

NEWSLETTER

Safeguarding Your Home While You Are On Vacation

I have developed this newsletter to help in the preparation of safeguarding your home while you are away on vacation. While each house differs from the next use this pamphlet as a guide to securing your home properly before you go away and you will leave your home knowing you have done all you can to make it safe and secure. Let us look at what makes your home safe while you are away.

Lights

Making your home look the same as it does while you're away is the most important part in preventing burglaries. Leaving the same light(s) on in the same room(s) is vital in protecting your home while you're away. There is no need to keep a light on in every room. However, if you have a large home or children I recommend that you leave more than one light on a timer in the rooms that are the most occupied when you are at home. I myself prefer two lights on timers one in the main living room and one in the bedroom. I set each timer for the times that these rooms are occupied when my family is at home. A porch light is also helpful but only if you use this light regularly. If you never turn on your

porch light and then turn it on when you're away this becomes very noticeable. Think about either a timer or daylight sensor for your porch light and start to use it. Motion detectors are also very important however these can easily be defeated by unscrewing the bulbs. Make sure your motion detector is placed high enough so it can't be reached by some one hoisting somebody else up to unscrew your bulb.

Doors and Windows

Make sure all your doors and windows are properly secured before you go away. This includes the cellar or basement windows and garage windows if you have an attached garage. Make sure the doors leading into your home from these areas are also secured. Lock all the locks on all of your doors this includes the storm doors too. If you are planning a vacation in the summer months it is advisable to put down the storm windows on all windows within easy reach from the outside. If you use a window air conditioner and can't properly secure your window with it in then remove the unit and secure that window. It is also recommended that you partially close all blinds and/or curtains so no one can look in.

Mail and Newspapers

If you have a mail slot in your door make sure the postal carrier has access to it. Do not lock the storm door leading to the mail slot. If you haven't a mail slot have your mail delivery stopped at the Post Office. Consider putting in a mail slot this will eliminate the need to cancel your delivery. If you're planning to be away for an extended period have your mail forwarded to you. Cancel the newspaper for the time you're away.

Notifying Neighbors

Notifying neighbors that you'll be away is always good policy. If you live in an area where you are unfamiliar with your neighbors or feel uncomfortable letting them know you'll be away then don't inform them of your plans. If you trust your neighbors then let them know the dates when you'll be away and leave them a number where you'll be in case of emergency. You don't have to notify all your neighbors only one or two will do.

Leaving a key

Leaving a key with someone is a matter of personal preference. You can leave a key with whom you feel comfortable with. It can be your neighbor or a relative or even a friend. Make certain that whoever has access to your house will know what to do in case of an emergency and can handle any situation if needed. If

you have someone with access to your house other than your neighbor and you have also notified your neighbor, leave him or her the number of the person who has access to your house only if that person has allowed you to give out his/her number.

Other Important Items

Locking the gates surrounding your home is a good idea but only if the locks cannot be seen from the outside. If you vacation during the winter it is very important to arrange to have someone shovel your walk. A walk that goes un-shoveled for a few days makes your home an inviting target. Put away all yard items such as yard tools, rakes and other things that are not needed while you're away. Try not to let everyone know that you'll be away from your home you never know who might be listening.

Following these steps will make your home safe while you're away and your vacation worry free. Remember, making your home look the same way as it does while you're away as when you are at home is the most important part in keeping your home safe.

John Bouris CRL

John Bouris is a Certified Registered Locksmith with twenty- five years in the industry. He offers a free basic security analysis of your home. He can be reached at jbouris@gmx.com and at 401.580.7267