Burglars Don't Take Vacations

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While you're away on vacation, the last thing you want to worry about is burglars invading your home and stealing your personal belongings. So before you leave, take these precautions. They'll help protect your property and give you peace of mind.

- Lock all windows and use dead-bolts on exterior doors. Install security bars on sliding doors to prevent them from being lifted off their tracks.
- Leave a few shades or curtains open to maintain a "lived-in" appearance.
- Set light timers in a few rooms so that it appears people are at home when it's dark.
- Stop newspaper delivery so that papers don't pile up at your door.
- Store cash, jewelry and other valuables in a bank safe-deposit box.
- Don't leave an outgoing message on your answering machine announcing you are on vacation. Lower the volume on the machine and your telephone ringer.
- Install outside lights, preferably with motion detectors.
- If you can afford one, install and activate a security system. Or at the very least, put security system warning decals on doors and windows to deter intruders.

Finally, ask your neighbors to keep an eye on your property and to notify you if they suspect a problem. Even better, ask a friend or relative either to house sit or to stop by daily to collect your mail, put out your garbage, and check that everything's okay. Don't forget to exchange the favor yourself.

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