

Theft Prevention Tips for Homeowners



Ways to secure your home before you leave for vacation

By using these theft-prevention tips to protect your home and possessions, you and your family will have extra peace of mind, whether you're away for a day or on vacation.

Make your home looked "lived in" even when you're not there

- Have a trusted neighbor pick up your mail and newspapers.
- Arrange for someone to mow your lawn or shovel snow.
- Ask a neighbor to park a car in your driveway while you're gone.
- Use timed switches on your lights, TV and stereo. Look for timers that turn on and off randomly.
- Never advertise your absence by taping a note to your door or announcing it on your answering machine/voice mail.
- Turn your telephone ringer down or off. This way a burglar is less likely to hear the ringing of unanswered calls and realize no one is home.
- You can add to the security of your lighting system and cut your electric bill by installing a motion detector on outside lights. This will activate your lights when anyone comes within range of the unit's motion sensor.

Follow these tips from law enforcement officials

- Join a Neighborhood Watch group. Most police departments have officers who will help you start a program. Neighbors can help watch your home when you're gone.
- Keep valuable items in your safe deposit box, such as stocks and bonds, duplicate copies of your will, stamp and coin collections and jewelry you don't frequently wear.
- Give parking lot attendants and mechanics your ignition key only, *not* your house key. Don't carry an identification tag on your key ring. This could help a would-be thief easily identify your home and vehicle.
- Consider installing an alarm system for an extra level of protection. You have a variety of choices – from do-it-yourself kits that trigger a siren or lights to professionally installed systems connected to a police station or monitoring service. Post signs in your windows showing you have a security system.
- Lock your doors and windows when you leave, whether you'll be gone a few minutes or a few days.

Law enforcement tips, continued

- Avoid leaving an extra "hidden" key outside your home, such as under the doormat or in a mailbox or planter. To make sure you always get in, leave a duplicate set of house keys with a trusted friend or neighbor.

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