

WHEN YOU ARE AWAY FROM HOME



A vacant house – or one that appears to be vacant – is an appealing target to a burglar. This is true during the work day when everyone may be at work or school, or during a vacation, a weekend away from home, or a business trip. You can alleviate day to day worries and make a trip more carefree if you will take a few simple steps to reduce the possibility that your home will be burglarized or vandalized while you are gone.

Although you should always be aware of leaving windows and doors closed and locked whenever you will be out of the home, there are a number of things to consider when you're going to be away for a weekend or longer.

Use this list to help you remember. Returning to a home that has been broken into is an unpleasant finish to any trip. Never give a burglar an even break.

AT LEAST ONE DAY BEFORE YOU LEAVE

1. Arrange with a neighbor to pick up and hold your mail and newspapers to they don't pile up. If this is not possible, notify your news carrier and the post office to discontinue these deliveries.
2. Make arrangements to have grass cut and watered or driveways cleared of snow while you are gone. Have someone check daily to remove throwaway papers and circulars from your doorway and yard.
3. If you have valuables in the house, take them to your bank for storage in a safety deposit box. Deposit extra cash in your bank account.
4. Notify your sheriff's office or local police station about your departure and return dates and give a name and telephone number of a neighbor or relative to notify in case of a burglary, fire or other emergency.
5. Make sure any broken windows, door locks or window locks are repaired.
6. Arrange with a neighbor or relative to watch your house and give them a key. Let them know where and how you can be reached in an emergency. Write their telephone number down so you can check with them during your trip. Give them your car description and license number.
7. Move all ladders, tools, lawn implements, garbage cans and yard furniture to your garage, basement or storage shed.

ON THE DAY YOU LEAVE

1. Unplug all electrical appliances such as radios, television sets, irons, washers and fans to prevent possible damage from electrical storms.
2. Set your thermostat so that you furnace or air conditioner will maintain a reasonable temperature – 80 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer and 55 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter. In winter, make sure outside water taps are drained to prevent freezing.
3. Close your fireplace flue to prevent birds or animals from entering.
4. Make sure all gas appliances are in good order and that pilot lights are working.

5. Turn off water to automatic washer to prevent possible damage from a broken hose.
6. Turn down the volume control on the bottom of your telephone and answer machine so it cannot be heard from the outside.
7. Close and lock all windows and sliding doors. Make sure that a “charley bar” is secure on sliding doors, and that all screens or storm windows are locked or fastened.
8. Put window shades in normal daytime position and make sure all main floor drapes, shades and curtains are arranged so that neighbors and police can see into your house.
9. If you are leaving a car or other vehicle in your driveway, make sure it is locked.
10. Set your electrical timer to turn some lights on and off during the evening hours.
11. Lock your garage door.
12. Make sure the last person out locks the door. Take a walk around the house. Check the doors and windows.
13. If you haven’t already done so, leave your key with your neighbor or relative. Check to make sure you have their telephone number.

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