

Home Security While on Vacation

The "Lived In" Look

The typical burglar looks for a house where it's obvious that no one's home. So, naturally, the best thing you can do to protect your property while away on vacation is to create the impression that someone is still at home.

One good way to create this "lived in" look while you're gone is with the help of a neighbor. Arranging to have a friend or relative check your home periodically is also a good idea. However, your neighbors can provide around-the-clock security simply by watching out for any unusual or suspicious activity around your residence and reporting it to police.

A vacation or weekend away from home should be a pleasant experience for you and your family. You can make it more enjoyable and carefree by taking a few simple steps to reduce the possibility that your home might be broken into while you are gone.

How A Neighbor Can Help

Some of the ways a neighbor can help to prevent a burglary to your home include:

- Collecting newspapers, mail and parcels that have been delivered to your house, and saving them for you until you return home. Uncollected deliveries only advertise your absence.
- Cutting the grass and keeping the yard tidy while you're gone in the summer.
- Shoveling the sidewalk in the winter.
- Parking a car in your driveway to give the impression that someone is still at home. During the winter, a driveway with no tire tracks in the snow is a dead giveaway that the house is unoccupied. Most important of all, tell your neighbors when you are leaving and how long you'll be gone. Ask them to watch your house, and to call the police if they see anything suspicious.
- If possible, you should also leave a telephone number where you could be reached in case of an emergency. And, you may even want to leave a house key with a trusted neighbor while you are gone. That's an especially good idea if you have houseplants or a pet that will need care while you're away.

Remember to return the favor by watching out for your neighbors' property when they go on vacation. A neighborhood "buddy system" is the best kind of crime prevention program you can have when you're away from home - and any other time, too!

Going on Vacation:

- **Leave Exterior Lights On:** Light up the locations where entry is most likely. Doors and those sides of the house not easily visible from the street.
- **Remove Flammables:** Remove another possible source of fire by removing flammables and accumulated rags.
- **Put Things Away:** Items left unsecured and in the open invite theft.
- **Do Not Leave Hidden Keys:** Burglars look for these and generally will find them.
- **The Mail & Newspapers:** Do not stop all deliveries. However, do have your keyholder pick up those still being delivered daily.
- **Lock All Doors & Windows:** Prior to departure check all doors and windows to insure all are locked.
- **Do Not Close Blinds and Drapes:** A "closed up" house is a sure sign of being unoccupied.

- **Turn Doorbell Volume Down If Possible:** A burglar will not be able to discern if the bell has rung and believes that it just was not heard.
- **Disconnect Garage Door Opener:** An extremely important step often forgotten.
- **In Winter Arrange To Have Snow Shoveled:** Lack of footprints or tire tracks are a give-away that your house is vacant.
- **Move Valuables:** Move valuables from locations where they are in plain view. Many burglars are window shoppers and go after what they can see.
- **Select A Keyholder:** Choose a friend, relative or neighbor to retain the keys to your residence in your absence.
- **Leave Interior Lights On:** Make the burglar think that someone is at home. Leave lights on in some interior locations.
- **Alter Lighting Pattern:** Use timers or have your Keyholder change which lights are on periodically during your absence.
- **Do Not Discuss Your Absence:** If a burglar overhears you are going to be gone, it makes his job that much easier.