



Hilton Head Second-Home Owner Pack

Your house, cared for - even when you are not there. Arrival and departure checklists, a month-by-month coastal calendar, hurricane preparation, and the logs that keep a second home safe, dry, and ready for your next visit.

For homes on Hilton Head Island and in Bluffton, Beaufort, and the surrounding Lowcountry. Print it, keep it at the house, and share the key pages with anyone who checks on your home.

Inside: 40+ printable checklists • Seasonal schedules • Hurricane playbook • Vendor & home-watch logs • Annual budget planner

A second home should feel like a vacation - not a second job

Most second-home damage does not happen in a storm. It happens quietly, in the weeks nobody is home: a slow leak, humidity creeping past 60 percent, a clogged gutter, pests in a dark pantry. All of it is expensive - and almost all of it is preventable with a simple routine.

This pack gives you that routine, built for how Hilton Head homes actually live: salt air, summer humidity, afternoon downpours, pollen, and a hurricane season from June 1 through November 30.

How to use this pack

1. Fill in page 3 first

Your Home at a Glance holds every shut-off, code, and contact in one place. Complete it on your next visit and leave a copy at the house.

2. Tape up the two key checklists

Arrival (page 6) inside the front door, Departure (page 7) by the door you leave from. They take 15 minutes each and prevent most problems.

3. Follow the seasons, not your memory

Pages 8-12 break the year into four Lowcountry seasons with exactly what to do in each. Set phone reminders for the first weekend of each season.

4. Hand pages to your home watcher

Pages 5, 17, and 18 are made to share - the while-you're-away routine, contacts log, and visit log. Whoever checks your home should use the same list you do.

Contents

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 3 Your Home at a Glance | 11 Fall & Peak Hurricane Season |
| 4 The Lowcountry Reality | 12 Winter: Quiet-Season Care |
| 5 While You're Away | 13-14 Hurricane Playbook |
| 6 Arrival Checklist | 15 Humidity, Mold & HVAC |
| 7 Departure Checklist | 16 Roof, Gutters & Exterior |
| 8 The Year at a Glance | 17 Plumbing, Pests & Appliances |
| 9 Spring: Pollen & Prep Season | 18 Contacts & Home-Watch Log |
| 10 Summer: Heat & Humidity Season | 19-20 Guest-Ready, Budget & Notes |

A note on peace of mind: If you would rather someone local walk this list for you, page 20 explains how Above The Boards maintenance plans work. Everything in this pack is yours to use either way - with us, with another watcher, or on your own.

Your home at a glance

Complete this page on your next visit. When a neighbor, watcher, or tradesperson calls about a problem, everything they need is here - no digging through texts and old emails.

PROPERTY ADDRESS

COMMUNITY / PLANTATION & GATE CODE

ALARM COMPANY, CODE & PASSWORD

WI-FI NETWORK & PASSWORD

MAIN WATER SHUT-OFF LOCATION

WATER HEATER LOCATION & BREAKER

ELECTRICAL PANEL LOCATION

GAS SHUT-OFF (IF APPLICABLE)

HVAC: SYSTEM COUNT, FILTER SIZES, SERVICE CO.

SEPTIC OR SEWER? LAST PUMPED / SERVICED

IRRIGATION CONTROLLER & RAIN SENSOR LOCATION

SPARE KEY / LOCKBOX LOCATION & CODE

The five numbers that matter most

Who	Name	Phone
Home watcher / keyholder		
Plumber		
HVAC company		
Neighbor you trust		
Insurance agent & policy no.		

Take a photo of this page and keep it in your phone favorites. Also photograph every shut-off valve with its location - a picture beats a description at 11 p.m. in a storm.

The Lowcountry reality: what actually damages homes here

Hilton Head is gentle on people and hard on houses. Four forces do most of the damage, and this whole pack is organized around beating them.

60%+

Humidity is enemy No. 1

Indoor humidity above 60 percent feeds mold on drywall, leather, books, and inside HVAC ducts. An empty, sealed, warm house is a mold incubator. Keeping air moving and conditioned - even at 78-80 degrees while away - is the single most protective habit in this pack.

365

Salt air never takes a day off

Salt corrodes outdoor HVAC units, door hardware, grill parts, bikes, and electrical connections - even a mile from the beach. Rinsing, covering, and choosing stainless or coated hardware stretches the life of everything outside.

Jun-Nov

Storm season is six months long

Hurricane season runs June 1 to November 30, peaking mid-August through October. Most seasons bring no landfall - but tropical rain bands alone can drop inches of rain in hours and find every weak gutter, seal, and roof flashing.

24/7

Pests love an empty house

Palmetto bugs, ants, spiders, and rodents treat a quiet house as safe territory. Regular pest service, sealed food, and no standing water keep a visit from starting with an unwelcome committee.

Lowcountry quirks worth knowing

- **Pollen season is real:** In March and April, oak and pine pollen coats every porch, car, and screen in yellow-green dust. Plan exterior washing after it peaks, not before.
- **Afternoon storms are routine:** Summer downpours arrive fast and hard. Gutters and drainage matter more here than almost anywhere inland.
- **It does freeze - briefly:** A handful of nights a year dip below freezing. Exposed pipes and irrigation lines still need winter attention (page 12).
- **Palmettos drop, oaks drip:** Fronds, acorns, and Spanish moss shed constantly. Roof and gutter debris is a year-round chore, not a fall one.
- **Flood maps matter:** Know your flood zone and keep your elevation certificate with your insurance papers. Much of the island sits close to sea level.

While you're away: the standing routine

Set these settings every departure and schedule these checks while the house sits empty. This page is the one to share with your home watcher.

Standing settings for an empty house

System	Setting	Why
Thermostat (summer)	78-80°F, fan on AUTO, dehumidifier if fitted set to 50%	Controls humidity without a huge power bill
Thermostat (winter)	Heat at 55-58°F minimum	Protects pipes on freeze nights
Main water	OFF if away more than a week (see page 7)	A burst line in an empty house is the costliest common disaster
Water heater	VACATION mode or OFF at breaker	Saves energy; no hot tank to leak under pressure
Ceiling fans	OFF (fans cool people, not rooms)	Reduces wear and power use; AC does the humidity work
Smart monitoring	Leak sensors under sinks, water heater, washer; camera doorbell; smart thermostat alerts ON	You hear about a leak in minutes, not weeks

Home-watch visit checklist (every 1-2 weeks)

- ☐ Walk the full exterior: roof debris, screens, doors, windows, any storm damage
- ☐ Check mailbox and front door; remove flyers and packages so the house looks lived-in
- ☐ Run every faucet for 30 seconds and flush every toilet (keeps traps full, blocks sewer gas and pests)
- ☐ Look under every sink and around the water heater for leaks or moisture
- ☐ Check thermostat reading and indoor humidity (target: under 55 percent)
- ☐ Sniff test: musty smell is an early mold warning - note it in the log (page 18)
- ☐ Check the breaker panel for tripped breakers; confirm the fridge is cold
- ☐ Start any stored car or golf cart; check the garage for pests or water
- ☐ Photograph anything unusual and send it to the owner the same day

Call the owner immediately if: there is standing water anywhere, the AC is not running in summer, a breaker keeps tripping, you smell gas, or a door or window is damaged or open.

Arrival checklist: open the house in 15 minutes

Do these in order, every arrival - even for one night. The walk-through catches problems while they are still small and cheap.

First walk-through (before you unpack)

- ☐ Walk room to room: look at ceilings and corners for water stains, check for musty smells
- ☐ Look under every sink; feel supply lines and traps for dampness
- ☐ Check around toilets, the water heater, washer, and fridge water line
- ☐ Confirm the AC is running and the house feels dry, not clammy
- ☐ Check windows and doors for damage, leaks, or pest entry points

Turn the house back on

- ☐ Main water ON (if you turned it off) - then re-walk the house after 10 minutes listening for running water
- ☐ Water heater back to normal temperature (120°F)
- ☐ Thermostat to comfort setting; replace the HVAC filter if it is due
- ☐ Open blinds and curtains; let light in and check screens before opening windows
- ☐ Run all faucets 1-2 minutes to flush standing water; run the dishwasher empty on hot if the house sat over a month
- ☐ Check fridge and freezer temperatures; toss anything doubtful
- ☐ Test smoke and CO detectors if the house sat empty over 3 months
- ☐ Check the golf cart / car battery, tire pressure, and fuel
- ☐ Sweep the entry and porch so the house feels like yours again

Found a problem? Photograph it, note it on page 20, and call from your contacts page (18) before it becomes the story of the trip. Small leaks and odd smells found on day one are the cheapest repairs you will ever make.

Departure checklist: close the house so it stays safe

Fifteen unhurried minutes here prevent the most common - and most expensive - second-home disasters. Do not skip steps because the last visit was fine.

Water: the No. 1 departure priority

- ☐ Away more than a week? Turn the main water OFF (location on page 3), then open a faucet briefly to relieve pressure
- ☐ Water heater to VACATION or OFF at the breaker when the water is off
- ☐ Empty and turn off the ice maker; prop the fridge doors open only if you empty and unplug it entirely
- ☐ Add a splash of mineral oil or RV antifreeze gel to rarely used drains? No - simply run water so every trap is full
- ☐ Empty all trash - every can, every bathroom - and take perishables with you or toss them

Climate, power, and security

- ☐ Thermostat set per page 5 (78-80°F summer / 55-58°F winter heat)
- ☐ Clean or note the HVAC filter date; set a reminder if a change falls due while away
- ☐ Unplug small appliances, TVs on surge strips OFF, chargers out of walls
- ☐ Close and lock every window and door; set blinds to a lived-in look
- ☐ Arm the alarm; set light timers on two lamps in different rooms
- ☐ Secure porch and patio furniture (or note it is storm-secured, page 13)
- ☐ Close the fireplace damper; check the grill is off, covered, and its propane valve closed
- ☐ Tell your watcher and your trusted neighbor your dates - a text takes 30 seconds
- ☐ Final slow walk: listen for running water, dripping, or an AC short-cycling, then lock up

The two mistakes that cost owners the most: leaving the water on for a long absence, and turning the AC fully off in summer to save on power. A single supply-line failure or one moldy month costs more than years of both bills.

The year at a glance

One page for the fridge. The four pages after it expand each season into full checklists.

Season	Focus	Key jobs
SPRING Mar-May	Pollen, prep, and pre-season systems	HVAC tune-up before summer; wash house after pollen peaks; service pest control; check roof and screens; irrigation start-up check
SUMMER Jun-Aug	Heat, humidity, and storm readiness	Humidity under 55%; AC filters monthly; hurricane kit stocked by June 1; gutter checks after big storms; mid-season home-watch visits
FALL Sep-Nov	Peak storm season, then the best weather of the year	Stay storm-ready through October; post-storm inspections; fall gutter and roof-debris clearing; schedule winterizing for late November
WINTER Dec-Feb	Quiet-season care and project season	Freeze-night pipe protection; heater checks; best window for repairs, painting, and projects while the island is quiet

Fixed dates to put on your calendar now

- ☐ **June 1:** Hurricane season opens - kit stocked, documents photographed, tree work done
- ☐ **Every month:** HVAC filter check, home-watch visit at least twice if the house is empty
- ☐ **Every 6 months:** Smoke/CO detector batteries, water-heater sediment check, dryer vent check
- ☐ **Every year:** HVAC professional service (spring), pest-service renewal, roof visual inspection, insurance policy review before June
- ☐ **Every 2-3 years:** Exterior caulk and paint touch-up audit; washing-machine hoses replaced (braided steel only)

Tax and insurance rhythm: Beaufort County property tax bills arrive in the fall, and many owners review wind and flood coverage each spring before hurricane season. Put both renewals on the same calendar as the seasonal pages that follow.

Spring: pollen, prep, and pre-season systems

Spring is the Lowcountry's working season. Summer guests, summer heat, and storm season all arrive soon after - spring is when you get ahead of all three.

- ☐ Book the HVAC tune-up now, before summer queues form; confirm both cooling and dehumidification work
- ☐ Wait for the pollen peak to pass (usually by late April), then wash the house, screens, porch, and outdoor furniture
- ☐ Inspect the roof from the ground with binoculars: lifted shingles, debris in valleys, moss in shaded spots
- ☐ Clean gutters and confirm downspouts carry water at least 4 feet from the foundation
- ☐ Renew or start quarterly pest control before insects get active
- ☐ Start up irrigation: run every zone, fix broken heads, confirm the rain sensor works
- ☐ Test every window and door lock; lubricate salt-stiff hardware with silicone spray
- ☐ Service the golf cart and any stored vehicle; check for rodent nests in engine bays and garages
- ☐ Walk the yard: trim branches back 6-10 feet from the roof, clear brush from the AC unit (2 feet all around)
- ☐ Review insurance: confirm wind and flood coverage is current before June 1
- ☐ Restock the basics for the season: filters, batteries, light bulbs, cleaning supplies, paper goods
- ☐ Deep-clean before the first long stay: fridge coils, ceiling fans, dryer vent, bathroom exhaust fans

Spring project window: Contractors book out fast from May onward. If you want painting, deck work, or repairs done this year, spring is when to schedule them - winter (page 12) is when to do the big ones.

Summer: heat, humidity, and storm readiness

Summer tests everything. The AC runs daily, humidity pushes in from every side, afternoon storms hammer the roof and gutters, and hurricane season is open.

- ☐ Check the indoor humidity weekly when in residence; keep it under 55 percent (page 15)
- ☐ Change HVAC filters monthly in summer - pollen and runtime clog them fast
- ☐ Pour a cup of vinegar in the AC condensate drain line monthly to prevent the algae clog that floods closets
- ☐ After every major storm: walk the exterior, check for ceiling stains, empty and reset anything the wind moved
- ☐ Keep gutters flowing; summer downpours expose every clog within minutes
- ☐ Rinse outdoor showers, hose bibs, and beach-gear storage to limit salt and sand buildup
- ☐ Check pool equipment weekly if fitted, or confirm your pool service reports are arriving
- ☐ Watch the yard: summer growth is explosive - mowing and trimming cannot pause for a month
- ☐ Keep the hurricane kit stocked and the car fueled during any storm watch (page 13)
- ☐ If renting or hosting guests, run the guest-ready list (page 19) between every stay

Empty house in summer? This is the highest-risk season to leave a home unwatched. AC failure plus August humidity can produce visible mold in under two weeks. Twice-monthly watch visits are the minimum; a smart thermostat with alerts is close to essential.

Fall: peak storm season, then the best weather of the year

September and October are statistically the most active part of hurricane season in the Lowcountry - and, between storms, the most beautiful weeks to be here. Stay ready first, enjoy second.

- ☐ Keep the hurricane routine (page 13) fully ready through the end of October - do not stand down early
- ☐ After any storm, run the recovery checklist (page 14) even if the house looks fine from the street
- ☐ Clear roof and gutter debris again: oak and palmetto drop peaks as weather cools
- ☐ Check exterior caulk and weatherstripping before the heating season; seal gaps pests use to come inside for winter
- ☐ Service the heating side of the HVAC before the first cold snap
- ☐ Test the fireplace and chimney before first use if the house sat all summer
- ☐ Audit outdoor furniture and cushions; clean and store anything that will not survive winter storms outside
- ☐ Review the year: what broke, what is aging, what goes on next year's project and budget list (page 20)
- ☐ Watch for Beaufort County property tax and any HOA or regime fee notices in the fall mail
- ☐ Book winter projects now while contractor schedules open up

The fall reward: Late October and November bring dry air, empty beaches, and the easiest living of the year. It is the best time to host, to do a deep home inventory with photos, and to update page 3 of this pack.

Winter: quiet-season care and project season

Winters are mild - most days in the 50s and 60s - but the island does freeze a few nights a year, and an unheated, unwatched house is still a vulnerable one.

- ☐ Before any forecast freeze: insulate exposed outdoor pipes and hose bibs, cover backflow preventers
- ☐ On freeze nights in an empty house: heat at 55-58°F minimum, cabinet doors under sinks open, faucets on exterior walls set to a slow drip if a hard freeze (below 28°F for hours) is forecast
- ☐ After a freeze: check for leaks before assuming all is well - pipe splits often show only when they thaw
- ☐ Reduce irrigation to winter frequency; overwatering in cool weather invites lawn fungus
- ☐ Keep pest service active: rodents and insects move indoors as it cools
- ☐ Run the generator under load once a month if fitted, and keep its fuel fresh
- ☐ Use the quiet season: schedule painting, flooring, deck, and remodel work now, when trades are available
- ☐ Do the annual deep checks: water-heater age and anode, washing-machine hoses, dryer vent run, attic for leaks and pests
- ☐ Update your photo inventory of furnishings and valuables for insurance, room by room
- ☐ Rest, visit, enjoy the empty island - and leave the house closed up per page 7 when you go

Before the storm: preparation in three stages

Hurricane season runs June 1 to November 30. Preparation done in June is calm and cheap; preparation done in the 48 hours before landfall is neither. Work in stages.

Stage 1 - Every June (season setup)

- ☐ Photograph or video every room, exterior side, and the roof line for insurance records; store copies off-site or in the cloud
- ☐ Confirm wind and flood policies are active; know your hurricane deductible (often a percentage of insured value, not a flat amount)
- ☐ Have dead or leaning trees and roof-line branches removed by a tree service - June, not September
- ☐ Know your shutters: fitted panels, accordion, or plywood? Test-fit or confirm hardware is stored and labeled
- ☐ Stock the kit: water, flashlights, batteries, battery radio, first aid, tarps, bungees, work gloves, basic tools
- ☐ Save key numbers in your phone: county emergency info, utility outage line, insurer claims line, your watcher

Stage 2 - Storm is forecast (about 72 hours out)

- ☐ Decide early whether you are staying or leaving; if officials order an evacuation for your zone, go - re-entry can be restricted for days
- ☐ Install shutters or board vulnerable glass; bring in or tie down everything outside: furniture, grills, bikes, bins, decor
- ☐ Clear gutters and yard drains; move valuables and electronics off floors and away from windows
- ☐ Fill tubs and containers with water; freeze extra water bottles to extend fridge cold if power fails
- ☐ Fuel the car and generator; charge phones and battery packs; withdraw some cash
- ☐ Tell your watcher and insurer's contact where you will be; photograph the house secured

Stage 3 - Final 24 hours

- ☐ Turn the fridge and freezer to their coldest settings; eat or share perishables
- ☐ Unplug sensitive electronics; if leaving, consider shutting water off at the main
- ☐ Lock, alarm, one last photo walk - then stop. Property is replaceable; the last hours are for people

After the storm: the first 48 hours back

Whether you rode it out or return after re-entry opens, work this list in order. Document first, clean second, repair third - your insurer will thank you, and so will your wallet.

Safety first

- ☐ Do not enter if there is standing water near electrical panels, a smell of gas, or visible structural damage - call the utility or emergency services first
- ☐ Watch for downed lines, displaced wildlife (snakes and alligators move with floodwater), and unstable trees
- ☐ Wear gloves and closed shoes for every cleanup task; floodwater is not clean water

Document, then mitigate

- ☐ Photograph and video all damage before moving or removing anything - wide shots, then close-ups, then serial numbers where relevant
- ☐ Make temporary repairs that prevent more damage (tarp a roof, board a window, shut off leaking water) and keep every receipt
- ☐ Remove wet carpet, padding, and saturated items promptly; run fans and dehumidifiers as soon as power allows - mold starts within 24-48 hours
- ☐ File the insurance claim early; storms create long queues, and claim number order matters
- ☐ Log every call, name, and promise in the notes page of this pack

Systems check

- ☐ Test every faucet; if water was compromised, follow county boil-water guidance until it is lifted
- ☐ Have an electrician check any panel or outlet that got wet before using it
- ☐ Inspect the attic and crawl space once it is safe: most hidden storm damage lives there
- ☐ If the house will sit empty after cleanup, reset it fully per page 7 before leaving

Beware storm chasers: After major storms, out-of-area crews solicit repair work door to door. Use known local companies from your contacts page, get written estimates, and never pay in full up front.

Humidity, mold, and HVAC: the system that protects everything else

If you master one section of this pack, make it this one. In the Lowcountry, your air conditioner is not a comfort appliance - it is your home's primary defense against mold, warped wood, swollen doors, and that musty second-home smell.

The numbers to live by

Measure	Target	If it drifts
Indoor humidity	45-55% (never sustained above 60%)	Check AC runtime, add a dehumidifier, look for water intrusion
Thermostat while away (summer)	78-80°F	Lower is safer for humidity but costs more; never OFF
Condensate drain	Clear, draining freely	Vinegar monthly; a clog backs water into walls and ceilings
Filter	Clean, correctly sized	Monthly in summer, every 2 months otherwise

Mold prevention habits

- ☐ Run bathroom exhaust fans 20-30 minutes after showers; leave shower doors open to dry
- ☐ Never store cardboard, leather goods, or important papers in the garage or attic
- ☐ Leave interior doors and closet doors ajar while away so air circulates everywhere
- ☐ Check the classic spots monthly: under sinks, behind toilets, AC closets, north-facing exterior walls, window sills
- ☐ Treat small surface mold (under a few square feet) promptly with proper cleaner and gloves; larger areas, or mold inside walls or ducts, is a professional job
- ☐ Keep a simple hygrometer in the main living area and one in the primary bedroom - two readings tell the truth about the whole house

Smart upgrade worth it: A smart thermostat with humidity display and phone alerts, plus two water-leak sensors (water heater and washing machine), covers the two disasters that ruin empty houses. Together they cost less than one insurance deductible.

Roof, gutters, and exterior: keep water outside

Water always wins eventually - your job is to make sure it lands where it should. A twice-yearly exterior routine keeps it that way.

Twice a year (spring and fall)

- ☐ Clean gutters and downspouts; confirm water exits well away from the foundation
- ☐ Ground-level roof inspection with binoculars: missing or curled shingles, exposed fasteners, sagging areas, debris dams in valleys
- ☐ Check flashing around chimneys, vents, and skylights - the source of most "roof leaks" that are not the roof at all
- ☐ Walk the siding: cracked caulk, peeling paint, soft or rotted trim boards, especially on the shaded north side
- ☐ Pressure-wash or soft-wash mildew off siding, porches, and walkways (slippery algae is a liability, not just a look)
- ☐ Service and inspect decks and porches: loose boards, rusted fasteners, soft spots at posts and stairs
- ☐ Trim vegetation off the house entirely - plants touching siding hold moisture and give pests a bridge

Every watch visit or monthly

- ☐ Look for new stains on ceilings below bathrooms and roof valleys after heavy rain
- ☐ Check screens, lanai, and pool cage if fitted for tears and loose splines
- ☐ Rinse the outdoor AC unit's coil gently with a hose to clear salt and pollen buildup
- ☐ Confirm outdoor lighting works - a dark house advertises an empty one

Plumbing, pests, and appliances

Plumbing: cheap checks, expensive failures

- ☐ Replace rubber washing-machine hoses with braided steel; check them yearly, replace every 3-5 years
- ☐ Know the manufacture date of your water heater (on its label); plan replacement around year 10-12 rather than after a failure
- ☐ Exercise shut-off valves under sinks and behind toilets twice a year so they work when you need them
- ☐ Listen for running toilets between visits - a silent flapper leak can add hundreds to a water bill and mask real leaks
- ☐ If your water bill or meter reading jumps with the house empty, treat it as a leak until proven otherwise

Pests: the quarterly rhythm

- ☐ Keep quarterly professional pest service year-round, interior and exterior - gaps are when infestations start
- ☐ Store all food, including pet food, in sealed hard containers; never leave fruit out in an empty house
- ☐ Seal gaps around pipes, dryer vents, and garage doors - a pencil-width gap is a rodent doorway
- ☐ Keep mulch and firewood away from the foundation; both shelter termites and roaches
- ☐ Schedule the annual termite inspection and keep the bond current - in South Carolina this is standard, serious practice, not an extra

Appliances

- ☐ Clean the dryer vent run yearly - lint plus humidity is a fire risk and a moisture source
- ☐ Vacuum fridge coils every 6 months; check door seals with a dollar-bill test (it should drag, not slide out freely)
- ☐ Run the dishwasher and disposal monthly even in an empty house to keep seals from drying out

Contacts and home-watch log

Full vendor and emergency contacts

Service	Company	Phone	Notes / Account
Home watch			
Handyman / home care			
Plumber			
Electrician			
HVAC			
Pest / termite			
Lawn / landscaping			
Pool service			
Cleaning			
HOA / regime			
Insurance			
Utility - electric / water			

Home-watch visit log

Date	Visited by	Humidity	What was checked / found	Action taken

Print extra copies of this page as the log fills. A dated log is also useful documentation for insurance and for spotting slow trends - rising humidity, repeat leaks - before they become repairs.

Guest-ready (and rental-ready) in one pass

Run this list before family, friends, or paying guests arrive. It is the difference between "nice house" and "we cannot wait to come back."

The welcome pass

- ☐ House cool, dry, and fresh-smelling on arrival - set the thermostat the day before
- ☐ All beds made with fresh linens; two towels per guest plus beach towels out
- ☐ Starter supplies stocked: paper goods, soap, shampoo, dish and laundry detergent, coffee, filters, trash bags
- ☐ Kitchen basics checked: ice made, grill propane full, knives, corkscrew, and coffee maker where guests expect them
- ☐ Beach and porch kit ready: chairs, umbrella, cooler, outdoor cushions out and clean
- ☐ Wi-Fi password, gate info, and house notes framed or in a welcome folder by the door

The small print that matters

- **If you rent:** Confirm your community's rental rules and minimum-stay requirements, Beaufort County business license and accommodations tax obligations, and that your insurance policy covers rental use. Rules vary by plantation and regime.
- **Guest book:** Leave the emergency page (3) and local favorites - your beach access point, bike rental, and rainy-day picks beat any guidebook.
- **After guests:** Launder, restock, inspect for damage or left-behind items within 48 hours, and log anything that needs repair before the next stay.

Annual second-home budget planner

Category	Budgeted	Actual	Notes
Mortgage / HOA / regime fees			
Insurance (home + wind + flood)			
Property taxes			
Utilities (electric, water, internet)			
Home watch / maintenance plan			
Lawn, pest, pool, cleaning			
Repairs and projects reserve			

Rule of thumb many owners use: set aside 1-2 percent of the home's value per year for maintenance and reserves, on top of fixed costs. Coastal homes sit at the higher end - salt and humidity see to that.

Notes, projects, and when you would rather hand this off

REPAIRS AND PROJECTS LIST (DATE / JOB / DONE)

NOTES FROM VISITS AND STORMS

Prefer a local set of eyes on it?

Above The Boards is a Lowcountry handyman and home-repair business, fully insured, serving Hilton Head, Bluffton, and Beaufort. Our maintenance plans put this entire pack on a schedule we handle for you: regular home-watch walk-throughs using these same checklists, seasonal preparation, filter and gutter cycles, storm preparation and post-storm checks, and a photo report after every visit so you can see your home from wherever you are.

You keep this pack either way - use it to check our work, brief another watcher, or run the routine yourself. When you are ready to hand it off, ask us for a free quote for a maintenance plan sized to your home and how often it sits empty.

Your next step

1. Fill in page 3 on your next visit.
2. Tape up pages 6 and 7.
3. Put the four seasonal reminders in your phone today. Those three moves alone put you ahead of most second-home problems - the rest of this pack is here when you need it.

Prepared by Above The Boards for Lowcountry second-home owners. Guidance in this pack is general home-care information, not a substitute for licensed trade, insurance, legal, or emergency advice. In an emergency, call 911. For storm information, follow Beaufort County and Town of Hilton Head Island official guidance. © Above The Boards. For the purchasing owner's household use; please do not redistribute.