

## CLOSING UP YOUR MOBILE HOME FOR THE SEASON

**Clean out the refrigerator:** Don't keep anything that is likely to go bad during the time you are away.

**Empty the freezer:** Don't leave anything in it in case the electricity is off for an extended period of time; you won't necessarily be aware if this occurs, and the food will have thawed and refrozen, which is very dangerous.

**If you must keep frozen food:** here is *one method for determining if your freezer has warmed during the winter*: freeze a container of water solid, then place a coin on the surface of the ice; if the coin has sunk into the ice when you return, then the freezer warmed, letting the ice melt and then refreeze. Dispose of the food.

**Wash the refrigerator and freezer thoroughly:** Prop open their doors, (unless you are keeping food in the freezer), the better to forestall mold and mildew (which like to grow in the dark) and their odors, which may transfer to the refrigerator's plastic parts. To further thwart odors, place an open bag of activated charcoal on the inside of the open refrigerator.

**Remove all food from the pantry:** Dry foods that remain should be locked in tin- or aluminum-lined cupboards or cabinets, and seeds and grains should be stored in metal containers with tight lids.

**Guard against insects and rodents:** Wash kitchen trash containers and put away soap, sponges, candles and other possible sources of food for vermin.

**Wash everything:** If linens, bedding, towels and the like remain, they should be washed or cleaned and then stored in boxes, preferably rodent-proof ones. Strip beds to allow the mattresses to air out. Open empty drawers and closets; use mothballs in the others.

**Vacuum carpets and floors:** This will ensure that no crumbs or other sources of food remain for vermin.

**Unplug all appliances:** Unplug electric appliances, including microwave ovens, coffee makers, toasters, and TVs, to avoid the risk of fire in the event of a faulty switch or a rodent gnawing the wires.

**Electronics:** Unplug the phone so it does not ring, contact your TV/Internet provider about putting those services on hold, most will do so for a nominal fee.

**Use Circuit Breakers:** For electrical items such as Water Heaters, Washer, Dryer, Stoves, Dishwashers, Refrigerators (if empty) use the CIRCUIT BREAKER to disconnect them.

**Don't forget the gas: (IF you have it)** for long absences, some experts recommend shutting off gas hot water heaters completely.

**Protect the yard and garden.** Arrange to have the lawn mowed and shrubbery trimmed. Arrange to have your garden watered if necessary.

**Store outdoor furniture:** Place tables, chairs, hammocks, delicate garden ornamentation, and other outdoor accessories in a garage, shed or storage unit. Leave nothing outdoors that can be blown about by a strong wind.

**Stop your mail/Newspaper:** This can be done online at USPS.gov. Stop any other routine deliveries as well. Ask a neighbor to be on the lookout for packages which may come to you by UPS, FedEx or any another service.

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**Turn off the water at the exterior:** Make sure that the water supply is turned off completely at the main supply point. Turn the power off to the hot water heater because leaving it on could damage it.

**Taking care of toilets & sinks:** If a house is to be vacant for a long time, you may prevent water in a toilet's trap from evaporating (and thereby permitting sewer gases to enter the home) by raising the toilet's lid and seat and covering the bowl with saran wrap. Place a Ziploc bag filled with water over all Drains, this prevents insects from entering through the drains.

**Adjust the Thermostat:** The recommendation is to set to your thermostat to a level adequate to keep the inside temperature at about 80 – 82 (summer) and 45 – 55 (winter) to help prevent excess humidity and the buildup of mold. In addition, to assist in keeping the humidity low; use a product such as Damp Rid.

**Lock your house at all entry points:** High quality locks for your doors and windows are a must. Check that all your windows and doors are shut and locked. Close window drapes, blinds and curtains to keep carpeting and fabrics from fading. Lower the Awnings on the outside in case of Hurricanes and to help with security.

**Have someone make regular check-ins:** If there is a neighbor who'll remain in the area while you're gone, leave them with a key for emergency entry if something should go wrong. Also leave them with your cellphone number, home phone number, e-mail.

**Is your insurance coverage adequate for being absent:** Due to the increased potential for something to go wrong (for example, burst water pipes, leaking gas heating systems, etc.), insurance companies can be tough vacation home owners. Some even require having someone check your home regularly if you are more than 72 hours away from your home. This unfriendly little clause could void your insurance coverage if you haven't arranged for someone to check. Also, check the age of your heating system; if it is over a certain age, you may not be covered by insurance. Give yourself plenty of time to have it replaced, if necessary.

**Be prepared to spend a few hours getting your home ready before you and the family leave; your efforts will maintain the home's value and ensure its continued enjoyment.**