



Tips for Safeguarding Your Home While You are on Vacation

In the excitement of planning your vacation, don't forget to put measures in place to safeguard your home from theft.

The following easy tips may dramatically lessen chances that your home will be targeted while you are away.

1. **Don't broadcast your plans.**

- ✍ Share your plans only 'on-a-need-to-know' basis. Be especially careful when talking about your trip in public, for ex., in line at the bank or at the grocery store.
- ✍ Leave your normal message on your answering machine instead of letting people know that you are away and when you will be back.
- ✍ Don't post your vacation plans on any social media site such as Facebook or Twitter.
- ✍ If looking for a housesitter, contact a professional housesitter service rather than posting an ad.

2. **Alarm systems.**

- ✍ Notify your alarm company of your travel plans and provide them with either a way to get in touch with you or the name and number of a local contact.
- ✍ Post alarm stickers on doors and windows, whether or not you have one. Stickers may be enough to deter a burglar.

3. **Interior.**

- ✍ If breaking in is too difficult or time-consuming, chances are the burglar will leave.
 1. Install deadbolts on doors and windows.
 2. Install a Charley Bar on sliding glass doors or windows.
 3. Turn the garage door opener off as some openers are on the same frequency.
 4. Secure all pet doors.
- ✍ Create the illusion that someone is home.
 1. Turn your phone ringer off so unanswered ringing is not heard.

2. Use several lighting timers on lamps to go on and off at random intervals.
3. In the summer, leave the air conditioner on to a moderate temperature. On hot days, an air conditioner that is not running is a clue that nobody is home.

- ✍ Double-check that all doors and windows are locked.
- ✍ Make an inventory of large items, such as televisions, computers, etc., and write down the serial numbers.
- ✍ Take photos of your items to prove ownership.
- ✍ Put jewelry and other valuables including important documents in a safety deposit box, rather than hiding them in obvious places such as drawers, under the bed or on a closet shelf.
- ✍ Leave a few pieces of costume jewelry in an obvious place as this may satisfy thieves.
- ✍ Unplug all unnecessary appliances.
- ✍ If you are going away during the colder months, leave the heat on to a modified level in order to prevent freezing problems with the plumbing system.

4. **Exterior**

- ✍ Either suspend your newspaper and mail delivery or have a neighbour pick it up for you.
- ✍ Arrange for someone to pick up any flyers that might be left on your porch or stuck to your front door.
- ✍ Install motion sensitive yard lights.
- ✍ Check all exterior lights and replace any burn-out bulbs.
- ✍ Leave a vehicle parked in the driveway.
- ✍ Arrange for someone to mow your lawn, rake the leaves or clear the snow.
- ✍ Trim the shubbery. It will make it easier for a neighbour or police to spot anybody who might try to use shubbery for concealment.
- ✍ Do not leave a spare key hidden outside the home. Thieves know where to look.

5. Make a list of important information to give to whoever will be looking after your house while you are away:

1. location of water/gas valves fuse boxes and main circuit breakers
2. your contact numbers
3. contact number for alarm company
4. names of people who have permission to be on your property while you are away (neighbours, contractors, pet sitters, yard workers, etc.)

If upon your return, you notice signs that someone may have entered, such as a forced door or window, **do not enter the house**.

If you only notice the break-in once you have entered, leave everything as is. In both cases, **immediately contact the police**.

Let your broker know that you have incurred a loss. If a window or door has been broken, they will make arrangements to secure the home until repairs can be carried out. An adjuster will be sent out to evaluate the cause and extent of loss. If you have any questions, contact your broker.