



Holiday Crime Prevention: Before You Travel

Before traveling for the holidays...Follow these tips to secure your residence.

- Have good locks on all doors and windows and use them. Double check everything is locked before you leave.
- Make sure your residence looks lived in, not empty.
- Leave shades and blinds in a normal position.
- Ask a neighbor to watch your residence while you are away or consider hiring a pet or house sitter.
- Inform a neighbor where you will be, for how long, and make sure they have your phone number. Consider giving them a key or garage security code in case of an emergency.
- Make your home look like business as usual with new technology:
 - Smart lights / bulbs – can be scheduled or turned on/off remotely
 - Voice assistant / Smart Hub – can schedule or turn on/off tv, indoor and outdoor lights, and play music
 - Smart timers – appliances, lamp
 - Fake TV simulator - make it appear as though your tv is on
- Test your smoke and burglar alarms. Ensure batteries are in working order.
- Stop all deliveries and mail. Arrange for a neighbor to pick up your mail, newspaper, and packages to deter porch pirates.
- 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 can(s) at the curb on your normal pickup day(s) and return them after the garbage pickup is made.
- Close and lock garage doors and windows, as well as the door from the garage into the house.
- If you leave your car at home, ensure doors are locked and park it as you normally would. Vehicles parked outside should be moved occasionally to appear that they are being used.
- If you have a driveway, allow someone to use it to keep up the appearance someone is there. Believe it or not, there are even services for people looking for parking spots that will pay you to park there!
- Consider taking valuables to a bank safety deposit box or invest in an in-home safe. Do not leave them in plain sight.
- Ask local police to place your home on their vacation check list.
- Don't leave house keys under the mat or anywhere near the door.
- Check with your security alarm company to make sure everything is working correctly.
- Refrain from sharing any trip details or photos on social media until after you return. You don't want to alert the public that you are away from home.
- Consider installing a video doorbell to capture real-time video and allow you to communicate with anyone that approaches the door. With a subscription you can also save the video for future use.



- Consider installing smart security cameras which can monitor and alert you to movement in or outside the house.
- Schedule background noise – similar to scheduled lighting you can use your voice assistant to play music according to a pre-set schedule.
- Check your router – if you are relying on smart devices, it might be a good idea to reboot your router before you leave to refresh your connections.
- Manage outside appearances – tidy up, don't leave items that can help a burglar enter your home (e.g., ladders, garden tools), hide anything that triggers the appearance you are away (e.g., self-watering devices)
- Lastly, when get home be sure to look around your property for any perpetrators waiting for your arrival, or for any damage or break-in evidence.