Cape Coral's Snowbird Season Is Arriving: Lux Cooling Shares HVAC Checklist for Seasonal Homeowners

As seasonal residents return to homes that sat closed through Florida's most humid months, Lux Cooling shares what to check before running the AC, and how to leave the system next spring so mold doesn't move in while they're away.



Cape Coral, Florida Nov 22, 2026 (Issuewire.com) - Snowbird season is arriving in Southwest Florida, and Lux Cooling, a locally owned HVAC company in Cape Coral, is sharing a short checklist for seasonal homeowners walking back into houses that have been closed since spring.

Florida remains the country's top winter destination. Florida Realtors reported in October that 63 Florida cities rank among the nation's 100 best snowbird destinations for the 2026-27 season, with Fort Myers and Cape Coral both on the list. Florida Power & Light estimates the state's seasonal population at roughly 1.5 million residents. Many of them are returning this month to homes that sat empty through the hottest, most humid stretch of the year.

That is when the air conditioner matters most, even with no one home. In Florida, the AC does more than cool. As it runs, it pulls moisture out of the air, and in an empty house it is usually the only thing

doing that job. If it ran too little over the summer, or not at all, humidity can build up indoors and give mold a place to grow.

"The first thing a lot of seasonal owners do is walk in, turn the thermostat down and move on," said Oscar Rodriguez, owner of Lux Cooling. "We'd rather they take ten minutes first. The house has been closed for six months in Florida heat. A quick look at the vents, the filter and the drain line tells you whether the system kept up while you were gone."

Lux Cooling's checklist for arriving homeowners:

Look and smell before you run it. Check for a musty odor near supply vents and the air handler closet, and look for visible growth on vent covers, around ceiling vents, and in the drain pan under the indoor unit. Small spots on a vent cover can be cleaned. Widespread growth inside the air handler or ductwork is a reason to have the system inspected before running it, since running it can spread spores through the house.

Replace the air filter. A filter that sat through a Florida summer may be dusty or damp. A fresh one helps the system move air properly from the first day.

Check the condensate drain. The drain line carries away the water the AC removes from the air. Algae and debris can build up in it while the system sits. A clogged line can trip a safety switch that shuts the AC off, or overflow into a closet or ceiling. Make sure the line is clear and that the outdoor end is not blocked by mulch, plants or standing water.

Clear around the outdoor unit. Remove leaves, branches and yard debris that collected over the summer and storm season, and trim back plants so air can flow freely around the unit.

Run it and watch it. Once the system is on, confirm it cools, cycles off normally, and that water is draining outside. Replace thermostat batteries if the display is dim or blank.

Check the humidity. An inexpensive indoor humidity meter shows whether the house is drying out. Florida Power & Light recommends keeping indoor humidity below 60 percent to help prevent mold.

Planning ahead for spring departure. Lux Cooling says the most useful advice for seasonal owners is about how they leave in April or May, not how they arrive.

Published guidance on away settings varies. Florida Power & Light suggests setting the thermostat to 80 degrees while keeping humidity below 60 percent, and UF/IFAS Extension advises no higher than 84. But research from the Florida Solar Energy Center found that in some vacant homes, settings of 83 and 85 degrees did not cause the AC to run at all during certain periods, especially in cooler months. Even lower settings are not a guarantee. A Palm Beach Post reader recently described a condo left at 77 degrees whose indoor humidity still climbed into the 80s, leading to mold their insurance would not cover.

"The temperature setting alone doesn't tell you whether the house stayed dry," Rodriguez said. "If the AC never runs, it never takes moisture out. That's why we tell seasonal owners to think about humidity, not just degrees."

Before leaving, Lux Cooling recommends replacing the filter and clearing the condensate line, leaving the system on rather than off, using a dehumidify mode or humidity setting if the thermostat has one, and

installing a thermostat or sensor that can be checked remotely so humidity can be watched from up north. Having a neighbor or home-watch service check the house periodically adds another layer of protection.

Lux Cooling is owner-operated and locally owned in Cape Coral and has served Southwest Florida homeowners since 2022. The company holds Florida Certified Air Conditioning Contractor License #CAC1822093 and an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau. It provides AC installation and replacement, AC repair, ductless mini-split services, heat pump services, and ductwork repair, sealing and replacement. Common repair parts are kept on the truck so many repairs can be finished in one visit, service calls are available 24 hours a day, and estimates on replacements and new installations are free.

Seasonal and year-round homeowners in Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Naples, Bonita Springs, Estero, Punta Gorda and surrounding communities can contact Lux Cooling at (239) 984-5775 or visit luxcoolingllcfl.com.

About Lux Cooling
Lux Cooling is an owner-operated, locally owned HVAC company based in Cape Coral, Florida, serving homeowners throughout Southwest Florida since 2022. The company provides air conditioning installation, replacement and repair, along with ductless mini-split, heat pump and ductwork services.

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