

Protect Your Home While Away on Vacation

Vacation should be a relaxing time. But preparing your home for your departure can be stressful. Whether you're leaving home for a week or a month, you can rest easy with these tips for keeping your home safe while you're away:

- Arrange for someone to do seasonal maintenance, such as mowing, raking or snow removal.
- Have mail or packages picked up by a friend, forwarded or held by the post office.
- Stop newspaper deliveries and ask a neighbor to pick up freebie newspapers and circulars.
- Lower your telephone ringer (and answering machine volume) and never leave an outgoing message that says you're away.
- Use timers to turn lights off and on at the appropriate times. Compensate for having lights on when no one's home by turning off other appliances that are often left on, such as DVD players, computers and microwaves. Also consider connecting a radio to a timer.
- Leave blinds open in their usual position.
- If you live in a cold climate, keep the heat on just enough so that the pipes don't freeze.
- Ask neighbors to park their car in your driveway.
- If you leave your car in the driveway, be sure to remove the garage-door opener from plain view.
- Double-check all doors and window locks.
- Tell a trusted friend or neighbor where you'll be.

Sources: Travelocity.com; Tripso.com; Insurance Information Institute



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