

Home Security Tips

Whether you're traveling for a two-day business conference or a two-week vacation, you're going to want to be sure your home is secure and safe from vandalism, break-ins, and property disasters while you are gone.

Avoid the hassle and inconvenience of having to file an insurance claim when you return by following these home security tips from experts in various industries.

Home Security Tips from Law Enforcement and Travel Experts

1. Join or start a neighborhood watch group. These are folks uniquely positioned and interested in watching your home when you're gone, and you can do the same for them.
2. Keep your valuables secured in a safe deposit box. These include your will, expensive jewelry, cash, and other things that can be easily stolen and sold.
3. Never give parking lot attendants and others who may temporarily drive your car your keyring. Your house key should never be handed to potential thieves.
4. Never leave a 'hidden' or 'emergency' key outside your home. Those are too easy to find and give a would-be thief very easy access. If you need an alternate way to get in, try a lock box or leave a key with someone you trust.
5. Install an alarm system if you can. Law enforcement experts have indicated that homes without security systems are three times as likely to be burglarized as those with one.
6. Install timers on various lights around your home so it looks like someone is there.

Home Security Tips from Property Management Experts

Protecting your home from electrical mishaps, plumbing disasters, and fires while you're gone is also important. Before you leave:

1. Unplug everything but the freezer, refrigerators, and items you have put on timers. This will not only save money on your electric bill, but it will help avoid electrical problems.
2. If you'll be gone for more than a week, turn off the internal water valve. Too many homeowners have come home to find an old pipe broke or the washing machine hose failed, and their home is flooded.
3. Secure all the doors and windows by locking them before you leave. Sliding glass doors should have devices as simple as an appropriately sized rod dropped into the track to prevent an intruder from forcing the lock and opening the door.
4. Disable your garage door opener. Tech-savvy burglars can work out the code to trigger the door to open and gain access to your home.

Things you shouldn't post on social media while on vacation

1. Trip countdown

Excited for your August Break holiday that's right around the corner? Of course, you are! But that doesn't mean you should post a countdown to your social network. It could take out the guesswork for potential burglars of when you'll be away from home. Keep the family excitement internal and your home will thank you.

2. Details of your vacation

You probably have a few hundred friends on your Facebook list. But they aren't all close family and friends, and unfortunately, you might not be able to trust everybody. Making people aware that you won't be at home could be just the invitation a thief was waiting for. In fact, police say that criminals are increasingly using Facebook to identify potential victims.

3. Personal possessions

Perhaps you're over the moon about a new 60" 4K TV or want to show off your latest family vehicle. Although you may think you're sharing this news with just a few friends, posting photos and detailed information about these items could get in the hands of the wrong person. When you head out on vacation, who knows who may be eyeing that shiny new TV?

4. Travelling with others

It's always fun to travel with others, and you'll want to capture photos of your adventures to look back and remember for years to come. But try saving them for a printed photo book or a scrapbook, instead of sharing them online. Tagging your fellow travellers in pictures or videos will alert their social networks that they're away from home.

5. Your current location

Without even knowing it, you may be revealing your location to the world every time you upload a photo or post a comment, making it easier for people to scope out your home for a robbery. Find out how to turn off location settings and geotagging on your devices now, so when you head out on vacation, you can worry less.