

We will not necessarily focus on theft or fire, protection in this discussion. Mostly just heat related damage and ensuring your house is as safe as possible before you leave.

1. Our history in traveling to from the Grand. 2007 onward...
  2. Need to protect our home and assets on the property...both man-made assets (water feature etc.) and organic assets (trees, plants etc.)
  3. We were told several different ways to treat our home and property when leaving in the heat. We learned the hard way on what to do and what not to do.
- Don't leave your AC on at all...just let your house handle the heat, it will be fine.
    - This is not something I suggest you do as we had many problems when we did this for one summer.
      - Alarm clocks broke
      - Handle to the step ladder fused to the wall, pulled off paint
      - Candles melted
      - Batteries depleted before they should have
      - Kitchen cupboard bumpers either melted, fell off or got hard

Because of this damage, we decided to make a process and list to protect our property.

### **Inside:**

- Have a neighbor, friend, family member or home watch service check the house every two weeks the entire time you are gone.
  - Especially important to have your house checked after a big storm!
  - Watch for any issues with the drip system (leaks can be very costly if not addressed).
  - Keep, maintain, and expose a list of service companies you use like the landscaper, pest control, air conditioning, plumbing, security company etc. so in case a problem does arise they can be contacted in your absence.
  - Ensure they care for your golf cart, check/add water and ensure the battery charger is working appropriately. Golf Carts are a big reason for fires!

- Ensure they water any indoor plants!
- Keep Air Conditioning working at all times...AC set at 86-90 degrees
- Put 6 or 7 gallon buckets with a cap of bleach in them throughout the house to keep some level of moisture in the air. The bleach slows down the rate of evaporation.
- Candles in the fridge
- Clean the garbage disposal – products and process can be found in a simple internet search.
- Leave 3 tablespoons to a half cup of vegetable oil in the dishwasher and garbage disposal to help keep seals moist.
- Make sure you replace the batteries in your fire alarms, watering systems, thermostats, and security system!
- Use automatic timers and nightlights in appropriate rooms.
- Unplug major appliances (oven, washer, dryer, hot water tank, etc.) and minor appliances (radio, TV, coffee maker, toasters, computer, etc.)
- Carbon Monoxide (CO) and Fire alarm batteries should be changed for prolonged trips away from the home.
- Technology: Best to have an alarm and security system hooked up with a service so that your house is protected while empty.
- Empty refrigerator but don't unplug it. Don't forget to empty the cupboards as well!
  - Recommend that you turn off your automatic ice maker.
- Turn your landline phone ringer off as an endless ringing phone means no one is home.
- Leave your interior door(s) open to allow the air circulation to reach all parts of your home.
- Keep your blinds closed to keep the heat out.
- Secure all windows and doors.

### **Garage:**

- Heat induced car problems: tires get flat and dry, hoses and other rubber parts become brittle and leak, leather becomes cracked and dry...
- Do car covers help? Will keep some dust off but do nothing to dissipate the heat

- The ultimate solution is to use both of these:
  - Car – the batter maintainer is necessary and should be on every automobile left unattended/undriven for 2 weeks or more in the heat.
  - If you can set this up, have a friend/family member start the car every month or so and drive it for 5 miles or so at temperature.
    - Note that if only one of these can be done, do the battery maintainer!
    - Also, I don't suggest disconnecting the negative cable on newer cars as it really confuses the computer systems and electronics causing additional issues on reconnect.
- Turn the water heater to the “vacation” setting.
- Unplug your garage door opener or secure it shut.
  - Alternatively, most newer garage door openers can connect to an app on your phone so you can manage them remotely. An example if MyQ. You can get alerts of your garage door is opened!
- Give your propane tanks and any combustible, flammable chemicals to someone for safekeeping or dispose of them properly.

## **Outside:**

- Put all of your outdoor/patio furniture in the garage
  - Minimize animal and weather damage
- Never stop the pest service. Bugs don't take the summer or heat season off!
- If you have a vacation mailbox, take out the bottom. If you don't, arrange for mail forwarding at least 2 weeks before you leave.
- You'll likely come back to weeds in your lawn no matter how well you prepare. Hire a yard service to periodically take care of your lawn while you're gone.
- If you have a pool, contact a pool maintenance service to take care of it while you're away. They will routinely check it for debris, check the chemical levels, and clean it out.
- If you own a hot tub, keep the water in it and turn off the heating system. If you drain the hot tub, the summer heat will damage the tub if it sits empty.
- If you have any standing water fixtures like a water feature, birdbath, or small pool for children, drain them. You can either drain and turn off any

fountains or let the water keep circulating. Standing water will attract mosquitos.

### **Other suggestions:**

1. You can build a smart home system for security where everything works together, fire alarms, CO alarms, garage doors, device control etc. and this can all be monitored and managed from app(s) on your phone or other mobile device.
  - a. Go over the Apps for the Home on my phone.
  - b. New tool called FLUME - [Flume Water | Smart Home Water Monitor | Water Leak Detector](#)
    - i. A Smarter Way to Track and Reduce Your Water Use
  - c. Drip System needs to be set to ensure your landscaping assets are maintained. A great tool on your phone to set/manage/track this is called Hydrowise – [Hydrowise | Smart Wi-Fi Irrigation Control](#)
    - i. Save Water and Protect Your Landscape
    - ii. Hydrowise-Ready Controllers and Hardware
    - iii. Hunter Wi-Fi controllers are compatible with Hydrowise Software
2. If you are gone for 14 or more days, sign up for Vacation Watch via the Grand Community Homeowners Association Patrol Service (CHAPS). You can sign up for this service in the Membership Office at the Palm Center or you can use the Vacation Watch Request Form. Log into your Grand Account and go here: [C.H.A.P.S. \(Evening Patrol & Vacation Watch\) - The Grand \(livegrandaz.com\)](#)
3. If you are gone for several months or more, put a hold on any entertainment service (streaming, cable etc.) and your internet service.
4. If you don't already have one, install a Residential Lock Box: A lock box is a heavy metal box, which is installed on an individual's home and contains a key to their home. The box is locked by a special key, which only the Surprise Fire Department has access. For details go here: <https://www.surpriseaz.gov/425/Lock-Box-Program>
5. Turn off the water to the inside of the house leaving outside water for your yard.
  - a. Before you leave, flush all of your toilets and run all of the faucets.

- b. Drain the faucets and showerhead extensions.
- 6. If you don't plan on bringing your valuables with you, take them to a safety deposit box or a safe storage center.
- 7. If you have natural gas, turn off the gas at the main valve<sup>2</sup>.