

Top 8 Tips for Crime Prevention 2008 (#5 in a series)

Vacation-proof your home

An empty home can be an easy target for thieves. When you go on vacation or travel for business, follow these quick and easy tips to protect your home and valuables.

#1: Make your home look lived in

Put lights, radios and TVs on variable timers and have someone stay inside your home for a while each day if possible. If you're leaving a vehicle outside your house, have someone move its position periodically, to make it appear that it's being used. Also arrange for lawn and garden upkeep.

#2: Cancel deliveries

Either cancel newspapers, mail and other delivery items or have a trusted neighbour collect them.

#3: Look at your home with a burglar's eyes

Ensure that the exterior of your home is well lit and that burglars don't have an opportunity to work unseen in hidden areas, such as behind fences and bushes.

#4: Check the fine print

Read your home insurance policy to find out how often your home needs to be checked in order to maintain your coverage: especially during the winter heating season, the requirement may be daily.

#5: Trust carefully

Tell only people you trust that you will be away and how long you will be gone for. Leave an itinerary with them so that they can reach you in case of an emergency. Ask trusted neighbours to collect junk mail and look out for your place; if there's no one nearby, hire a reliable house-hitting service.

#6: Go off site

Store important or irreplaceable documents and items away from your home, such as in a safety deposit box.

#7: Secure your garage

Disconnect the garage door opener by switching on its "lock" setting or switching off the circuit breaker that allows the automatic door to open. Place a padlock in the door track to block the roller. Lock all person-doors, including the one between an attached garage and the house.

#8: Before you go

Lock up tools, BBQs and ladders and make sure they're out of sight; set and test your timers; lock and check doors and windows; and leave shades and blinds in normal positions. Turn off the telephone ringer so no one knows your home is empty (and don't leave outgoing phone messages saying you are away).

If you return to find that your home has been broken into, don't enter it and don't touch anything. Call the police from a neighbour's home or cell phone, and wait for police to arrive.

For more information about residential security and Crime Prevention information, contact your District Community Liaison Officer.

Public Contact Information:

General Police Line: 266-1234

Public Email Contact:

cps@calgarypolice.ca