

Is Your Home Safe When You Go On Vacation?

For many people, summer means vacation and a vacation can mean leaving your home for a longer period of time than usual.

Many people who go on vacation wonder if their house will be safe while they are away. When you go on vacation, the last thing you want is a phone call telling you that your house was robbed- or even worse- coming back from vacation and discovering damage and loss. Here are some tips for securing your home.

- Before you leave, check every door and window to make sure that everything is locked and sealed, including your garage door, shed, and basement windows. Also, make sure that you have no spare keys lying around that are "hidden" under a mat or under a rock. Burglars know where to look and a key gives them easy access. If you have a sliding window or door, put a piece of wood or a long metal rod on the track so that it can't be pushed open.
- Set timers on lights outside of your house. The darker it is outside your house, the more appealing it is going to be for burglars because they cannot be seen. Also, timers help give the impression that someone is home.
- Make sure that your newspapers and mail are picked up or put on hold. If papers and mail are piled up outside your house, it is obvious that someone has not been home for a while.
- Leave some blinds or drapes open. If your house is completely closed off, it is going to look like no one is there. If you make it appear more normal, it is less obvious that you are away.
- Arrange to have a trusted family member, neighbour or friend to check on your home. Even if it means having them going into the house to water the plants, they can take a peek around to make sure that everything is okay.
- Going on a vacation is an excellent reminder to ensure you have an updated inventory of household goods which may include appliances, jewellery, firearms, and other valued items.
- If you have any cash, jewellery, or any other valuables in your home, take them out and put them in a safety deposit box. It costs money for this service, but it is far better than if someone were to break into your home and find your valuables.
- If you are a firearms owner, please ensure you secure and store all firearms in accordance with the Firearms Act and Regulations.
- Set timers on electronics inside your house. Put one on a lamp or even a radio. If someone is watching your home and sees that there is no activity going on inside your house, it is a clear indicator that you are not home.
- Make sure that your home security system is on. Don't forget to tell your friend or family member the code so that they do not set off the alarm when they check on your home.

A vacation is supposed to be a relaxing time. There is no reason why you should have to spend time worrying about the safety of your home, as long as you make sure to take the necessary precautions.

Assess — Then Address

Assessing your home's security is an important initial step in crime prevention. Essentially, your home should look protected, well-maintained and appear to be occupied at all times. Visit the [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation](#) website and [complete their checklist](#), most homeowners will find that there are many areas requiring attention.

This tip has been brought to you by Public Safety Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with information from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

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