

Protect Your Home While You're Away

Summer is approaching, and that means Show Low residents will be heading out of town for vacation. Unfortunately, burglars work overtime during the vacation season. A vacant house that makes an appealing target for burglars during the day while occupants are at work or school becomes even more appealing when its occupants are away for the weekend, a business trip or vacation, allowing more time for thieves to achieve their goal.

If you're planning to be away from home for a weekend or longer, follow the steps below to reduce your risk of being burglarized or vandalized and give yourself greater peace of mind while you're gone. To help you remember, copy the list and carry it with you as you prepare to leave. Check off each item as you do it.

At least a day before you leave:

- Ask a neighbor to pick up and hold your mail and newspapers so they don't pile up. If this isn't possible, arrange in advance for mail and newspaper delivery to be discontinued while you're gone. Do not leave notes for your mail or news carrier. Apartment tenants should also heed this rule, since a stuffed mail receptacle is a giveaway that no one is home.
- Arrange to have your lawn cut and watered. Ask someone to remove loose circulars and other papers that might accumulate by your door or in your yard.
- Tell trusted neighbors about your absence so they can be alert for suspicious people or activity around your home. However, try not to overpublicize your plans to be gone.
- Leave a key with a trusted neighbor or relative so they can go by and inspect your home periodically while you're gone. Tell them how and where you can be reached in case of an emergency. Carry their telephone number with you so you can call periodically during your trip. Give them your car description and license plate number.
- Set up timers to switch lights on and off during the evening hours to give the appearance that someone is at home. Ask the person checking on your house to vary the positions of your shades or blinds.
- If you have valuables at your house, take them to your bank for storage in a safe deposit box while you're gone. Include an inventory of other items at your home, including serial numbers and photographs, so you'll have it for police and insurance in the event a burglary occurs (click here download our [Personal Property Inventory](#) sheet).
- Notify your sheriff's office or local police station about your departure and return dates and provide the name of the person who can be reached in case of a burglary, fire or other emergency. If you live within the Show Low city limits, arrange for our Senior Patrol to make periodic checks on your home by downloading our [Property Watch](#) form and mailing or delivering it to the Show Low Police Department.

Put ladders, tools, lawn implements, garbage cans and yard furnishings inside a garage, basement or storage shed.

On the day you leave:

Unplug electrical appliances such as radios, televisions, computers, etc., to prevent possible damage from electrical storms.

Set your thermostat so your furnace or air conditioner will maintain a reasonable temperature—80 degrees in summer and 55 degrees in winter. In winter, be sure to drain outside water taps to prevent freezing.

Close your fireplace flue to prevent birds or animals coming in.

Be sure all gas appliances are in good order and pilot lights are working.

Turn off water to automatic washer to prevent possible damage from a broken hose.

Turn down the volume on your telephone and answering machine so they cannot be heard from outside.

Close and lock all windows and sliding doors. Use a “Charley bar” to secure sliding doors. Lock or fasten all screens and storm windows.

Put window shades in normal daytime position. Arrange main floor shades and curtains so neighbors and police can see into your house.

Make sure any vehicle left in your driveway is locked.

Set the timer to turn lights on and off during evening hours.

Lock your garage door.

Lock all house doors when you leave. Walk around the house to check windows and doors.

Leave a key with your neighbor or relative if you haven’t already done so. Make sure you have their telephone number.

When you return:

If you find a door or window that appears to have been forced or broken while you were gone, DO NOT ENTER. The criminal may still be inside. Use a neighbor’s phone to call police or sheriff’s deputies.

Do not touch anything or clean up if a crime has occurred. Preserve the scene until police can inspect for evidence.