

Be House Smart - Keep Your Home Secure Over The Summer Holidays

by Adam Smith

'We're all going on a summer holiday' - it's that time of year again! The day after Christmas the wrapping paper will be tidied away, the car packed and you'll be ready to head off. Before you leave, take a few minutes to make sure your home is safe and secure.



All around New Zealand homes empty out at this time of the year. That means there's opportunity for things to go wrong or some less than honest people to take advantage of the situation.

So, before you head off on holiday, here are some things you can do to ensure your property is protected.

Keep it secure

Triple-check you've locked everything:

- Take 10 minutes to walk around the house and double check window latches and deadbolts are fastened, and all doors are properly locked. Don't forget the garden shed and garage doors too!
- For doors with windows, remove keys from the lock and put them out of reach.
- If you have ranch sliders, you may also want to put metal or wooden rods in the runners to be extra sure they can't be opened.
- Anyone who really wants to break in will take some time to find your secret 'spare key' spot. Don't forget to remove the 'secret' spare key or make sure it's in a heavy-duty outdoor coded key safe (your local hardware store should have these).

This may all seem like obvious advice, but you'd be surprised how many of us forget about a door or window that is not used often. Check and re-check before you head off.

Keep it safe

Remember to 'flick the switch' before leaving the house:

- Electrical fires can be devastating, so turn off as many appliances as you can at the wall - this can also help prevent damage from any power surges.

Keep it smart

Nothing is more attractive to a burglar than an empty-looking house. So, give your home that 'lived in' look by:

- Asking a neighbour to collect your mail or calling New Zealand Post and putting a hold on your mail
- Leaving a spare car in the driveway
- Having curtains and blinds open
- Getting someone to mow the lawns while you're away
- Cancelling newspaper subscriptions or offering them to your helpful neighbor, particularly if they put the bins out too while you're away!