



# Brown County Sheriff's Office

## Safety Tip: Preventing Burglaries & Protecting Your Home

### When You are Away from 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.

A vacant house – or one that appears to be vacant – is an appealing target to a burglar. This is true during the work day when everyone may be at work or school, or during a vacation, a weekend away from home, or a business trip. You can alleviate day-to-day worries and make a trip more carefree if you will take a few simple steps to reduce the possibility that your home will be burglarized or vandalized while you are gone.

Although you should always be aware of leaving windows and doors closed and locked whenever you will be out of the home, there are a number of things to consider when you're going away for a weekend or longer.

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 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 identification 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 good evidence in court. You may also want to take pictures or do a home video taping 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.)

Install motion detector lights on the outside of your home. Use electronic timers on inside lights and photoelectric switches on the 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, TV's, 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.

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 the last page and ask a trusted neighbor to keep this information private.

Call the Sheriff's Department or your local police department to register your home for extra patrol. Typically, a squad will drive by your residence to check on things.

To help you remember use this list as you prepare to leave, and check off each item as you do it.

Returning to a home that has been broken into is an unpleasant finish to any trip. Never give a burglar an even break.

## At Least One Day Before You Leave

1.  Arrange with a neighbor to pick up and hold your mail and newspapers so they don't pile up. If this is not possible, notify your newscarrrier and the post office to discontinue these deliveries.
2.  Make arrangements to have grass cut and watered while you are gone. Have someone check daily to remove throwaway papers and circulars from your doorway and yard.
3.  If you have valuables in the house, take them to your bank for storage in a safe deposit vault. Deposit cash in your bank account.
4.  Notify your sheriff's office or local police station about your departure and return dates and give a name and telephone number of a neighbor or relative to notify in case of a burglary, fire or other emergency.
5.  Make sure broken windows, door locks or window locks are repaired.
6.  Arrange with a neighbor or relative to watch your house and give them a key. Let them know where you are and how you can be reached in an emergency. Write their telephone number down so you can check with them during your trip. Give them your car description and license number.
7.  Move all ladders, tools, lawn implements, garbage cans and yard furniture to your garage, basement or storage shed.

## On the Day you Leave

8.  Unplug all electrical appliances such as radios, television sets, irons, washers, and fans to prevent possible damage from electrical storms.

9.  Set your thermostat so that your furnace or air conditioner will maintain a reasonable temperature – 80 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer and 55 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter. In the winter, make sure outside water taps are drained to prevent freezing.
10.  Close your fireplace flue to prevent birds or animals from entering.
11.  Make sure all gas appliances are in good working order and that pilot lights are working.
12.  Turn off water to automatic washer to prevent possible damage from a broken hose.
13.  Turn down the volume control on your telephone and answering machine so they cannot be heard from outside.
14.  Close and lock all windows and sliding doors. Make sure that a “Charley bar” is secure on sliding doors, and that all screens and storm windows are locked or fastened.
15.  Put window shades in normal daytime position, and make sure all main floor drapes, shades and curtains are arranged so that neighbors and police can see into your house.
16.  If you are leaving a car or other vehicle in your driveway, make sure it is locked.
17.  Set your electrical timer to turn some lights on and off during the evening hours.
18.  Lock your garage door.
19.  Make certain that the last person out locks the door. Take a walk around the house. Check the doors and windows.

# Travel Information

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

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We're leaving (date) \_\_\_\_\_, traveling by  
 Car  Bus  Train  Plane

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

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

Leave (city): \_\_\_\_\_ at: \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Returning of (date): \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_; traveling by  
 Car  Bus  Train  Plane

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

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

Leave (city): \_\_\_\_\_ at: \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_

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

Local emergency phone number:

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

Phone Number: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

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