



## VACATION CHECKLIST

Going away? An empty house is a tempting target for a burglar. Use this checklist of tips to safeguard your home while you're away.

- Have good locks on all doors and windows, and use them!
- Engrave your valuables with your personal identifying name or number. Post Operation I.D. stickers in entry doors and windows.
- Never leave your house key hidden outside under a doormat, in a flower pot, or on the ledge of a door.
- Sign up with the Sheriff's Home Vacation Watch program to have your house checked periodically.
- Stop all deliveries, or arrange for a neighbor or friend to pick up your mail, newspapers, and packages. Don't forget the "throwaways" that arrive unscheduled.
- Depending on the seasons, arrange for someone to mow your lawn, shovel snow, or rake leaves to give your home a lived-in look.
- Plug in timers to turn lights on and off at appropriate times. Adjust the timings to your normal routine.
- Hide your garbage cans in the garage or a storage shed. Empty cans when everyone else's is full can tell a burglar you're away.
- Turn the bell on your telephone down low. If a burglar's around, he won't be alerted to your absence by a ringing phone.
- Close and lock garage doors and windows. Ask your neighbor to park occasionally in your driveway. If you leave your car at home, park it in the driveway. Have your neighbor move it occasionally so it looks like you're using it.
- Leave your blinds, shades, and curtains in a normal position. Don't close them unless that's what you do when you're at home.
- Ask a neighbor to watch the house while you're away. Leave your contact information with a neighbor so you can be reached in case of an emergency.

## ON THE ROAD

- Never carry large amounts of cash; use traveler's checks or our bank debit/credit card. Advise your credit card company where you will be traveling to so they may flag your account for strange (out of area) charges. If you must carry cash, do not display it openly. Carry contact information for your traveler's checks, your credit card company, and your bank in case of a problem.
- Be aware of your surrounding and never advertise your plans to strangers; this includes travel routes and the amount of cash you are carrying.
- Do not stop to offer help to a stranded motorist. Use your cell phone or a public pay phone to call for assistance.
- If you suspect someone is following you, drive to the nearest service station, restaurant or business and call 911. If you have a cell signal on the highway, call 911 and advise them of the situation. If you believe it is unsafe to get out of your car, honk your horn and flash your lights to draw attention.
- If your car breaks down, raise the hood and attach a white cloth to the antenna, the door handle, or hood latch. If someone stops to help, it is advisable that you stay in your locked car and ske them to call the police or a garage.

## **CAR SECURITY**

- Always lock your car when entering or leaving it.
- Always lock valuables out of sight, preferably in the trunk. Always carry wallets, checkbooks and purses with you.
- Do not advise that you are a tourist. Place maps and travel guides in the glove compartment. Remove your GPS device from the car.
- Park in well-lighted, busy areas.
- Always check the back seat before getting into your car.

## **REMEMBER THAT PLANNING HELPS TO REDUCE YOUR CHANCE OF BECOMING THE VICTIM OF A CRIME.**

## **SIGHTSEEING**

- Ask for directions at a hotel/motel on how to get to those attractions you want to visit
- Select tour guides carefully.
- Ask if there are any areas in town you should avoid. Stick to well-lighted main streets and public areas.
- Looking lost (stopping or staring at street signs) may make you look like an easy target for crime. If you do get lost, find an open business and ask for directions.
- Only carry with you the cash you will need, and only small denominations.
- If older children go off separately, be sure they understand the importance of keeping track of time and returning promptly at appointed hours. If your children do not regularly carry cell phones, think about inexpensive, no contact, cell phones available at big box stores.

## **HOTEL & MOTEL SECURITY**

- Determine the most direct route to and from your room, to the fire escapes, elevators and nearest phone.
- When occupying or leaving your room, use all auxiliary locking devices on doors and windows. You may want to think about purchasing a portable/travel door lock for your trip.
- Use the door viewer to identify anyone requesting entry. Open the door only if you are certain the person has a legitimate reason to enter your room. If in doubt, call the hotel/motel front desk.
- If your stay is longer than one night, unpack and place belongings in the closet and dresser. Arrange your things so you'll know if anything is missing.
- Consider locking any electrical appliances in your luggage. Keep your suitcases lock at all times.
- Never leave money, checks, credit cards or car keys in your room. Take them with you.
- Place extra cash, high value items in the hotel/motel safe.
- Report any lost or stolen items to the hotel/motel management and to the local police.
- Report to the management any suspicious movements in the corridors or rooms.

## **WHEN YOU GET HOME**

If you suspect a burglary has taken place at your home:

- Don't go in. Go to a neighbor and call police immediately. Wait outside for them to arrive.
- If you confront a burglar, don't try to stop him. Call police at once.
- After a burglary, don't touch anything. Call the police immediately-even a delay of 5 minutes can mean the chances of catching the criminal drops significantly.

**REMEMBER-the only way to stop crime is to get involved in crime prevention.**