



CARDINAL MANAGEMENT GROUP of South Florida, Inc.

April 20, 2009

Dear Homeowner,

As we are approaching the time when many of you will be leaving your Florida homes for an extended period of time, we felt it might be beneficial to pass along some suggestions for ensuring the safety and security of your Florida home.

We, as well as many community developers, highly recommend that a Home Watch service check your home regularly while it is vacant (twice per month is recommended by the insurance industry). Many times your neighbors' homes are also vacant, and there is no one to inform you of possible issues. Damage from storms, failure of the air conditioner, water leaks, and mold are several of the events that can impact your home when it is unoccupied for an extended period.

Cardinal Management Group of South Florida's Home Services Division provides this service for an additional fee. Contact Michael Hebbe at (239) 774-0723 x302 or at m.hebbe@cmgsfl.com for more information.

In addition to hiring a Home Watch service, there are many steps we suggest you take upon your departure to prepare your home for being vacant. The checklist on the opposite side of this letter provides some suggestions you should consider. Suggestions in the checklist are provided to assist you in your efforts to safeguard your home. The list is not intended to take the place of home monitoring.

Sincerely,

Glen Fulker, Vice President
Cardinal Management Group of South Florida, Inc.

Home Close-Up Suggestions/Checklist

- Forward mail delivery and stop newspaper delivery.
- If you are in a single family home and have a pool, notify your pool company of your departure and follow their recommendations regarding the pool heater settings.
- Change your smoke detector batteries and thermostat batteries (if applicable).
- Take all clothes out of the washer and/or dryer.
- Bring in all patio furniture, plants, hoses, ornaments, etc.
- Have your AC serviced and your AC filters changed, especially before you leave. You should set the air conditioner(s) according to the manufacturers or service company's recommendations where appropriate. Under no circumstances should you turn off the power to your home or turn off your air conditioning system. Set thermostat between 77-82 degrees at your discretion. If a timer has been installed, set it for a two-hour run in the morning hours with the A/C thermostat set between 70-74 degrees.*
- Humidistat – set the humidistat according to the manufacturer's directions. Incorrect humidity levels can cause mold and mildew to grow in Florida's hot weather. If you wish, you may also turn the fans on low (blowing downward) to circulate air; however, this does not reduce humidity. You may also wish to install "Damp-Rid" or a similar dehumidifying product for extra protection.*
- Leave the dishwasher door ajar for air movement. A small amount of vegetable oil may be placed in the bottom well to prevent the seals from drying out.
- Run your garbage disposal before leaving to make sure all residual food is removed. Pour a small amount of vegetable oil in bottom of garbage disposal to prevent the seals from drying out.
- Open cabinets, dressers, etc., and leave closet doors and drawers open to allow air movement and circulation.
- Pour ½ cup of bleach in the toilet bowl, not the tank, and seal the bowl with plastic wrap. The bowl should remain clean and the water should not evaporate as quickly.
- You should disconnect electronic items (stereos, computers etc.) and phones because of problems due to electrical storms/power surges and outages. Unplugging your garage door opener may prevent it from malfunctioning and opening accidentally.
- If you are leaving bagged or boxed food items, be sure these are tightly sealed to prevent insects and rodents from being attracted. Do not leave any perishable food in your home.
- Set refrigerator to a warmer setting. Also, lift the arm to the icemaker and empty out the ice in the bin. Some owners actually empty and unplug the refrigerator.
- Turn down or turn off the water heater. Refer to the owner's manual or check with your plumber on the appropriate plan.
- Install hurricane shutters (if your home is so equipped). Be sure that you know the time period that your Association will allow these to be in place. Generally, June 1 – November 15.
- Be sure that all trash and garbage has been removed from your home. Make sure that your trash and recycle containers are stored inside your garage and not left outside.
- Turn off the main water valve to your home. This is a requirement for Condominiums, however if you have a single family home with a pool, you should confer with your pool company or plumber.
- If you have personal elevators, leave them at the top floor in case of flooding.
- Lock all doors and windows, including garage and garage access doors.

**There are no guarantees that mold or mildew will not form even if these suggestions are followed. Again, you should follow the direction of your AC service company or home watch representative regarding the A/C settings for you specific system.*