



Be House Smart - Keep your Home Secure over the Summer Holidays

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'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.

After another disruptive year and no international travel, all around New Zealand, people will be looking to explore what NZ has to offer and homes will empty out over the summer holidays. 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 'switch off the gas and have electrical appliances unplugged with the switches off at the wall.

Don't turn off the mains power as you still need power to run the burglar alarm, fridge and freezer.

Keep it smart

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

- * Don't tell everyone on social media of your travel plans, including when you are leaving, where you are going or when you will return.* Ask a neighbour to collect your mail or call New Zealand Post and put a hold on your mail. Make sure you aren't expecting any courier deliveries.
- * Leave a spare car in the driveway
- * Have curtains and blinds open
- * Getting someone to mow the lawns while you're away
- * Cancelling newspaper subscriptions or offering them to your helpful neighbour, particularly if they put the bins out too while you're away!

Apply these quick and easy tips to help with your home security plan this summer and you'll be sure to have total peace-of-mind while you're away!