



Vacation is a time for relaxation and enjoyment. It can also be the time for crime victimization if appropriate crime prevention measures are not followed. The following crime prevention tips or recommendations are designed to allow the vacationer to enjoy a safe and secure trip and to return to a secure residence. This is the first in a series of posts designed for vacation tips.

PART 1 Before Leaving . . . Secure Your Residence

- Have good locks on all doors and windows and use them.
- Make sure your residence looks lived in, not empty.
- 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.
- Ask a neighbor to watch your residence while you are away. Leave your vacation address and telephone number with a neighbor so you can be reached in case of an emergency. If you have an active Neighborhood Watch, let your Block Captain know that you will be away so that surrounding neighbors can keep an eye out for you.
- Test your smoke and burglar alarms.
- Leave shades and blinds in a normal position. (The more “normal” your home looks, the better. Closing them all could be a giveaway.)
- Stop all deliveries, arrange for a neighbor to pick up your mail (or place temporary stop with USPS yellow card), newspaper and packages if something is delivered.
- Arrange for someone to mow your lawn, rake leaves and maintain the yard to give the home a lived-in look. Trim bushes and trees to eliminate potential hiding spots.
- Have a neighbor place garbage cans at the curb on your normal pickup day(s) and return them after the garbage pickup is made.
- Use Plug in timers to turn interior lights on/off. Also consider timers on a radio or television to come on and off at appropriate times.
- Exterior Lighting: Consider upgrading to LED lighting (they are brighter, more energy efficient). Use the dusk-to-dawn setting for the front entrance and driveway where vehicles are parked. In other locations, use motion detection.
- Take advantage of current smart phone apps (either with an alarm monitoring company, or individual home security systems) that allow you to turn lights on and off (and other fixtures such as TV or radio) from your phone, no matter where you are.
- Turn the bell or ringer on your landline telephone down low/mute. If a burglar is around, he won't be alerted to your absence by a ringing telephone.
- If you have call forwarding on your landline telephone, forward your calls to your cell phone, trusted friend or a relative.



- Don't announce your absence on answering machine messages or Social Media! Leave your normal message on the machine. This next one will be tough for a lot of us, but...WAIT until you return home to post photos on Social Media! Social Media is not 100% completely secure...it is possible for a criminal to get knowledge of your absence and target your home because they know you aren't there!
- Write down makes, models, and serial numbers on your big ticket items (electronics, lawn equipment, firearms, etc.). Keep them in a safe place. Consider taking digital photos of jewelry and heirlooms.
- Consider taking valuables to a bank safety deposit box.
- A convenient way to record serial numbers is a secured website called "Leads Online". Create an account and store information there. You can also upload digital photos to the site:

<https://reportit.leadsonline.com/>

For more Crime Prevention tips: <http://www.hooverpd.com/crime-prevention.php>