.
Lower thermostat to at least 55°F (13°C) (don’t turn it off; it could freeze).
Unplug appliances.
Open doors to dishwasher, washing machine to prevent mold.
Close fireplace flue.
Cover chimney with wire mesh to exclude critters.
Leave interior doors open to allow air circulation.
Clean outdoor furniture and move it inside for storage.

Administrative

Forward mail or arrange to have someone collect it.
Hire plant and pet care.
Put utilities the house won’t use, such as cable and internet, on hold.
Stop all deliveries (water, newspaper, etc.).
If you have a landline, forward your calls to cellphone or landline in winter home.
Contact your bank and credit cards to let them know you’ll be living in a new location for x amount of time.
Change your mailing address with financial institutions, insurance, and other places that send you mail.
Talk to your home insurance provider about how to proceed with your policy while you’re away.
Transfer your prescriptions.

Security

Double check to make sure all doors and windows are locked.
Let neighbors know your travel plans.
Fill out a form at the police department for your travel plans.
Arrange for a way for lights to turn on and off such as smart lights, timers, or apps.
Arrange to have someone check on your home, shovel walks, make sure HVAC is working, check for roof leaks, etc.
Set your security system.
Use smart home monitoring to monitor things like lighting, temperature in the house, security, etc.

**Cleaning**
Do all laundry, dry, fold it, and put it away.
Clean house thoroughly from top to bottom.
Clean out fridge and freezer and if empty, dry, shut off, and leave the doors open to prevent buildup of mold and mildew.
Remove any opened foods from cupboards or safely seal them in zipper bags.
Empty garbage and wash garbage cans.

**Packing**
Medications and toiletries
Travel documents
Important paperwork such as tax documents and prescriptions
Health care records
Identification and passports
Anything you share between homes such as linens, clothing, etc.

**Vehicle**
Have car and/or RV serviced.
Check tire pressure.
Make sure you have vehicle registration with you.

**Arriving at Winter Home**
Have HVAC inspected and change filter.
Remove plastic wrap from sinks, toilets, and tubs.
Turn on water if you had it shut off.
Turn on water heater.
Un-pause utility bills.
Plug in appliances.
Check interior and exterior of home for signs of damage and arrange to have anything fixed.
Replace batteries and bulbs.
Test smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.
Clean to refresh.
Let neighbors or people watching your home know you have arrived.
Plug in appliances.
Turn on fridge and freezer and allow it to chill before adding food.
Get groceries.
If you keep a vehicle at your winter home, have it inspected and serviced.
Put out outdoor furniture.
Clean up landscaping.
Push furniture back into their proper places.
Wipe down surfaces, cupboard and fridge shelves, dust, and dust mop.
Check dates on any food and medications there when you arrive and discard if expired.

**Leaving Winter Home**

Shut off water at main valve.
Turn off water heater.
Service HVAC so it works when you return.
Turn up a/c thermostat to about 85°F (29°C).
Unplug appliances.
Open doors to dishwasher, washing machine.
Leave interior doors open.
Close blinds or shades.
Prevent sewer gas accumulation by covering toilets, sinks, and tubs by covering them with plastic wrap.
Push furniture away from walls so mold can't accumulate.

**Security**

Double check to make sure all doors and windows are locked.
Hire plant and pet care while away.
Let neighbors, community managers, and law enforcement know your travel plans.
Arrange for a way for lights to turn on and off (security) such as smart lights.
Arrange to have someone check on your home to make sure everything is okay.
Set your security system.
Use smart home monitoring to monitor things like lighting, temperature in the house, security, etc.

**Administrative**
Forward mail or have someone collect it.
Stop all deliveries (water, newspaper, etc.).
If you have a landline, forward your calls to cellphone or landline in summer home.
Contact your bank and credit cards to let them know you’ll be living in a new location for x amount of time.
Change your mailing address with financial institutions, insurance, and other places that send you mail.
Talk to your home insurance provider about how to proceed with your policy while you’re away.
Transfer your prescriptions.

**Cleaning**
Do all laundry, dry, fold, put away.
Clean house from top to bottom.
Clean and put away outdoor furniture.
Clean out fridge and freezer and if empty, dry, shut off, and leave the doors open.
Remove any opened foods from cupboards or safely seal them in zipper bags.
Empty garbage and wash garbage cans/waste baskets.

**Packing**
Travel documents
Prescription medications and toiletries
Important paperwork such as tax documents
Health care records
Identification and passports
Anything you share between homes such as linens, clothing, etc.
**Vehicle/RV**

- Have car serviced.
- Check tire pressure.
- Make sure you have vehicle registration with you.

**Returning to Your Summer Home**

- Turn on water; check for leaks.
- Let everyone know you’ve returned including neighbors and police.
- Stop mail forwarding.
- Resume utility services you may have put on hold, such as cable or internet.
- Re-set up deliveries.
- Turn up HVAC and change the filter.
- Turn on water heater.
- Plug in appliances and close doors.
- Test smoke and Co2 detectors and replace batteries.
- Wipe down surfaces, dust, wipe out fridge, and dust mop.
- Grocery shop.
- Clean up landscaping.
- Do a quick indoor and outdoor walk-through to check for leaks or other issues that arose during the winter.
- Open fireplace flue and uncover chimney.
- Check expiration dates on medications and foods and discard if expired.