

KEEPING YOUR HOME SAFE WHILE ON VACATION



SECURITY

Locks: Good deadbolt locks are the hardest for burglars to breach. Go through each room before you leave to ensure everything is locked.

Garage Door: Unplug the power to your automatic garage door to keep thieves from opening it with a universal remote.

Alarm System: If you have an alarm system, remember to engage it when you leave, and inform the alarm company in advance of the dates you will be away. If no one is expected to be in your house during that period and your alarm goes off, in most cases the company will respond by automatically sending the police.

AWARENESS

Cars: Look as if you're home by keeping a car in your driveway or parking spot. If you're using your car, ask neighbors to park in front of your house.

Blind and Drapes: Don't shut all your blinds and drapes. Leave them in their usual position, but make sure nothing valuable can be seen through the windows.

Timers: Set light timers to come on at the normal after-work time. You can also use *FakeTV* which is a small electronic device that simulates real television lighting (faketv.com).

Mail and Newspapers: Don't let mail and newspapers pile up outside your door. Arrange to have your friends to pick up your mail or have your mail held by filling out an online form at holdmail.usps.com/holdmail.

Answering Machine: Don't change your answering machine message when you are gone. Tell only those who need to know that you're going away. Instruct your kids to do the same.

Cars and Personal Information: Thieves prowl airport parking lots for cars and valuables to steal. Anything with your name and address on it could entice a thief.

Transportation to the Airport: Taking a car service or taxi to the airport means the driver will already know your address and that you will be away. Don't provide any more information than absolutely necessary.

Social Media: Insurance companies warn there is anecdotal evidence suggesting that social media sites have become a popular hunting ground for would-be burglars. Be careful what you post and check your social media privacy settings.

Location Settings: Be cautious when checking in on a social network. Foursquare and review sites can put your whereabouts into a cyberspace anyone can view.

Apps: Through apps, you can have your whole home in the palm of your hand.

- *Ring Video Doorbell* (ring.com, \$199) and *SkyBell Wi-Fi Video Doorbell* (skybell.com, \$199) both use a camera equipped with night vision, plus a monitor and speaker to show you, via a smartphone app, who's at the door. Both can be installed on your door, connecting into the existing doorbell.
- *Alarm.com* (free) hooks up with your existing home security system to alert you in real-time if there's any movement or security breach in the system. It enables you to access the home security video stream or change security settings remotely.
- *ISentry* (free) turns the webcam on your home computer into a surveillance system — monitoring only the area in which the camera is pointed. When motion is detected, the app notifies you on your phone.
- Similar: *AtHome Camera* (free) and *iCam* (\$4.99) stream video from home cameras to multiple iPhone or Android devices.

NOTES:

OUR OFFICE LOCATION

4400 Post Oak Parkway, Suite 150
Houston, TX 77027

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