

# KEEP YOUR HOME SAFE WHILE YOU'RE ON VACATION

It's warm, the kids are out of school, and you're headed on a family vacation. Summertime is the perfect time to escape and leave home for a week or two, but before you do, prepare your house with these safety tips!

## 1. Stop the Mail

Before you leave on your vacation, make sure to stop mail and newspaper, or ask a neighbor to pick them up for you. Letting newspaper pile up not only alerts potential burglars that you aren't around, but can be a fire hazard! Luckily, you can put a hold on your mail without leaving your house thanks to the USPS's online system!



## 2. Unplug Appliances

Unplug small appliances, like your coffee maker, toaster, or television. Smaller appliances can use energy even when they're turned off- so save yourself some money when you're out of town. You can also protect them from power surges and reduce the likelihood of an electrical fire.



### 3. Purchase Light Timers

You want it to seem like your home is being lived in to potential burglars. Lived in doesn't mean that your lights are turned on all day and night – that's a sure sign that you're not home. You can make a home seem lived in by buying light timers and having them turn your lamps on in different rooms at different times in the evening.



### 4. Change Your Thermostat

Going away in the summer? Turn the air down. Save yourself some money while you're away and keep the AC from cooling a home that you won't get to enjoy! If you're going away in the winter, turn the heat down. (Of course, if you have pets staying in the home while you're gone, make sure the temperatures are comfortable for them and the people who come to watch them!)



### 5. Turn Your Water Heater on Vacation Mode

You don't want to turn your water heater completely off, but you also don't want it to be constantly heating your water that you won't use! What a waste of energy that would be. Turn your water heater to vacation mode and save money!



## 6. Turn Water Valves Off

Prevent leaks and flooding by shutting water valves off to your dishwasher, washing machine, and sinks before you go.



## 7. Double Check Your Smoke Alarm

It's the worst-case scenario, but you'll want to make sure your smoke alarm is working! Replace the batteries and test it before you go. If something does catch fire while you're gone, it's better to have a smoke alarm that works and alerts neighbors or the fire department than not to have one at all.



## 8. Prevent Smells

One of the worst things about getting home from a vacation is coming back to a smelly house. Smells are unpleasant, but they can also draw in pests! Make sure you prevent smells from starting in your kitchen while you're gone by cleaning out your fridge before you go. Take out the trash as you're leaving, too. If you want to really make sure you don't have any spoiling food smells, clean the

garbage disposal right before you leave. (Don't worry about it taking too long, we have quick and easy ways to clean your garbage disposal here.)



## 9. Lock Up and Turn Off Your Garage

Of course, you're going to lock up your house before you go, but make sure everything is locked up! That means closing pet doors (if they're not going to be using them), windows, and removing the spare keys under your mat or in your front yard. Finally, turn off your garage door and leave through the front door when you go. (Some burglars use universal garage door openers!)



## 10. Don't Leave Your GPS Out

Parking at the airport? Don't leave a GPS in your car, especially one that points back to your house! Many burglars break into cars in parking lots at the airport, and leaving a GPS pointing back to your home is like an invitation to rob your house.



## 11. Get a Home Security System

Getting a home security system can help to monitor break ins, temperatures in your home, and more! Home security systems can provide you with peace of mind when you leave for vacation.

