

UPPD Vacation Safety Tips for your Home

Deliveries – Stop mail, newspapers and other deliveries. Or, ask a neighbor to bring them inside everyday. If a neighbor brings your newspapers and deliveries inside, have them put it somewhere that can't be seen through the window.

Use Motion Detectors/Timers – Outside lights on motion detectors. If an intruder were to come to your house at night, it's the action of the light coming on that scares them away, not just the light being on. You also should use timers to turn lights and a radio or TV on and off at appropriate times.

Yard Work – Arrange to have yard work done. Un-mowed grass, un-shoveled snow, and un-raked leaves give the impression a home is not occupied. Also, have a neighbor set out trash on normal collection days. Empty cans and recycle bins should be removed the same day.

Telephone – Turn the ringers on phones down or off. Also, don't change the outgoing message on your answering machine. Never program it to announce that you're out of town, or to give another number where you can be reached. Instead, periodically call in and listen to messages.

Utilities - Make sure that electrical appliances (computers, etc.) are unplugged, the gas supply is shut off, and the water taps (or supply) are tightly turned off. Central Air Conditioner – In the summer, set the air conditioner to a higher temperature, but don't turn it off. A silent compressor on a hot day is a good indication that the house is unoccupied.

Alarm System – If you have an alarm system, make sure it is in working order. If it's connected to a monitoring service, tell them when you'll be gone and where you're going, along with a phone number of the person keeping an eye on things. (A home protected by a security system is three times less susceptible to a break-in than one without.)

Travel Plans – Avoid discussing your travel plans in public places. A stranger could overhear them, follow you home and return after you've left on your trip.

Luggage Tags – Use luggage tags that can't be easily read. Someone standing behind you at the airport check-in counter could notice your address and write it down. Or, use your business address on your luggage tags.

Vehicle – Don't leave a garage door opener in the car, especially if you are parking your car on the street. It is recommended to unplug an electric garage door opener before you leave.

House Keys – Do not keep keys hidden around the outside of your home or in your garage. Intruders know all the secret places of where keys could possibly be hidden.

Take Final Look – Take one last walk around. After everyone is in the car, check to make sure that all windows and doors are securely locked and that the alarm system has been properly armed.