

## INTRODUCTION

Many people leave their home dark and empty when they go on vacation. Nobody mows the lawn, shovels the driveway, picks up the mail or newspaper, turns on the lights, or pulls the curtains at night. This is just what a thief is looking for! You might as well leave a sign on the door that says, "We're on vacation. Come on in."

We have prepared the following information to help ensure the safety and security of your home while away on vacation. Much of this information involves making your home look occupied to discourage burglars and thieves. Some of these recommendations require the help of a trusted neighbor.

The Coon Rapids Police Department is here to help; **however alert and concerned neighbors are your best protection against crime.**

## LIGHTS



Interior lights should be left on or placed on automatic timers. Use at least two timers in different portions of the home to create the illusion of movement. Motion sensor lights should be installed near patio doors and other entrances. Curtains should be left in their normal position or changed from time to time by the person watching your home.

## VEHICLES



Vehicles left in the driveway might make it appear as if someone is home. All valuables should be removed from the vehicles and they should be locked. You should keep a list of license plate numbers for yourself and your neighbors in case of theft. Boats, campers, vehicles, and sheds are especially vulnerable to theft and vandalism.



## SECURITY

Install a good deadbolt lock on each door. Use high security strike plates with 3" screws. Install good locks on all windows, especially those on ground level. Remove the cranks on all crank out windows if nobody is going to be home. Don't rely on factory installed locks on sliding patio doors. A "Charlie bar" or wood dowel should be placed in the track to prevent the door from opening. Make sure there is not a lot of "play" between the dowel and the door.

## GARAGE



Close and lock all garage doors. Many thieves have been able to defeat garage door openers by trying several transmitter settings or by jarring the door until the opener releases from the track. You may want to consider disabling the opener by disconnecting it from the power source while away from home. Many home burglaries occur when the garage service door is left unlocked or forced open. Easy access is then made into the home. All garage service doors and those leading from the garage into the home should be secured completely. Cover all garage windows to prevent anyone from seeing the contents and whether or not your car is there.

## APPLIANCES



Be sure to unplug or disconnect all unnecessary appliances and equipment.

## YARD



Arrange for someone to mow your lawn or shovel the snow off the driveway and sidewalk. Don't allow garbage to collect outside where it can be seen. Trim all bushes down. Trim all trees (including evergreens) up. This prevents crooks from hiding behind them and allows neighbors to see more clearly. Move all ladders, lawn tools, yard furniture or ornaments, and other items inside a secure shed, garage or basement.

## RECORDS



Create a complete list of all valuables in your home. This list should include the make, model, and serial numbers for electronics and other items such as: video equipment, televisions, microwave ovens, cameras, stereos, computer equipment, guns, etc. These items are most likely to be stolen. It only takes a few minutes to make an inventory of them and insurance companies are better able to process claims resulting from fire, theft, or other damage if you have a record of this information. Store it in a safe place. Photographs or videotapes of your home and its contents can be very helpful. Fireproof safes can be purchased at area stores, and are relatively inexpensive. Most banks have safe deposit boxes for rent.

## DELIVERIES



Arrange to have all deliveries canceled, including U.S. mail, newspaper, private carriers, etc. Have them forwarded, or picked up by someone you trust. If you plan to be away for an extended period of time, you may wish to have subscriptions canceled. When calling to have deliveries canceled or forwarded, don't provide any more information than is absolutely necessary. The person you are talking to may not be honest.

## KEYHOLDERS



Leave the keys to your home with someone you trust. Inform them of your itinerary so they know where you'll be, your phone number, and when you'll be back. Also leave names and phone numbers of relatives or friends who should be contacted in case of a fire, burglary, or other emergencies. Have the key-holder or another person check your house each day for anything unusual. Have them notify the police by calling 911 if they see or hear anything suspicious.

## DON'T FORGET YOUR PETS



There are four options available if you choose to leave your pet at home while you are away:

- ◆ Board your pet at a kennel.
- ◆ Leave your pet with a friend or relative who is willing to care for it.
- ◆ Have someone come into your home each day to feed and care for it.
- ◆ Have a trusted friend or relative stay at your home where they can watch over the pet and the property.

If you leave your pet in the care of someone else, make sure they know the closest veterinarian or emergency pet hospital location and phone number. Most veterinarians will not provide services, even emergency care, unless the person who brings the pet in has the ability to pay at the time services are rendered. All pet doors at your home should be secured completely to prevent other animals or thieves from entering.

## CONCLUSION

It is true that if a thief wants to get into your home, he can probably find a way, but most burglaries and thefts are a crime of opportunity committed by an amateur. This means that the more difficult you make it for someone to enter your home, the more likely it is that he will move on to a home that is not as secure. By using the suggestions we've given you, you can reduce your chance of being victimized by theft or burglary. Remember, the Coon Rapids Police Department is here to help. Don't hesitate to call us.

**Have a safe and wonderful vacation!**

**VACATION PLANS**

(To be given to person watching your home:)

In case of an emergency, contact:

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

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**VACATION ITINERARY**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

**RELATIVES**

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

**HOUSE CHECKLIST**

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Leave: \_\_\_\_\_ Return: \_\_\_\_\_

**LIGHTS:** (circle one)

- No
- Yes
- Timers
- Outside Light
- Other

**DELIVERIES:** (circle one)

- Canceled
- Arranged to be picked up
- Deliveries will continue

**MAIL:** (circle one)

- Stopped
- Arranged to be picked up
- Mail will continue

**KEYS LEFT WITH:** \_\_\_\_\_

**IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY, NOTIFY:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**OWNER MAY BE NOTIFIED AT:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**PROPERTY IN DRIVEWAY/YARD:**

(i.e. cars, boats, campers...)

\_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

(someone mowing? shoveling?)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you see something,  
say something!

**9-1-1**

**police - fire - medical**

911 is the number to call in Anoka County  
for both emergency and non-emergency  
response by police, fire and medical personnel

**Vacation  
Tips**

*What you need to know  
before you go.*



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