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# **Protecting Your Home While On Vacation**

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**Presented by Community Crime Prevention/SAFE**

# *Preparing Your Home*

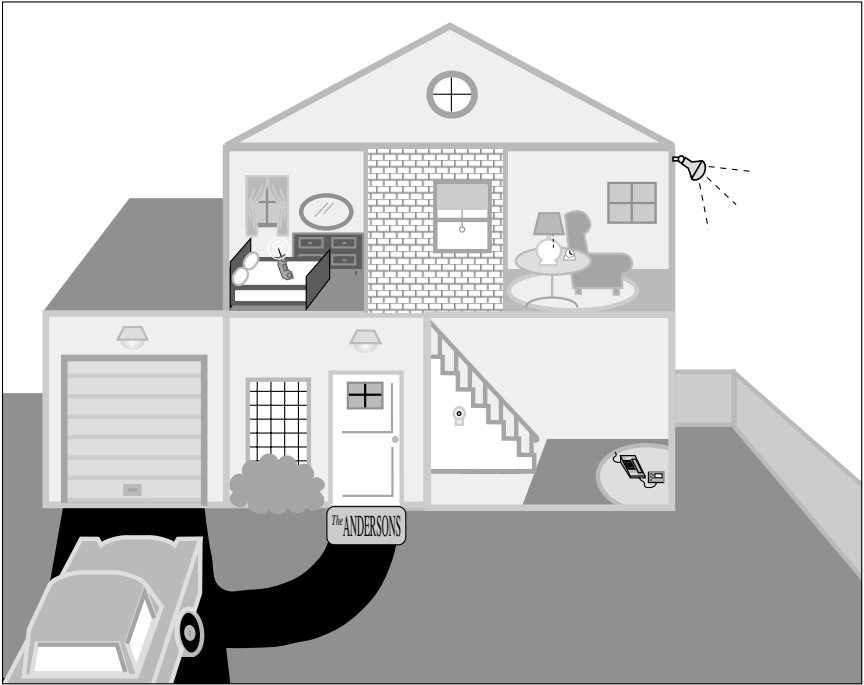
We have prepared the following information for you to help ensure the safety and security of your home while you're away. Some of these recommendations require the help of trusted neighbors. Alert and concerned neighbors are your best protection against crime in your neighborhood.

To learn how to protect your home, attend a home security presentation. To have a police officer check your home and make recommendations, schedule a premise security survey. For more information, call your SAFE team:

1st Precinct .....	612-673-2923
2nd Precinct .....	612-673-3204
3rd Precinct .....	612-673-2955
4th Precinct .....	612-673-2803
5th Precinct .....	612-673-5585

During vacations or other trips, use this checklist to protect your property and make your home appear occupied. These steps may discourage burglars and thieves.

- ◆ Install good locks on doors and windows. It's true that an intruder who really wants to get into your house probably can find a way, but most burglaries are crimes of opportunity committed by amateurs. This means that the more difficult you make it for someone to enter your house, the more likely it is a burglar will not make the attempt—or at least that an alert neighbor will see or hear the burglar.



- ◆ Mark your valuables with an Operation Identification (OPID) number to ward off burglars and thieves and to make your valuables identifiable if they should be lost or stolen. To most thieves, marked property is not as valuable because the “fence” won’t pay as much for it. Marked property is also good evidence in court. The free OPID number and information are available from Community Crime Prevention/SAFE by calling 612-673-2749. You may borrow an engraver from your police precinct station (see back page). You might also want to take pictures or do a home videotaping of your valuables to aid in their identification if they should be lost or stolen. (If you take pictures, use a business address when you bring in the film for developing and pay for it with cash.)

## TRAVEL INFORMATION

We'll be gone from \_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_

=====  
We're leaving (date) \_\_\_\_\_, traveling by

\_\_\_ Car \_\_\_ Bus \_\_\_ Train \_\_\_ Plane

From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_ Flight/Trip # \_\_\_\_\_

Leaves (city) \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

Arrives (city) \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

We'll be staying at: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Returning on (date) \_\_\_\_\_, traveling by

\_\_\_ Car \_\_\_ Bus \_\_\_ Train \_\_\_ Plane

From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_ Flight/Trip # \_\_\_\_\_

Leaves (city) \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

Arrives (city) \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

Local emergency phone number:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

- ◆ If a neighbor will not be picking up the mail and newspapers daily, stop the mail and cancel the newspaper. Never tell the newspaper carrier that you will be gone. Cancel the paper rather than entering a “vacation stop” for extended (more than two weeks) absences.

- ◆ Install motion detector lights on the outside of your home. Use automatic timers on inside lights and photo-electric switches on outside lights. A week or two before you leave, set your timers so you can establish a pattern while you are still home. There are even timers available that will vary the on/off times. Occasionally have a radio or TV turned on.
  
- ◆ Don't leave valuables where they can be easily seen from the windows. Video equipment, TVs, stereos, gun collections, etc. should be stored in basements, closets, on the second floor, or left with a friend or neighbor. Equipping a storage closet with a good deadbolt lock makes a safe storage area too.
  
- ◆ Leave your drapes in the normal position. Have a neighbor close them at night and open them at daylight, or use sheers. Sheers help to obscure the view into the house without making it obvious, as drapes would, that no one is home.
  
- ◆ Put at least two lights and a radio on automatic timers.
  
- ◆ Leave the bathroom light on with the door ajar to add to the impression that someone may be home.
  
- ◆ Close and lock your garage doors to prevent someone from stealing the contents of the garage. Consider putting a padlock in the track of overhead garage doors (CCP/SAFE has instructions available). Also, attached garages that are not kept locked provide the opportunity

for an intruder to enter the garage and work in privacy at breaking into your house, perhaps with the assistance of your own tools.

- ◆ Cover your garage windows to prevent anyone from seeing the contents of your garage and whether your car is at home.
- ◆ Check your homeowner's insurance policy. Does it provide theft coverage while you're staying in hotels and motels? It should.
- ◆ Don't let your travel plans be widely known. Try to arrange for a house-sitter, but if you can't, provide your immediate neighbors with a recipe card with the information shown on page 3 and ask a trusted neighbor to keep this information private.
- ◆ You also may want to add the following to the previous information:
  - Check your home daily for anything unusual.
  - Park in your driveway or in front of your home.
  - Occasionally place garbage in your garbage can.
  - Mow the lawn or shovel sidewalks and driveways.
  - Pick up your mail and newspapers.
  - Light on timers or constantly? Where?
  - Cars in the driveway.
  - Who else will have access to my home. Their cars are:
  - Miscellaneous:

- ◆ Call your police precinct station to register your vacation and the specifics such as the previous items. Typically, a squad from the precinct will drive by several times a week to check on things. When you return, they will send you a card listing the dates and times of their drive-by's.
- ◆ At work, request office staff to be cautious when answering your phone calls. Transfer business calls to another employee or have callers told that you will be out of the office until whatever date you are to return. No information should be given out about why you are not in the office.
- ◆ Set the bell on your telephone on low. A loudly ringing, unanswered phone is a sign no one is home.
- ◆ Make arrangements for the care of your pets.
- ◆ Remind your neighbors to call 911 if they see anything suspicious around your home.



**Upon return, if there are signs of a burglary such as a broken window pane or forced door, call 911 immediately. Do not take the chance of confronting a burglar inside.**

**DO NOT CALL YOUR LOCAL  
PRECINCT STATION IF YOU NEED A  
SQUAD CAR TO RESPOND. ALL  
DISPATCHING OF SQUAD CARS IS  
DONE THROUGH 911.**

1st Precinct (Downtown)

19 N. 4th St. .... 612-673-2655

2nd Precinct (East side)

1911 Central Ave. NE ..... 612-673-5702

3rd Precinct (Minnehaha)

3000 Minnehaha Ave. S. .... 612-673-5703

4th Precinct (North side)

1925 Plymouth Ave. N. .... 612-673-5704

5th Precinct (Southwest)

3101 Nicollet Ave. .... 612-673-5705

***HAVE A SAFE AND PLEASANT VACATION!***

**VISION**

The City of Minneapolis is the safest place to live, work and visit.

**For individuals with disabilities:**

If you need this material in Braille, large print, computer disk, or cassette tape, call 612-673-2912. Sign language interpreters available — call 612-673-3220 or 612-673-2626 (TTY). Please allow two weeks for accommodation.

