

HELPFUL HINTS FOR YOUR HOME

The following is a collection of ideas picked up over a period of time from fellow owners about how to protect your belongings from the desert Sun, Dryness, Insects, Thunderstorms and Burglars. These ideas are for when you will be away from your home for a period of time as well as when you are in residence.

- **Protection from the sun:**
 - The bright Arizona sun will fade your furniture, carpet and especially your clothing. If you have a skylight in your closet, most people cut an inch thick piece of Styrofoam and push it into the opening for the skylight. It will help keep your home cool while you are away. Another suggestion would be to cover the clothes in the closet with a sheet. You should close all blinds on windows facing the sun.
- **Protection from dryness:**
 - The low humidity here will damage your furniture over a period of time. You can reduce this damage by leaving a few containers of water around the house.
 - Also, be sure to close the drains to all your sinks to keep the water in the “J” trap under the sink from evaporating. The water in the “J” trap keeps the odor from the sewer from entering your home. Some drains are easy to forget such as the drain in the shower; that can be covered with a saucer. The drain where the washing machine empties; put a bit of duct tape over the opening.
 - Make sure to turn off the water to the washing machine.
 - Toilets: The small plastic valve that allows water to enter the toilet tank can fail, and you can have water running continually can be damaging to your home and costly. Prevent this problem by turning off the valve below the bottom of the tank. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap. It will prevent the water from evaporating and also prevent sewer roaches from entering your home through the toilet pipe.
 - Another suggestion is to occasionally operate appliances that use water, run water to kitchen & bath faucets, flush toilets, etc.
- **Water Heater:**
 - Turn the temperature down to the “Vacation” setting. This leaves the pilot light burning and will keep the water hot. If you expect to be gone for over a month the water heater should be turned “off” and then relight the pilot light upon your return.
- **Dish Washer and Washing Machine:**
 - The various hoses and valves connected to the machine tend to dry out over the summer. It is a good idea to start the machine(s) occasionally to keep the hoses from drying out.
- **Protection from insects:**
 - Summer is the time of year that moths and silverfish can invade your home. They can ruin your clothing while you are away. Hanging insect killer for your closet can be purchased. There is a “Do It Yourself” store locally. Another option is to hire an Insect Control company. Look in the Harried Homeowner Handbook for recommendations. Another suggestion is to sprinkle cricket killer around the outside of your home to help control crickets, ants and scorpions.
- **Protection from thunderstorms:**
 - Summer thunderstorms present two hazards; heavy rain water and electric power surges. Take a look at your roof, check for cracks in the surface that could produce leaks and make sure that no build-up of debris has occurred. Most of our desert trees shed leaves and other material, which could flow to the drain area and block the drain. The rain water, with no place to go, then begins to get deep, perhaps entering the skylights or vents. This could cause a lot of damage to your home.
 - These storms also cause power fluctuations in your electrical system. Unplug all appliances that are not being used, especially your TV, radios and computer. It is recommended to have all these sensitive electronic devices on a surge suppressor. Make sure to unplug your garage door opener. The unit has a small radio receiver and can be ruined by a lightning strike.
- **Refrigerator:**

- Some chose to leave it on to keep from having to restock. This is okay for a month or so, but for longer periods the plug should be pulled. This can save on your electric bill. Remember the refrigerator keeps things cold and creates heat outside the unit. Even if you keep your air conditioner set at the recommended 85 degrees, it is working extra because of the heat generated by the refrigerator. If you turn off your refrigerator, be sure to block the doors open to prevent an offensive odor.
- **Protection from burglars:**
 - Make your empty home look occupied. Be sure your post light has new bulbs. Leave some lights on timers in the living areas of your home. Leave a radio on a timer that turns on at various times during the day and night.
 - Make arrangements to keep your yard clean and trimmed. Make sure to have the irrigation system checked periodically for leaks in order to prevent large water bills or dead plants for lack of water. Pack rats can also be a problem. They like to nest in cactus and are destructive.
 - Notify the Post Office to have them either “hold” your mail or forward it to your vacation address. Notify the newspaper to stop delivery. Notify your security system company that you will be away. The most important notification to make is to your neighbors. Provide them with your travel plans and phone numbers where you can be reached in case of an emergency.
- **Fire Protection:**
 - This part of Pima County does not have public fire protection paid for by tax revenues. You may buy “Subscription Coverage” through Rural Metro. If you do not have this coverage you can still get their response, but you may be charged thousands of dollars for their service and your homeowners insurance may not cover the cost. Not having this protection may also affect your ability to be insured and/or the cost.
 - This Association has no fire hydrants. This does not necessarily mean that your fire insurance will be at a higher rate. You should inform your insurance company that the responding fire equipment carries 750 gallons of water and that a follow up “tanker” carries 1,500 gallons of water.

Other items of interest:

1. If you subscribe to cable TV, you may be able to save money by asking for their “Vacation Rate” while you are away.
2. The photo cell that controls your post light has a failsafe feature. If it fails, your post light stays on all the time. A replacement photo cell is available at your local hardware store for approximately \$ 10.00.
3. If you will be away during the winter months, don’t forget to have your water pipes prepared to prevent freezing.
4. If you are going to do some exterior painting and the Architecture Committee has approved your project, you can save about 30% on the paint cost by buying from Dunn Edwards (on Speedway). Tell them you live in the F airfield area. The approved paint colors are listed in the Rules and Regulations.
5. Your home is designed to vent the hot air from your clothes dryer out onto your roof area. This vent sometimes becomes clogged with lint from your dryer. You should check the roof vent at least annually to prevent your dryer from being overheated and becoming a fire hazard.
6. If you have a Security Alarm System that is monitored by a central alarm center, most insurance companies will discount your insurance costs.
7. The “ring around the toilet bowl” is easy to remove. A screen mesh-like product is available from your local hardware store. It looks like a window screen and comes in 8x10 sheets (choose #180 grit). This will remove the calcium buildup in the porcelain toilet surface and not scratch the bowl. Do not use on cultured marble surfaces such as your sinks and bathtub. Cultured marble is relatively soft and subject to scratching.
8. Clean the cultured marble surfaces with products such as BufferAll Cleaner/Descaler & Neutralizer or Olde Tyme Marble Polish. They will keep your cultured marble sinks, bath tub and bathroom counter tops looking like new for many years.