

HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST WHILE ON VACATION

1. **Hire A House Sitter** - While a pricey option, it is one of the safest. Combined with a pet sitter, it can save kennel fees and end up being an economical choice. Plus a house sitter will be able to take care of many of the items mentioned below.
2. **Stop The Mail** - If you are going to be gone for longer than three days request that the local U.S. Postal Service hold your mail delivery until you return.
3. **Stop Newspaper Delivery** - If you are still reading newsprint, make sure you stop the service when you leave on vacation. It is a good idea to have a neighbor double check since communication between the circulation office and actual carrier sometimes isn't clear and papers could be piling up



when you thought they wouldn't! Also beware of advertising circulars or packages that are left in driveways or at front doors – ask a trusted friend or neighbor to check the premises on a daily basis.

4. **Arrange For Lawn Care** - Don't let uncut grass or untrimmed bushes make your home look neglected. Hire someone to do these chores in your absence. Eliminate easy hiding spots for thieves with good landscaping and maintenance.

5. **Put Out The Trash Cans On The Designated Day** –Have someone pull out your cans on trash day - and even put garbage in them to make it more realistic. Don't leave cans out for the entire time you are gone.

6. **Have Your Home Look Lived In** - An occupied home looks lived in. Lights go on and off and cars come and go. Invest in timers to turn lights on and off. Ask a neighbor or friend to park their car in the driveway for a few hours each day.
7. **Turn The Key And Lock Up** - Double check your house before you leave making sure all windows and doors are locked. Take the time to glance back and make sure the garage door closed completely.
8. **Don't Tell The World Your Plans** -It is tempting to brag on social media outlets about your exciting vacation plans or post in your blog that you are island-bound. Talk about it and post pictures when you come back – don't let a photo reflect that you are 500 miles from home. This goes for parents and teens – the less people who know that you are not around the better.

9. **Install Added Security Features** - A home security system, surveillance cameras, exterior motion lights, and smoke detectors work whether you are home or not. These extra protection devices are a good investment and often result in reduced home insurance rates. Make sure to arm the alarm when you leave. Security company yard signs and window decals are a good crime deterrent. Make sure you have signs and stickers posted.



10. **Unplug Your Electronics** - Disconnect power to your most frequently used electronics: computer, coffee pot, television, and chargers. It will save you money and worry that you left them on. Some people even turn off their garage door to keep it from being opened with a universal remote.

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11. **Stow Away Car Electronics** - Do not leave a GPS sitting in your parked car at the airport or train station. A thief can take the device and easily obtain your address.



12. **Alert Your Security Monitoring Company** - Let your monitoring company know that you will be travelling and make sure they have updated contact information in your absence. Test your security system a few weeks before you go out of town to make sure everything is working properly.

13. **Put Valuables In A Safe Deposit Box** - Prevent the worst case scenario if your home is robbed when you are gone. Take jewelry and other valuables and secure them in a safe deposit box.

14. **Don't Encourage Window Shopping by Burglars** - Keep shades or curtains closed to block views of expensive items, computers or other electronics. Try not to leave cameras, phones, or purses on kitchen counters where they can be quickly grabbed if an intruder gets access to your house.

15. **Mark Electronics And Valuables** - Use data dots (<http://www.datadotdna.com/us/>) or an etching tool to mark your valuables (use driver's license number and state abbreviation-not your social security number). Keep model/serial numbers of valuables in a secure location.

16. **Don't Leave Spare Keys Outdoors** - Collect any hidden spare keys from under the mat or potted plants. Burglars know the most popular hiding spots.

17. **Be Wary Of People Who Are Working In Your Home** - Notice what service people are doing when they are in your home. Always check behind them and make sure that they haven't left a window or door unlocked as a way to break in later.

18. **Tell the Neighbors** - Let neighbors know when you are leaving and who they should expect to see (like a house sitter or landscaper) at your home.

19. **Alert Local Law Enforcement Of Your Travel Plans** - Many law enforcement professionals encourage homeowners to alert them when they are out of town so they can do periodic drive bys to keep tabs on a vacant home.

20. **Check Your Homeowners Insurance And Make Sure It Is Up To Date** - If the worst happens, you don't want to wonder if your losses will be covered. Conduct a household inventory and list of serial numbers for electronics along with pictures of valuables and store with a copy of your insurance policy in a safe place.

