

FAMILY VACATION SAFETY TIPS

Provided By: The Hilliard Division of Police Training & Community Relation Bureau

1. Stop mail and newspapers or ask a trusted neighbor to pick them up everyday.
2. Put timers on several household lights.
3. Arrange to have grass mowed while you are gone.
4. Clean out your wallet or purse before you go; take only essential credit cards and identification. Try not to carry a lot of cash.
5. Keep a separate record of the contents of checked luggage and keep anything of value such as medicine and jewelry in a carry-on that stays with you.
6. Be cautious of who you tell about your departure. One innocent comment could lead to a disaster. Don't risk it. It's okay to let a trusted neighbor know when and where you are going just don't broadcast it to your whole neighborhood.
7. Make sure that everything is locked up and secure before heading out on your summertime excursion. Double check sheds, windows, garage doors, basement windows and any other opportunistic niche a robber might get into.
8. An unanswered phone might tip off a prowler that no one is home. Turn the ringer to the phone off while away and most definitely don't vocalize your departure on your answering machine message.
9. Remember that trusted neighbor that you are going to have collect your mail? Why not get him or her to park in your driveway while you are away? This gives the house a "lived in" feel.
10. Keep an outdoor light with a motion sensor. If the light were to come on while prowling around your house a robber would assume someone is home and get out of the vicinity ASAP!
11. Leave blinds and curtains in normal positions wherever possible, taking care not to expose belongings attractive to prying eyes.
12. Stow valuables (important papers, jewelry, etc.) in a home safe or safe deposit box.
13. Make sure your computer is turned off and disconnected from the internet, particularly if it contains personal information. Also put away or shred telltale bills and receipts that add to the risk of identity theft.
14. Activate your alarm system, and be sure to notify the security company of your days away and provide interim contact information.
15. Finish all major yard work before you go, with special trimming attention given to trees and shrubs near windows and entries (it doesn't take much for a burglar to hide behind). Then put away all yard equipment and tools.
16. Remove all "secret keys" from their supposedly undisclosed outdoor locations, providing only one of your duplicates to the person who'll be in charge while you're out of town.
17. Inform your local police department of your plans so that they can add your home to their vacation watch list. Be sure to include contact information for both your interim caretaker and you while on the road.