

Home

V A C A T I O N E R S - P R O T E C T Y O U R H O M E F R O M T H E F T , D A M A G E

The bags are packed and you're ready to go, but is your *home* ready to go it alone while you're gone? These tips can help ensure that a thief, flood, or fire won't mar your homecoming.

To discourage theft:

- Lock all outside doors and windows. Don't forget backyard gates and garage doors, too.
- Cancel newspaper delivery service. A pile of uncollected papers in the driveway is a sure sign to crooks that no one is home.
- Ask the post office to hold your mail or entrust a neighbor to pick it up every day.
- Arrange to have your lawn mowed if you'll be gone more than a week.
- Leave blinds slightly ajar and set a lamp on a timer. The light going on and off at appropriate times will give the illusion that someone's at home.
- Don't broadcast the fact you're going out of town. Only family members and a trusted neighbor need to know.
- Ask your police department if it offers "vacation checks." If so, an officer can drive past your home periodically to make sure nothing is amiss.
- Consider installing a burglar alarm.
- Keep indoor and outdoor lights on when it's dark outside. Install timing devices that turn on lights automatically when they sense darkness or movement outside the home.

To prevent water damage:

- Shut off the main water valve.
- Turn off the hot-water tank and drain it.
- During winter, set the thermostat high enough to prevent frozen pipes.

To guard against fire and electrical damage:

- Close interior doors. If a fire starts, that will limit its oxygen supply and keep flames from spreading quickly.
- Make sure the fireplace is cool and no embers remain.
- Unplug appliances and extension cords.
- Never store combustibles near natural gas water heaters or furnaces.

