

## **Vacation Checklist**

A vacation, a weekend away from home or a business trip should be a pleasant experience for you and your family. You can help make each trip more enjoyable by taking a few simple steps to reduce the possibility that your home will be broken into while you are gone. An empty house (or one that looks that way!) is a tempting target for a burglar.

### **Use this checklist of tips to help safeguard your home while you're away.**

- Have good locks on all doors and windows, and use them!
- Make sure any broken windows, door or window locks are repaired.
- Ask a neighbor to watch the house while you're away. It's a good idea to leave your vacation address and telephone number with a neighbor so you can be reached in case of an emergency.
- Never leave your house key hidden outside your home.
- Stop all deliveries, or arrange for a neighbor to pick up your mail, newspapers and packages.
- Arrange for someone to mow your lawn, rake leaves and maintain the yard to give the home a lived-in look.
- Have a neighbor place garbage cans at the curb on your normal pickup days and return them after the garbage pickup is made.
- Plug in timers to turn lights and a radio or television on and off at appropriate times. This helps to disguise the fact that you are away.
- Turn the bell or ringer on your telephone down low. If a burglar is around, he won't be alerted to your absence by a ringing phone.
- Don't announce your absence on answering machine messages; leave your normal message on the machine.
- Leave your blinds, shades and curtains in a normal position. Don't close them unless that is what you do when you are home.
- Close and lock garage doors and windows. Ask a neighbor to occasionally park in your driveway. If you leave your car at home, park it as you normally would. Vehicles parked outside should be moved occasionally to appear that they are being used.
- Secure storage sheds, attic entrances and gates.
- Consider taking valuables to a bank safe deposit box.
- Engrave your valuables. This simple step will allow your stolen property to be identified and returned to you if recovered by the police.

## **While Traveling**

- If you are driving, make sure your vehicle has been properly serviced and is in suitable condition for the journey.

- Try to have specific directions and routes to your destination.
- If you get lost, call the local police for directions or assistance.
- Keep your vehicle doors and windows locked, even while you are in it!
- At stop lights and other traffic delays, leave enough space in front of your vehicle so that you have an escape option in case of an emergency.
- Let someone know the route you intend to travel and your itinerary. This will help authorities in locating you if there is a need to do so.
- Plan your trip carefully and allow for factors such as weather, fatigue, facilities for lodging, food, and fuel.
- Be sure you have sufficient money available; use traveler's checks or credit cards instead of large amounts of cash.
- Ask the hotel or motel staff about their security measures so you know what to expect.
- Use the hotel safe to store your valuables during your stay.