

Welcome Home Checklist

Everything to check when you return to your Arizona home for the winter

A house that sat empty for months can hide small problems that get bigger fast. Work through this list in order, starting with safety, then water, power and air conditioning, and leave the cosmetic items for last. Print it, tick the boxes, and keep it for next year.

Date arrived: _____ Address: _____

1. First 10 minutes: before you settle in

- ☐ **Walk the outside first.** Look for damage to the roof, stucco, windows, screens and doors.
- ☐ **Check doorways and the garage** for wasp nests, webs, and bird or rodent nesting.
- ☐ **Air out the house.** Open doors and windows for a few minutes.
- ☐ **If you smell gas, do not flip switches or use the phone inside.** Leave, then call the gas utility from outside.
- ☐ **Look and smell for water problems:** drips, damp spots, stained ceilings, musty odors.
- ☐ **Take dated photos** of anything wrong, before you clean or fix it (useful for insurance).
- ☐ **Collect mail and packages** and confirm your mail forwarding is switched to this address.

2. Safety and electrical

- ☐ **Test every smoke and carbon monoxide detector.** Replace batteries; replace any unit past its expiration date.
- ☐ **Check fire extinguishers:** gauge in the green and date current.
- ☐ **Check the breaker panel** for tripped breakers; reset GFCI outlets (kitchen, bath, garage, outdoors).
- ☐ **Look for chewed wires or cords** in the garage, attic access and behind appliances.
- ☐ **Check dryer and range-hood vents** for lint buildup or nests.
- ☐ **Replace burned-out bulbs** and reset clocks, timers and smart-home devices.

3. Water and plumbing

- ☐ **Turn the main water valve back on slowly** (if you shut it off) and watch for leaks.
- ☐ **Run every faucet, shower and tub** until the water runs clear; flush every toilet.
- ☐ **Check under every sink** and around toilets and washer hoses for drips.
- ☐ **Water heater:** check for leaks around the tank, then switch it on and set the temperature. For gas units, follow the manufacturer's instructions or call a plumber.
- ☐ **Run empty cycles** on the dishwasher and washing machine.
- ☐ **Replace water filters** (refrigerator, under-sink) and top up water softener salt.
- ☐ **Check outdoor hose bibs and hoses** for cracks or leaks.

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- ☐ **Compare your first water bill** with past years. A sudden jump can mean a hidden leak.

4. Air conditioning and heating

- ☐ **Replace the air filter.** Check all vents and returns for dust or pests.
- ☐ **Replace thermostat batteries,** then set the schedule and test the system.
- ☐ **Listen and look:** unusual noises, weak airflow, ice on the lines, water pooling near the unit.
- ☐ **Check the outdoor unit:** clear debris and nests and keep plants trimmed back.
- ☐ **Check the condensate drain line** for clogs or overflow.
- ☐ **Book a professional tune-up** if the system has not been serviced in the past year.

5. Kitchen and appliances

- ☐ **Throw out anything left behind** and clean out the fridge and freezer. Confirm they are at a safe temperature.
- ☐ **Check the pantry** for pests in stored dry goods.
- ☐ **Test the oven, stove, microwave and garbage disposal.**
- ☐ **Wipe down surfaces** and run a cleaning cycle in the dishwasher.

6. Pests

- ☐ **Look for signs of scorpions, roaches, ants, spiders and rodents:** droppings, gnaw marks, webs, nests.
- ☐ **Check the garage, under sinks, cabinets and door seals.** Seal gaps where pests can enter.
- ☐ **Check eaves, trees and block walls** for bee swarms or wasp nests. Do not disturb a hive; call a professional.
- ☐ **Wear gloves and a mask** and air out the space before cleaning up droppings.
- ☐ **Schedule pest service** if you do not already have a recurring plan.

7. Pool and spa

- ☐ **Have your pool service inspect** the pump, filter, heater, water level and chemistry before anyone swims.
- ☐ **Test the pool barrier:** gates self-close and latch, and door alarms work.
- ☐ **Skim debris** and check equipment for leaks or unusual noise.
- ☐ **Check the spa or hot tub** cover, heater and jets.

8. Yard, lawn and irrigation

- ☐ **Check the irrigation controller:** power and backup battery, correct date and time, and a winter watering schedule. Winter needs much less water than summer.
- ☐ **Run every zone and walk the yard.** Look for broken heads, leaks, geysers and dry spots.
- ☐ **Decide on a winter lawn.** Many Arizona lawns go dormant and brown in winter, and many homeowners overseed with ryegrass in October. Ask a lawn professional what is right for your yard and what timing is still possible.

- ☐ **Mow, edge and clear weeds** from the lawn, rock areas and planting beds.
- ☐ **Prune trees and shrubs**; remove dead plants, fallen limbs and old palm fronds.
- ☐ **Plan for cold snaps**. Frost can damage tender plants, so keep covers handy and move pots.
- ☐ **Top up rock or mulch** where it has thinned or washed out.
- ☐ **Look for gopher, rodent or ant damage** in the lawn and beds.
- ☐ **Check outdoor lighting** and walkways for trip hazards.

9. Exterior and structure

- ☐ **Roof and stucco**: look for broken tiles, cracks and stains.
- ☐ **Windows and doors**: check seals, screens and weatherstripping.
- ☐ **Garage door**: test the opener and safety sensors; replace remote batteries.
- ☐ **Fences, gates and block walls**: check for leaning, gaps or storm damage.
- ☐ **Patio furniture, grill and shade structures**: clean and check for sun damage or loose parts.
- ☐ **Mailbox and house numbers**: repair or replace if faded or damaged.

10. Vehicles and garage

- ☐ **Car, RV, trailer or golf cart**: check the battery, tire pressure and fluids.
- ☐ **Confirm registration and insurance** are current.
- ☐ **Check the garage** for pests, leaks and stored items that shifted or spoiled.

11. Security and utilities

- ☐ **Test door locks**; change garage keypad and alarm codes if others had access while you were away.
- ☐ **Collect spare keys** from friends, neighbors or your home-watch service.
- ☐ **Test the alarm system and cameras**; update Wi-Fi and account passwords.
- ☐ **Confirm electric, water, gas, trash, internet, phone and TV services** are active and billing correctly.
- ☐ **Review your home-watch report** (if you use one) and update emergency contacts.

12. Paperwork and local setup

- ☐ **HOA**: check for notices, dues, violations and approval requirements for projects.
- ☐ **Insurance and property tax**: confirm your homeowners policy and tax statements are current.
- ☐ **Trash and recycling**: confirm the pickup schedule and bulk-pickup dates.
- ☐ **Update your address** with your bank, pharmacy and doctors if it changes seasonally.

13. Book in your first 30 days

- ☐ **A/C tune-up** (if not done this year)
- ☐ **Recurring pool service** and **pest control**
- ☐ **Lawn and landscape service**, including irrigation checks
- ☐ **Deep clean**, window washing and dryer-vent cleaning
- ☐ **Water heater flush** and any repairs from your walkthrough

Your local contacts

Fill this in once and keep it with the checklist. Call a licensed professional for gas, electrical, roof or structural concerns.

Service	Company / person	Phone	Notes
Home-watch service			
Pool service			
Pest control			
A/C and heating			
Plumber			
Electrician			
Lawn and landscape			
Irrigation repair			
Handyman			
Cleaning service			
HOA or community manager			
Electric utility			
Water utility			
Gas utility			
Insurance agent			

Need a hand with the yard? Little John's Lawns is a family-owned lawn care and landscaping company. Get a free quote at littlejohnslawns.com.

Call (520) 650-8960

Or scan the code to get started.



This checklist is general guidance and does not replace manufacturer instructions or advice from a licensed professional.