

## VACANT HOME SECURITY TIPS

A vacation should be a pleasant experience for you and your family; a time for relaxation and enjoyment. It can also be the time for crime victimization if appropriate crime prevention measures are not followed. Take a few simple steps to reduce the possibility of a burglarized house while you are away. The following tips are offered to allow the vacationer to return to a secure residence.

- \* *Have deadbolt locks on all outer doors and secure the windows with good locks or pinning method.*
- \* *The home should have a lived-in look leave shades and blinds in the same position as when you are home.*
- \* *Cancel all deliveries and notify your local post office to put your mail on a "vacation hold". Have a trusted neighbor or friend remove any deliveries or throwaway papers/ circulars. Leave a telephone number or address where you can be reached with a neighbor/friend or family member.*
- \* *Notify your local police about your plans and provide dates of departure and return. The police can place your home on their vacant home list and check periodically. Provide an emergency contact number where you can be reached.*
- \* *Use timers to turn on and off lights at strategic locations inside the home at appropriate times. A motion sensor light should be installed at the rear and front of the residence. Place a radio or television on a timer for added precaution.*
- \* *Make arrangements to have your grass cut and yard maintained or your walk and driveway shoveled in winter.*
- \* *Move all ladders, tools or any other devices (that could be used to break in) to a locked garage or shed. Arrange for garbage cans to be placed at curb for pickup and returned to the proper location*
- \* *Lock all doors, windows and make sure any broken windows, window locks and door locks are repaired.*
- \* *Secure your valuables in a locked closet or safe place in the home or take them to a bank safety deposit box.*
- \* *Keep an inventory of all valuables in the home including furniture, jewelry and electronic products. Take pictures or videotape and record serial numbers and purchase information. Consider marking your valuables with an engraving tool.*
- \* *Unplug all electrical appliances. Set your thermostat so that your furnace will maintain a reasonable temperature in your house. Test your smoke and burglar alarms.*
- \* *Park your car in the driveway or have a neighbor or friend park their vehicle at your home while you are away.*
- \* *The message on your answering machine should always indicate that you are home or forward your calls to a trusted friend or relative. Turn the ringer on the telephone down low and disengage the automatic garage door opener.*
- \* *Take a walk around the house before leaving to make sure all doors and windows are closed and locked. If you have an alarm system, make sure it is turned on.*