

6 top tips to keep your home safe over the summer holidays

by Adam Smith Real Estate

In the mad rush to get Christmas together and away on holiday, it's pretty easy to race off without putting much thought into keeping your home safe while away. So here are our top tips to help you keep your place as safe as possible while you're off enjoying that summer sun (hopefully)...



#1 Keep up appearances

Nothing is more attractive to a burglar than a house that screams 'I'm empty'. It makes a home a prime target. So keeping up a lived in appearance is one of the most important precautions you can take. Here are some tricks to keep your home looking lived in:

- Leave curtains open, have mail collected by a neighbour, and even have them put bins out on collection day. Leaving your spare car in the driveway can be a good deterrent, as can be a lamp or outdoor lights on a timer switch to make it seem like someone's home in the evenings.
- Keep the garden tidy by having someone mow the lawns if you're away for a couple of weeks.
- Look at stopping your newspaper and other subscriptions from being delivered while you're away – or even better, have a helpful neighbour collect them so it looks like someone's home.

#2 Remove the temptation

Whether you're away from home or not, keeping attractive, desirable items out of sight could make the difference between a break-in or not.

- With Christmas looming, don't put presents on show under the tree until Christmas Eve. Cases of a house-load of presents being stolen are becoming more and more common.
- Try to keep expensive electronics out of view – stash laptops and other devices while you're away, close TV cabinets so equipment is not in view, and try to screen off a large TV from view.
- Take a walk around your yard and think like a thief. Don't leave implements outside that could make their job any easier... bricks, tools, ladders that could aid their entry.

#3 Don't advertise your absence

Be careful about who you tell you're going away, and for how long.

- Don't advertise your absence on your answer phone, on Facebook or anywhere else that is public.
- Turn down the ringer on your phone so anyone scoping out your home can't hear that there's no one home to answer. Have your calls forwarded to your mobile instead.

#4 Keep an eye out

Getting someone to check in on your home is one of the best precautions you can take, particularly if you're away for a long period.

- Let a neighbour or relative know you're going to be away, or alternatively your landlord or property manager, and ask if they'd check by the property to see if all is well. This is particularly important if you live in quite a private setting. Leave an emergency number with them, and perhaps even insurance company details in the event something happens.

#5 Lock it or lose it

Seems rather obvious, but being even more thorough can make a big difference to the security of your stuff.

- Make sure you check everything – garden sheds, window latches, deadbolts.
- Remove that spare key. If anyone's set on getting into your home, it won't take them long to figure out your 'novel' hiding place.
- Another precaution that pays off is to put metal or wooden rods in ranch slider runners so doors can't slide open.

#6 Flick the switch

This one may not be a burglar deterrent, but can keep your place safe all the same – make sure you turn off any appliances at the wall.

- Better safe than sorry when it comes to electrical fires, so flick the switch on all the electrical items you can before you leave home. A smoke alarm won't alert anyone if there is no-one staying in the house.
- Turning an appliance off can also save any appliance damage due to power surges.

We hope your holiday season is a safe and very happy one.

Regards, [The Iron Bridge Team](#).